

Special Educational Needs Policy



**Moyderwell Mercy Primary School
13530D**

Section 1: School Overview

1.1 Introduction

Moyderwell Mercy Primary School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Dioceses of Kerry, catering for children from a diverse range of social, cultural and religious backgrounds. It is a DEIS Band II school, with many students coming from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The school is child centred in approach to education. In accordance with the Mercy Ethos, its aim is to recognise the uniqueness of each pupil and strive to develop their potential to the full. The school encourages a love of learning and participation in school life and seek to supply a well-rounded education.

The purpose of this Policy Document is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, special needs assistants and other interested parties in the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties as well as fulfilling obligations under The Education Act 1998 and the EPSEN Act 2004. This Policy also recognises that the purpose of the strategy Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020 (Dept. of Education and Skills) “is to raise achievement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all the students including those with special educational needs.” (Pg 66).

1.2 Categories of pupils who qualify as SEN

The following categories of pupil will receive supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher and The Resource Teacher under the terms of the General Education Model outlined in the DES Circular 02/05

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests in English or Mathematics;
- Pupils with learning difficulties, pupils with mild social or emotional difficulties and pupils with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions
- Pupils who have been identified as being in the low incidence category (Appendix 1 Sp. Ed. Circular 02/05) will receive an individual allocation of support through the Special Education Needs Organizer. (SENO)
- Pupils who have special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability).

1.3 Current SEN Provision

Moyderwell Mercy Primary School currently has the following teaching resources for SEN under DES guidelines (Sept 1st 2014)

- Two full time and one clustered teacher for Learning Support under the General Allocation Model (GAM)
- Four full time Resource Teachers
- One English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher
- Six special needs assistants working in a number of classes

1.4 Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The school hopes to provide for the all-round development of pupils in its care, in as far as resources can provide. Therefore through its Special Needs Policy, it hopes to allow for:

- An appropriate education for all pupils of the school.
- A curriculum that is accessible to all pupils.
- The provision of support for pupils with special educational needs.

1.4 Implementation and Review

This policy will be operative as of September 2015. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

1.5 Communication

This policy will be available on the school web site. Information regarding the availability of all school policies is also be disseminated to parents through the medium of the school newsletter.

Section 2: Learning Support Policy

2.1 Principal Aim

The principal aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

2.2 Specific Objectives of Learning Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate to the best of their ability in the full curriculum for their class level.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policy on learning support for these pupils.

- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning. These to date include Aistear, Literacy Liftoff, Maths Recovery and Reading Recovery.

2.3 Guiding Principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole school policies that deliver equality of access and esteem to all children.
- Whole school involvement.
- Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class.
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

2.4 Prevention Strategies

- As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English including reading, writing and comprehension strategies as detailed in the *First Steps* literacy program.
- Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum.
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. a whole school approach to the Language of Tables and Subtraction.
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the provision of the Tips for Parents booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings and participation in the Maths in the Classroom project.
- Implementation of the Literacy Liftoff Programme from Junior Infants to 2nd Class. (Junior Infants commence Shared Reading in the third term only. All other junior classes participate in Shared Reading during Literacy Liftoff sessions.)
- Class based early intervention facilitated by the Learning Support Teacher from Infants to 4th Class resulting in the provision of additional individualised support where required. In Junior Infants this is primarily focused at identification of pupils who may be in need of LS.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

Section 3: Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

3.1 General Allocation of Learning Support

Children from all classes from First to Sixth will be screened every May for possible learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The tests currently used at are ‘Sigma-T’ (numeracy) 1st Class to 6th Class and ‘Drumcondra (literacy) 1st Class to 6th Class. Drumcondra Early Screening Tests in literacy and numeracy are used with Senior Infants. Learning Support will be offered based on the following priorities:

3.1.1 Literacy

- 1 Senior Infants identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or Drumcondra Early Screening Test for Literacy, as having difficulty in literacy.
- 2 Children from 1st Class and 2nd Class, at or below the 16th percentile in literacy in accordance with Drumcondra Testing.
- 3 Children from 3rd Class and 4th Class at or below the 16th percentile in literacy in accordance with Drumcondra Testing.
- 4 Learning support for 5th and 6th classes will be provided where possible, when resources allow. Support in Literacy will be prioritised in this instance.

3.1.2 Numeracy

- 1 Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or Drumcondra Early Screening Test for Numeracy, as having difficulty in numeracy
- 2 Children from 1st Class and 2nd Class, at or below the 16th percentile in numeracy in accordance with Sigma-T Testing.
- 3 Children from 3rd Class and 4th Class, at or below the 16th percentile in numeracy in accordance with Sigma-T Testing.

If a child is absent on the designated date of testing, then testing will be rescheduled for him/her at the earliest possible date. In the event of new children coming ygbgto the school in the first term the appropriate Drumcondra / Sigma-T will be administered and the same criteria (see above) will apply to selection for learning support. In the event of children arriving in the school in the second or third terms other appropriate standardised literacy and

numeracy tests will be administered and the same criteria will apply to selection for learning support.

3.1.3 Exceptions to Agreed Policies of Provision

In certain circumstances, exceptions to the 10th / 12th Percentile rule in all classes may be made based on the teachers' knowledge and experience of exceptional circumstances. These may include;

- Difficult home situations where support cannot be guaranteed
- Some children for whom English is a second language.
- Children who, in spite of learning support and other interventions, do not perform well in class perhaps due to a processing difficulty e.g. visual or auditory.

3.1.4 Discretionary Support

Where possible support will be offered in the following cases, at the discretion of the Special Education Team

- In class support where resources allow for children presenting at 12th to 20th percentile in literacy and numeracy in all classes up to 1st Class to Rang 6.
- Special cases agreed between the class teacher, the learning support teacher and parents may also be considered where parts one and two of the staged approach have failed. (The staged approach is outlined in Appendix of the Special Education Circular 0205,) (See Appendix A of this policy)
- Pupils with psychological or other reports deeming them eligible for resource hours over and above the school's existing allocation. (In some instances while awaiting sanctioning by the SENO)

3.2 Early Intervention

Early intervention will be provided to pupils in some circumstances, with more specialised intervention being provided to those who qualify under the selection criteria in English and Maths or under low incidence department guidelines. The class teacher and learning support teachers will share the instruction of particular prevention programmes e.g. Literacy Liftoff, Aistear, EAL, Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery.

Prior to formalised testing at the end of Senior Infants, all Junior Infant and Senior Infant pupils are screened using teacher observation.

3.3 Permission for Withdrawal

On entry to the school parents will be required to sign a general consent form to withdraw their children from the classroom for early intervention programmes from junior infants to second class.

In the situation where parents refuse to grant consent for their child to attend learning support classes, this must be put in writing and a record of the offer and its rejection should be kept in the child's file.

Section 4: Provision of Supplementary Teaching

4.1 The Provision of Support

The primary work of the learning support teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.

- A system of withdrawal and/ or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the pupils and to considerations discussed by Classroom Teacher and Learning Support Teacher. The learning support teacher, in consultation with the Principal and with reference to the guidelines issued by the D.E.S., determines the size of the groups, taking into account the individual needs of the pupils and the overall caseload.
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and where caseload permits.
- The class teacher and the learning support teacher meet to devise Individual Learning Plan and / or General Education Plans in consultation with parents. It will be necessary to provide time and supervision of classes in order to facilitate these meetings. This will require discussion and planning before meetings are arranged.
- If there is sufficient time available, some children who have high levels of ability may be given the opportunity to work on a more challenging programme with the involvement of a member of the S.E.N. team. This would need to be explored and discussed at staff level should resources allow it.

4.1.1 Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery (RR) is an early intervention, designed to provide children who have particular difficulties in reading and writing after their first/second year in primary school, a period of intensive, individual teaching. It is a school-based intervention designed to reduce literacy problems within an education system. The intervention is not solely concerned with improving the reading and writing skills of the lowest achieving children in the age band in the mainstream class (around age six) but also helps them to develop more effective literacy strategies so that they will be able to continue to work at age appropriate levels and to progress satisfactorily in their own school's instruction programme. A child's RR series of lessons is finished when he or she is judged to be able to cope well with reading and writing and work successfully at age appropriate levels.

The aim is that, with a fully trained RR teacher, this should be achieved within 12-20 weeks. As soon as the child leaves Reading Recovery, another enters and this rolling intervention continues throughout the year.

4.1.2 Maths Recovery

The Maths Recovery Programme focuses on the:

- (a) Identification of the lowest-attainers at the first-class level and
- (b) Provision of a programme of intensive, individualized, group or class-based teaching.

Scope of Maths Recovery

Maths Recovery focuses on developing

- a facility with number words and number word sequences,
- the ability to recognise, identify and write numerals,
- emerging strategies for adding and subtracting,
- emerging knowledge of the tens and ones aspect of the numeration system,
- And emerging methods of notation in arithmetic.

Key features of Maths Recovery

The key features of the Maths Recovery Programme are:

- (a) Intensive, individualized, group or class teaching of low-attaining first class pupils by specialist teachers;
- (b) An extensive professional development course to prepare the specialist teachers, and on-going collegial and leader support for these teachers;
- (c) Use of a strong underpinning theory of young children's mathematical learning; and
- (d) Use of an especially developed instructional approach, and distinctive instructional activities and assessment procedures.

4.2 Conducting Assessments

In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the learning-support teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments, and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. The learning support teacher should:

- Conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having a suspected learning difficulty.
- Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of learning support.
- Review the progress of each pupil at the end of an instructional term.

4.3 Formal In-School Assessments – General Ability and Attainment

(1) New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)

The New Non-Reading Intelligence Tests (NNRIT) comprise three tests for use with separate age groups: NNRIT 1 is for pupils aged 6:2 to 8:10; NNRIT 2 is for ages 7:2 to 9:10; and NNRIT 3 is for ages 8:2 to 11:10 in primary schools and 10:2 to 13:10 for average- and lower-ability students in secondary schools.

These are group tests are presented orally by the teacher, enabling general ability to be assessed independently of reading. The NNRIT tests assess aspects of language and thinking that are not necessarily represented in measures of pupil attainments, and help to pinpoint low-achieving and slow-reading pupils who may nevertheless have high underlying ability.

The NNRIT will be administered by class teachers on all students in 1st, 3rd and 5th class in May/June of each academic year so that all students complete the test every second year. The

NNRIT 1 is administered with 1st class, NNRIT 2 with 3rd class and NNRIT 3 with 5th class. Results of the NNRIT will be compared with the standard scores on standardised testing/early literacy/numeracy tests from the previous year in order to identify students that have discrepancies of greater than 10 score points between the two tests. These students will then be referred to the Learning Support Teacher, who will conduct further formal testing to identify possible difficulties in specific areas.

4.4 Formal In-School Assessments – Literacy

4.4.1 Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Diagnostic

The Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy–Diagnostic (DTEL-D) is designed for use with children who may have a reading difficulty. It is recommended to administer the DTEL-D to children who have attained low scores (below 17) on the DTEL Screening Test. The purpose of the DTEL-D Test is to identify specific reading and reading-related skills with which children may be experiencing difficulties. The test is individually administered and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. The DTEL-D is divided into three parts: Phonological Awareness, Phonological Working Memory, and Knowledge of Letters and Letter Sounds. This test will be administered by the Learning Support Teacher in early September each in order to identify priority learning needs of students in 1st class as well potential students for Reading Recovery.

4.4.2 Graded Word Spelling Test (5-18 Years)

Spelling is a key skill in the National Curriculum for English and an important 'basic skill' which continues to be valued highly in further and higher education and in the world of work. Vernon's **Graded Word Spelling Test** is a widely used, standardised test designed to assess spelling attainment and progress from age 5 to 18+ years.

The **Graded Word Spelling Test** is designed for use throughout the years of compulsory schooling, and extends to the level of spelling reached by well-educated adults. Its wide range is achieved by the presentation of 80 test words, graded in order of difficulty and each placed in the context of a short sentence.

This test will be used with students that demonstrate significant discrepancies between spelling attainment in Drumcondra standardised testing and general literacy attainment in the Drumcondra Reading and Comprehension Test. These students will be identified and tested by the Learning Support Teacher and testing will generally be conducted with students between 2nd and 6th class.

4.4.3 Single Word Reading Test (6-16 Years)

The *Single Word Reading Test (SWRT)* provides a measure of a child's word reading skills and will contribute to an assessment of reading achievement, as well as informing teaching and learning strategies.

Individually administered *SWRT* contains six graded sets of ten words of increased difficulty. Parallel forms allow repeat testing and vast amount of diagnostic information can be obtained in the form of sight vocabulary analysis and error analysis. It is ideal as a quick screening test for checking progress at regular intervals and as part of the qualifying criteria for Access Arrangement

This test is used in conjunction with the YARC (see below) and the same criteria for administration apply.

