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**Carrigeen NS**

**Special Educational Needs Policy**

**Introduction**

Carrigeen NS is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory. It is a mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parents on the provision of effective learning support for pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

**Provision**

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs.

* One Learning Support Teacher and one shared LS teacher(.2 post).
* One Shared Resource Teachers for children with Special Educational Needs
* One part time resource teacher
* One Special Needs Assistant

**Implementation and Review**

The implementation of this Policy will commence immediately upon ratification by the Board. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

**Communication**

This policy will be available on our school website. All school policies will also be disseminated to parents through the school office on request.

**The principle 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.

**Specific Objectives of Learning Support**

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

* facilitate pupils to participate 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 child's learning
* Promote collaboration among teachers.
* Promote acceptance of and inclusion of all children with SEN.

**Guiding Principles**

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

* Effective whole-school policies
* Whole school involvement
* Prevention of failure at infant level
* Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class
* Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need

**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.
* The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths.
* 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 provision of regular school newsfeeds via website/twitter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents' Association.
* Implementation of Shared Reading Programme
* Implementation of the Jolly Phonics Programme
* Class based early intervention by the Learning Support Teacher resulting in the provision of additional individualised support. In Junior Infants, this will be primarily focused at identification of pupils who may be in need of LS.
* Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the class teacher.

**Selection of Pupils for Learning Support**

* The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Junior Infants to Second Class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support.
* In Junior Infants pupils are screened using teacher and LS teaching observation.
* From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
* Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 10th Percentile, excluding in the main pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
* In the case of pupils performing at or below the 10th percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support teacher and the parents, where necessary, concerning the pupil's performance and supplementary teaching is offered.
* In the allocation of places for Learning Support, the following are prioritised:
  + 1. Junior and Senior Infants identified by the class teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in literacy.
    2. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 10th percentile in literacy
    3. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4, at or below the 10th percentile in literacy
    4. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 10th percentile in numeracy
    5. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4, at or below the 10th percentile in numeracy
    6. Children from Rang 5 and Rang 6, at or below the 10th percentile in numeracy
    7. Additional Support for children presenting at 10th to 20th percentile in literacy/numeracy in all classes up to Rang 6.
    8. Additional Support in Literacy and Numeracy for children presenting above 20th precentile where consultation with the class teacher deems this necessary and where spaces are available on LS caseload.

**Provision of Supplementary Teaching**

* + The primary work of the Learning Support teachers is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.
  + The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional Terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
  + The maximum caseload at any one time shall be 30 pupils
  + One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective.
  + Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency.
  + A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil.
  + The class teacher and the Learning Support/Resource teacher will meet to devise an Individual Education Plan (IEP/IPLP/PPP) or Group Education Plan(GEP) in consultation with the Principal and parents, where necessary.
  + If a pupil is receiving support from a Resource Teacher in English/Maths, s/he

will not normally be provided with supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher as well. Exceptions to this will be at the discretion of the Principal.

* + If the pupil is in receipt of support from a Resource Teacher to address other needs, e.g. Behavioural problems, sensory difficulty, it may be appropriate for the Learning Support Teacher to provide supplementary teaching as well.
  + The Learning Support Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:

1. Individual Profile and Learning Programme

2. Short term planning and programme record

3. Records of diagnostic tests, assessments etc.

4. Other records as appropriate, e.g. Tape recordings of oral work

5. Samples of written work

6. Reading analysis records

**Individual Learning Plan/IPLP**

The individual Learning Plan/IPLP will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES. This plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

* + Details from the 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 ICT
  + Home Support Activities

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 each Instrumental Term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

**Timetabling:**

* + The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths. However, where necessary the English/Maths programme will be covered solely by the LS teacher.
  + Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support if the LS teacher is not solely responsible for English/Maths. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
  + The provision of Learning Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition.
  + In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class teacher and the Learning Support teacher.

**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 from the Board of Management.
  + Learning Support resources will be primarily used in the Learning Support room. These resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

**Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

* + In general, children should not stay for more than 2 years in Supplementary Teaching, unless they are still at, or below, the 10th Percentile.
  + Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
  + The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher, and the pupil's parents, and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
  + The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
  + **A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set**
  + **A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom learning context.**
  + **A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP.**

**Referral to out of School Agencies**

* + The Learning Support Teacher co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist.
  + The Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the needs for the referral and to seek consent.
  + The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
  + The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher and the Learning Support teacher as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted.
  + This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
  + Where concern arises regarding the manner of speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out of school agency concerned.

**Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

Learning Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

**Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

* + Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school.
  + Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support Teachers.
  + Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Learning Support.
  + Budget of ongoing support for Professional Development in Learning Support for staff.

**Principal**

The role of the Principal is to:

* + Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children.
  + Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on Learning Support in the context of Special Needs Education.
  + Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Support on an ongoing basis.
  + Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with lowest levels of achievement.
  + Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination learning support in the context of Special Needs Services.
  + Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
  + Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiative referrals.
  + Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Learning Support.

**Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Support, the teacher can:

* Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
* Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
* For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
* For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
* Weekly plan of work in English and Maths to be provided to the Learning Support Teacher in advance.
* With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:
* Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
* Priority when establishing parental contact
* Group teaching
* Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
* Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
* Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
* Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
* Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
* Carrying out error analyses of a pupil’s work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
* Setting up ