

Gaelscoil Shlí Dála

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Policy on Special Educational Teaching Reviewed June 2019

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act, 1998. In Gaelscoil Shlí Dála we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of SET teaching is integral to this commitment.

In Gaelscoil Shlí Dála the principal aim of SET teaching is to optimise the learning process in order to enable pupils with learning needs to achieve the highest possible levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

1. Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
2. Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
3. Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
4. Collaborate with colleagues in order to maximise learning
5. Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability.
6. Establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning.

1. Prevention Strategies

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, the following strategies are being implemented:

1. Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in the provision of additional individualised support;
2. Development and implementation of agreed approaches to language.
3. Development e.g. Phonetic analysis & phonological awareness and the teaching of other aspects of the Gaelige, English programme and Maths programmes e.g. Maths language;

4. Promotion of parental involvement. The arrangement of formal and informal Parent/Teacher Meeting and the delivery of programmes for parents.
5. Implementation of Paired Reading programmes and
6. Ongoing observation and assessment.

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage 1: Whole school and classroom support for all pupils

In the first instance, all children are supported through whole school and classroom planning and support. Preventative and pro-active approaches are employed. In First and Second Class a GLA assessment is carried out on all children to determine their learning styles. Based on this information in so far as is possible, the individual learning styles of the children are accommodated. The class teacher employs several teaching strategies to accommodate these varying needs. Should the class teacher and/or a parent have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a pupil, further testing and screening will be administered such as checklists, teacher designed tests and screening to identify the child's difficulty. Appropriate interventions/adjustments will then be considered.

Stage 2: School support for some children

Teachers will endeavour in so far as possible to accommodate the needs of every child with identified problems within the classroom setting. The SET teacher in conjunction with the class teacher will give this support to small groups or individuals as necessary.

Stage 3: School + Support for a few

In a small number of cases, some children will be withdrawn from the class for individual support and a student support plan will be drawn up. Each child's progress will be monitored closely. Where teachers deem necessary, following consultation and adhering to appropriate procedures, the school/parents may request a formal assessment to be carried out. Such specialist advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists and occupational therapists etc. Clear learning targets will be identified and reviewed on a regular basis.

Procedure for Identification/Screening/Referral of Pupils

Assessment of Junior Infants

There is ongoing assessment throughout the year for all Junior Infant children. This assessment takes the form of teacher observation, the use of checklists and regular testing of numbers, letters, sounds, words etc.

Throughout the year, ongoing assessment of appropriate numbers and letters, sounds and words.

June: The children are tested on numbers 1-5, all 26 letters and their sounds and the sight words from the Jolly Phonics programme.

Assessment of Senior Infants

All children in Senior Infants are tested on an ongoing basis throughout the year using checklists for word recognition from the class readers and teacher observation for language development and mathematical ability.

Phonics

September: There is an initial assessment in September for all Senior Infant children. In class support is given as required.

Second Term: During the Second Term the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is administered. Children who experience difficulty with this test will receive help as per the staged approach.

Evaluation and Assessment: In the third term of each year the standardised tests are administered to all children from first to sixth class by the class teachers.

Uses to which the results will be put: The results will be used to guide teacher planning in class. The results will also be used to screen children for in-class SET support from.

Writing and Storing Records of Tests: The class teacher scores the tests and writes up the results. One copy of these results is kept on file in the filing cabinet in the office. The Principal, class teacher, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist and the SET may access these results at any time. Parents may have access to their own child's results (but may not see the test). The results are kept in the school until the child is 21 years of age.

Student Support Plan

A Student Support Plan (SSP) will be drawn up for all children in receipt of individual support. Prior to this, information will be gathered from all relevant bodies in order to ensure accuracy of information pertaining to the child. Reasonable targets will then be set and reviewed on a regular basis. Contact with other, outside professionals will be recorded in The Log of Actions section of this plan. A copy of the plan will be given to the child's parents, to the class teacher and the SET. A copy of the SSP will be stored in a locked filing cabinet where only the class teacher and SET will have access to it.

Psychological Assessment Reports

All formal reports pertaining to the child will be stored in the child's folder in a locked filing cabinet in the office.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Board of Management** has overall responsibility for developing and supporting school policy on SET.

The **Principal Teacher** has responsibility for the school's special education programme.

The **Deputy Principal** is the Special Co-ordinator in the school.

The **Class Teacher** has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her class including those selected for individual teaching. She/he should endeavour to create a positive and supportive learning environment. This is best achieved by grouping pupils for instruction, differentiating the curriculum for pupils who are experiencing difficulty and liaising closely with their parents and learning support teacher.

The SET Teacher assists in the implementation of a broad range of strategies designed to enhance learning.

- She/he will develop an SSPs for pupils who are selected for SET teaching in consultation with class teachers and parents.
- She/he will keep plans for, and work samples of pupils or groups who receive SET.
- She/he will deliver SET to pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- She/he will contribute at the school level to decision-making in relation to the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the learning support teacher's room.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): The SET and the class teacher will work with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to help support the child in the best way possible. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be involved with the drawing up of the SSP for their child and in carrying out the tasks they agree to do as part of the programme. Teachers will communicate with the parent(s)/guardian(s) regularly.

Special Needs Assistants A Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to the school to support the care needs of a number of children.

Timetables: The SET teacher will have a timetable drawn up in conjunction with the class teachers. A copy of this timetable is given to the Principal and the class teacher.

Code of Behaviour: The sanctions outlined in the code of behaviour policy will apply to the pupils who misbehave in SET class.

Tests

Diagnostic Reading Test (Drumcondra for Gaeilge, Béarla, Maths)

The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)

Non Reading Intelligence Test to give learning styles (NRIT)

Early Literacy and Early Numeracy (Drumcondra)

Single Word Spelling Test (weekly spelling tests)

Language Test (BPVS British Picture Vocabulary Scale)

Transfer to Secondary School

Parents are supported in choosing an appropriate post primary school. The relevant teacher will liaise with the special education department in post primary schools and will transfer information only on receipt of written parental consent.

Ratified by the Board of Management: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson B.O.M