4.4.4 Yorkshire Assessment of Reading and Comprehension (YARC)

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC) offers teachers a reliable way of assessing their pupils' emerging and developing skills in reading and reading comprehension from age four to 16.

(1) *YARC Early Reading (4-7 Years)*

The York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC) Early Reading allows teachers to focus assessment on the core skills that underpin alphabetic literacy. It comprises four short tests:

- Letter Sound Knowledge
- Early Word Recognition
- Sound Isolation
- Sound Deletion

These tests may be used together or individually with pupils aged four to seven.

The tests allow for the quick and accurate assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress as well as providing diagnostic information for the early identification of reading problems. Their development reflects the recent changes in emphasis in the teaching of reading to a systematic phonic based approach.

YARC Early Reading provides standard scores, percentile ranks and age equivalent scores for word reading, letter sound knowledge and phoneme awareness.

The YARC Early Reading Test is used for early intervention in Literacy. In Junior and Senior Infants, administration will be conducted on children based on the recommendation of Class Teachers and the Learning Support Teacher and intervention strategies will be implemented based on the outcomes of the assessment in a learning support setting.

(2) *YARC Passage Reading (5-11 Years)*

YARC Passage Reading consists of a series of graded passages to assess children's reading attainment from age five to 11. Importantly, each passage is accompanied by a set of comprehension questions which assess a range of comprehension skills. YARC Passage Reading allows teachers to regularly assess children's reading fluency and accuracy and comprehension.

YARC Passage Reading has equivalent forms and produces standard age scores, percentile ranks and age equivalent scores for reading accuracy (through a detailed error analysis), rate and comprehension. YARC Passage Reading has been correlated with the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability to give teachers flexibility in their choice of reading assessments from GL Assessment.

4.4.5 Dyslexia Screening Test – Junior (DST-J) (6:06-11:05 Years)

The *DST-J* provides a profile of strengths and weaknesses which can be used to guide the development of in-school support for the child.

New theoretical developments in dyslexia research suggest that it should be possible to identify both slow learners and potential dyslexic children at the age of 5 or 6 years, in time for greater reading support. The *DST-J* is designed for early identification of children who are at risk of reading failure so that they can be given extra support at school.

The DST-J will be administered by the Learning Support Teacher when concerns have been observed by the Class Teacher/Learning Support teacher and will be a precursor to Dyslexia related interventions such as Toe by Toe or Stride Ahead. It may also be used to support a referral to the NEPS psychologist for further assessment.

4.5 Formal In-School Assessments – Numeracy

4.5.1 Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy Diagnostic

The DTEN-D is recommended for use with children who have attained low scores on the DTEN-S. The purpose of the DTEN-D is to identify specific aspects of numeracy with which children may be experiencing difficulties. It is individually administered, takes approximately 45 minutes, and is divided into 15 tasks distributed over the three areas of pre-number, numeration, and addition and subtraction. This test will be administered by the Learning Support Teacher in early September each in order to identify priority learning needs of students in 1st class as well as identifying potential students for Maths Recovery.

4.5.2 Maths Assessment for Learning and Teaching (MaLT 2)

These standardised group tests yield formative information which will directly support individual and whole-class teaching, as well as reliable *summative* assessments for screening, monitoring and progress tracking.

MaLT Stage 2 assesses all areas of mathematics from age 8 to 11, providing:

- standardised scores and percentiles
- maths ages (MaLT 8-11+)
- year-on-year progress assessment
- *attainment target* performance profiles
- individualised formative and diagnostic feedback to pupils
- whole-class profiles identifying weaknesses, common misconceptions and errors.

These tests will be administered by the Learning Support Teacher prior to commencing learning support with groups identified by standardised Sigma-T testing. Outcomes of the test will identify priority learning needs for the group and these students will be re-tested at the end of the intervention period in order to inform the cessation or continuation of support.

4.6 Formal In-School Assessments – Speech and Language

4.6.1 Test of Language Development-Primary: 4th Edition (TOLD-P:4) (4:00-8:11 Years)

The Test of Language Development-Primary: Fourth Edition (TOLD-P:4) assesses spoken language in young children. It is well constructed, reliable, practical, research-based, and theoretically sound. Professionals can use the TOLD-P:4 to

- identify children who are significantly below their peers in oral language proficiency,

- determine their specific strengths and weaknesses in oral language skills,
- document their progress in remedial programs
- measure oral language in research studies.

This test will be administered by the Learning Support/Resource Teacher on the identification of concerns and recommendation of Class/Support Teachers and will inform early intervention and referral to HSE Speech and Language Services.

4.7 Formal In-School Assessments – Pre-Referral to NEPS Psychologist

4.7.1 Weschler Intelligence Attainment Test for Teachers (WIAT-T II)

The *WIAT-II^{UK}-T* is the most comprehensive UK-normed assessment package designed for access arrangements, statementing and general literacy levels.

The *WIAT-II^{UK}-T* is the only test for specialist teachers currently offering subtests in the three key areas of reading:

- untimed single word accuracy
- reading comprehension
- reading speed.

It provides the following:

- Single Word Reading - includes letter identification, phonological awareness, letter-sound awareness, accuracy and automaticity of word recognition
- Reading Comprehension - stories and sentences include literal, inferential and lexical comprehension, oral reading accuracy and fluency and word recognition in context
- Reading Speed - for 6 to 16 years 11 months. Words per minute (WPM) can also be recorded for the full age range
- Reading Rate - this is calculated from the Reading Comprehension subtest. The quartile scores identify the slow and accurate, slow and inaccurate, fast and accurate and fast and inaccurate reader
- Single Word Spelling - includes letter-sound correspondence for vowels, consonants and consonant blends, regular and irregular words, contradictions and high-frequency homonyms.

The WIAT-T II will be administered by the Learning Support/Resource Teacher prior to referral to the NEPS Psychologist.

4.8 Informal Testing and Screening

4.8.1 Screening Test to Enhance Educational Resources (STEER)

The STEER is an indicator that provides a valuable overview of the child's strengths and needs without diagnosing. It is a comprehensive screening test based on carefully selected tasks from ten skill areas including Gross Motor skills, Fine Motor skills, Language, Reading, Writing, Number, Perception, Organisation and Planning, Behaviour and Social Skills. It is researched to identify accepted age-norms for each selected task against which the child's performance can be measured and is a valuable fact-finding exercise which empowers the Learning Support/Resource Teacher to select the most suitable approaches, interventions, resources and specialist help to facilitate the child's progress. It is supplied with an extensive Support Pack containing clear directions for use, interpretation of findings, practical

interventions and details of valuable resources. This test (or portions thereof) will be administered to identify specific priority learning needs on the recommendation or concerns of the Class Teacher/Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher.

4.8.2 Other Informal Testing and Screening

A wide range of further tests, screeners and checklists are available in a wide range of areas and these can be accessed on the shared drive in the SEN Folder.

4.9 Individual Learning Programme / Group Learning Programme

The individual learning plan/group learning plan (IEP/IPLP) will be in accordance with the criteria as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from Class Teacher.
- Assessment results.
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies.
- Learning strengths and attainments.
- Priority learning needs.
- Learning targets.
- Class-based learning activities.
- Supplementary support activities to include computer programmes.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback. A detailed review will take place at the end of the instructional term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

****We plan a phased introduction of the Student Support File\Continuum of Support which will eventually replace the current format of the IEPs\IPLPs. This has commenced for all new referrals from September 2015, with full implementation expected by June 2017.***

4.10 Timetabling

The provision of learning support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths. Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend learning support. The provision of learning support which may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition or in-class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher.

4.11 Inclusion

We hope to include all pupils, irrespective of needs, into all aspects of school life. Support and empathy are encouraged through the SPHE programme, the RSE programme, games in PE programme and the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Circle time may be used in class or in the learning support setting to encourage inclusion.
- Co-operative games in PE also encourage team work.

- Senior pupils may be encouraged to interact at all times with children in junior classes to encourage helpfulness, responsibility, empathy and inclusiveness.

4.12 Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of this system include:

- Informing parents of concerns regarding progress in school;
- Outlining the school's practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures;
- Consultation between Class teacher and Learning Support teacher following a low score on a screening test;
- Consultation between Principal and/or Learning Support teacher and/or Class teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval for diagnostic assessment and provision of supplementary teaching;
- Ongoing communication between the LST (learning support teacher) and the class teacher;
- Regular communication between the LST and parents.

4.13 Referral to Out-of-school Agencies

The Learning Support Teacher and class teacher in consultation with principal and parents coordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, etc.

When completing a referral to out-of-school agencies, the following steps will be followed.

1. The Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent;
2. The necessary referral forms are completed by the appropriate school personnel;
3. The external professional may visit the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, class teacher and the Learning Support Teacher as appropriate and assessment is conducted; alternatively, a clinic based assessment may be undertaken.
4. This may be followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed;
5. Where concern arises regarding the manner or speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out-of-school agency.

4.14 Provision of Resources

Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.

Following consultation between the Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided by the school.

Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

4.15 Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme.
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support based on positive assessment results.
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs.
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress.

Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities – Learning Support

5.1 Role of Class Teacher

- Observe pupils under his or her care with a view to identifying children who may need support.
- Establish the required support systems as set out in the staged approach of Circular 0205.
- Teachers from first to sixth administer Drumcondra Reading and Comprehension and Sigma-T to all children in the class on one day in May of each year in so far as this is possible. In the case of children who are absent on the day the test is administered, it should be administered as soon as possible after their return.
- Correcting the tests and putting the results in order as directed by the Special Education Teacher.
- Requesting parents' approval to refer a child for additional support.
- Modify and differentiate class programmes to suit the needs of the pupils

5.2 Role of Special Education Team

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- Providing additional support to pupils who qualify under the- selection-criteria in English and Maths.
- Providing individual teaching to pupils who qualify under low incidence departmental guidelines.
- Development of a suitable Individual Profile and Learning Programme for each pupil who is selected.
- IEP targets achieved are recorded in on-going progress records for each individual or group.
- Delivering early intervention programmes for literacy and numeracy to children in the junior section of the school.
- Collating reports on screening tests for the purpose of selecting pupils for learning support.
- Meeting with parents/guardians of each pupil in receipt of individual teaching at the beginning of each term. The purpose of this meeting is to review the pupil's attainment, to discuss suitable targets for the coming term and to revise the IPLP accordingly.
- Co-operating and liaising as necessary with the principal, class teacher, parents and external agencies.
- Directing, supporting and providing relevant information / resources for Special Needs Assistants.
- Liaising with external agencies
- The learning support teacher should not routinely be expected to provide teaching cover for colleagues who are absent.
- If a child is entitled to an exemption from Irish, as indicated on a psychological report, the parents will be informed of the correct follow up procedure to allow for this exemption. It is at the parents' discretion to decide if or when they want their child to continue or discontinue learning Irish.

5.3 Role of the Parents

The school communicates with parents of children with SEN in line with relevant provision in the EPSEN Act 2004. The school welcomes parental input, about any aspect of their child's special needs and value parents as partners in education. Parents are consulted informally and formally during the school year, which can be requested by either parents or teachers. Parents are advised as to how they can support school work at home. If they so wish, the school can give parents information on reading material on outside bodies which may be useful in relation to their child's SEN.

If parents do not want their child to avail of learning support/ resource teaching in school, they should so advise in writing. Likewise if parents want the principal to apply to the DES for an exemption from Irish, they must request this in writing. The school is mindful of possible parental sensitivities around their child's special educational needs, particularly if difficulties with literacy or other needs exist within the child's immediate or extended family. It is in the best interests of the child that all relevant information be given to the school at enrolment and following any assessment or other outside professional advice/ consultation.

5.4 Role of the Pupil

It is important for the students to have an input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can:

- Become more independent as learners;
- Become aware of different learning styles;
- Become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs;
- Enjoy success and evaluate their progress;
- Excel at and enjoy many curricular and extracurricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size;
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught during supplementary teaching and apply these strategies and skills in their mainstream class situation

5.5 Role of the SNA

- Accompany and stay with children in the yard.
- Oversee the children's general behaviour and conduct in class.
- Fulfil the needs of the children who are in need of support, as determined by the class teacher and directed by the principal.

Note: This following information is an Appendix attached to Circular 07/02, and as such is the most recent clearly defined role of the Special Needs Assistant.

Their duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with Circular 10/76: "Duties and responsibilities of Principal Teachers" and sanctioned by the Board of Management. Their work should be supervised either by the Principal or by a class teacher.

Those duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.

- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class).
- Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.

Guidelines for SNAs in Moyderwell Mercy Primary School

- The SNA is directly responsible to the principal of the school. However, the class teacher will direct the SNA's activities on a day to day basis, with the agreement of the principal.
- As class teachers change from year to year, the SNA will be expected to adapt to the teacher's routine, but in general the SNA's role will be that of support to the child in his class work, play-time and related activities.
- SNAs should accompany children to and from the yard at yard times. They should oversee the conduct of the children in their care during yard-time. In the case where yard time is extended, the SNAs should stay in the yard.
- Removal from the classroom of special needs children may be necessary from time to time for exceptional reasons, such as disruptive behaviour. Such occasions and breaks from class contact time should be kept to a minimum and should not be used as rewards. Parents should be informed of these exceptional breaks by the class teacher.
- The SNA is not answerable to parents and all enquiries of whatever nature should be referred to the class teacher or principal.
- The SNA may be invited to attend meetings with parents and other educational personnel at the discretion of the principal. No meetings will take place without the principal, class teacher or resource teacher present
- The deployment / redeployment of SNAs is a decision for the principal in consultation with the learning support / resource team and classroom teachers.

5.6 Role of the Principal

- To oversee and ensure that the standardised tests (currently Sigma-T, Drumcondra Reading and Comprehension) are administered, corrected and the results recorded.
- To ensure that the children receive supplementary tuition in accordance with priorities outlined in this document.
- To ensure that the children identified as needing assessment are referred to the appropriate agency.
- To liaise with the S.E.N.O.
- To initiate the induction of the SNAs
- To assume responsibility for liaising with parents who refuse additional support.

5.7 Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will supply and maintain suitable accommodation and resources for the Special Education section of the school.

Section 6: Resource Teaching Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, and other relevant persons on the provision of effective teaching support for children experiencing a learning disability or with special needs and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1988 and the EPSEN Act 2004

6.1 Definition of Special Needs

We understand special needs to be that as defined in D.E.S. circulars. Intervention with pupils will be delivered in a manner that best meets the needs identified, which may be through group or individual teaching.

6.2 Identification and Selection of Children with Special Needs

Concerns about individual children may arise in a number of ways:

- ❖ Parents inform the principal or class teacher of a concern they have regarding their child;
- ❖ Teachers having a concern regarding a child in their class;
- ❖ Concerns arising following standardised testing;

6.3 Identification Procedures

1. Having consulted with teachers and parents involved, the Principal will seek appropriate assessment from the relevant outside agency such as N.E.P.S, Kerry Intervention & Disability Services (KIDS) or the H.S.E. with a view to qualifying for support from a Resource Teacher.
2. In the situation where parents refuse to grant consent for the child to attend such an assessment this must be put in writing and a record of the offer and its rejection should be kept in the child's file.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 authorises the Board of Management with the consent of the parent of a child to arrange for a child to be assessed as to his or her intellectual, emotional and physical development by such a person as may be determined by the Board with the concurrence of the parent.(Section 10-4);

Where a parent refuses to give consent the Board may apply to the Circuit Court for an order that an assessment of the child be carried out. (Section 10-5).

6.4 Aims of Special Needs Teaching

- ❖ To support as far as possible the integration of the child with special needs into the mainstream setting;
- ❖ To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in the child; and
- ❖ To promote collaboration among the staff in the implementation of the whole school policies on special needs.

6.5 Role of the Resource Teacher

The role of the resource teacher is to provide support for children with special needs by:

- ❖ Developing an individual learning programme for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education;
- ❖ Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress;
- ❖ Setting specific time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal;
- ❖ Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class;
- ❖ Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, text books, computer programmes and other related matters;
- ❖ Meeting and advising parents when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary;
- ❖ Meeting with relevant professionals in the child's interest e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists and visiting teachers.

6.6 Timetabling

- ❖ The provision of special needs teaching is in addition to regular teaching;
- ❖ Time allocated per child will depend on the demands on the service and the hours authorised by the SENO;
- ❖ Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend except where a pupil has been exempted from a subject by the DES; and
- ❖ Likewise the school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy such as Art and P.E.

6.7 Enrolment of Children with a Disability and / or Special Needs:

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. Further attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- ❖ A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices.
- ❖ Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management.
- ❖ From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, the school requires;

- ❖ A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- ❖ Copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These are necessary to facilitate access to any additional support/s that may be available and will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times.

- ❖ An assurance from parents that they understand that the responsibility of the school is primarily to ALL the children in its care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an on-going detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.

6.8 Role of the Class Teacher, Resource Teacher, Parents, Principal and Board of Management

The role of all the above in the education of children who have been allocated resource teaching is as in the previous section i.e. Learning Support Section.

6.8.1 Referrals from Class Teacher to SEN Team

When a class teacher has concerns with regard to students in their class, a referral will be made to the SEN Team for further investigation.

SEN teachers with responsibility for individual classes is follows.

- Junior Infants – Caroline Doody\Patricia O’Connor
- Senior Infants – Niamh Griffin
- First Class – Mairead Devine
- Second Class – Betty Barrett
- Third Class - Finbarr Mullins
- Fourth Class
- Fifth Class - Máire Jones
- Sixth Class

Once an initial referral has been made, a Student Support File will be forwarded to the class teacher, who will commence documentation of the actions taken in class (the first stage in the Continuum of Support) to address the needs of the individual student. This initial stage of documentation should take two weeks or until the nearest SEN meeting after the initial two week period.

Each individual SEN teacher will briefly document the nature of the referral, which will then be discussed at the SEN Monthly Meeting. A rolling register of all new referrals will be kept and stored in the Principals Office. All new\ongoing cases will be discussed during the monthly meeting and an action plan will be developed for each individual case. Each new case will be assigned to a member of the team, who will take responsibility for further testing and referrals where necessary. When testing has been completed, a decision will be made if there is a need to move the student to the second stage of the Continuum of Support.

6.9 Transfer to Post-Primary

In the year prior to children transferring to secondary school every effort is made to help the child make a smooth transition.

- ❖ Parents are contacted early in the school year about their choice of school for the following year – parents are made aware that resources may be limited in secondary

school so early application is vital. When parents give the school permission to contact the secondary school the principal will contact the new principal to make them aware of the child's needs.

- ❖ Where possible the child may be re-assessed prior to transfer. Again this will be based on current assessment needs in the school. Permission would be sought from parents to have the results of assessment passed onto the secondary school of their choice.
- ❖ In certain circumstance the SENO may help in the transition of the pupil and the communication with the new school re resource hours, teaching hours, SNA etc.

6.10 Record Keeping

- ❖ A locked filing cabinet containing records is kept in the school. This is updated each year. A folder is organised for each pupil. The folder will contain relevant details such as – enrolment form, results of tests, report cards, absence notes, results of assessment and any other relevant information.
- ❖ Access to this filing cabinet is restricted. Teaching staff have access to the records of children in their care. If there are sensitive issues these will be kept in a separate folder.
- ❖ External assessments are kept with the child's records (unless they are of a sensitive nature). The learning support teacher also has a copy of these reports. These are locked in the learning support teachers file.
- ❖ Parental approval is sought before passing on records. Prior to assessment parents give their consent to have records passed on to relevant bodies – DES, SENO etc. Records of external assessments are not passed on to the child's next school without parents' permission or the permission of the relevant professional.
- ❖ All record relating to students in the school are securely stored until the student reaches 21 years old. In the particular instance of pupils with SEN, records are stored until they are 24 years old. A parent may apply in writing for their child's records up to when the child reaches 18 years old. A past pupil may apply for their own records from the age of 18 to 21 (or 24 in the case of SEN).

Section 7: Ratification

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed _____
School Principal

Date: _____

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Appendix A: Staged Approach to Meeting SEN

A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Stage 1: Observation Process

1. Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development.
2. Class teacher administers appropriate screening measures.
3. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting.
4. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents.

Personnel:

- ❖ Class teacher
- ❖ Parent
- ❖ Home School Liaison
- ❖ NEPS Psychologist

Stage 2: Referral to SEN Team

If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2.

1. Child is referred to learning support teacher, with parental permission for further diagnostic testing.
2. If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged.
3. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.

Personnel:

- ❖ Class teacher
- ❖ Parent
- ❖ Learning Support Teacher
- ❖ Home School Liaison
- ❖ NEPS Psychologist
- ❖ Other Support Staff and Services available to school

Stage 3: Referral to External Agencies

If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3

1. School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.
2. A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan.
3. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process.

4. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.
5. Any private practitioner engaged by a school at Stage 3 should have the relevant Department of Education and Science Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their attention.

Personnel:

- ❖ Class teacher
- ❖ Parent
- ❖ Learning Support Teacher
- ❖ Resource Teacher

Relevant Specialist e.g.

- ❖ NEPS Psychologist
- ❖ Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments
- ❖ Speech and Language Therapist
- ❖ Occupational Therapist
- ❖ Psychiatrist
- ❖ Audiologist
- ❖ Paediatrician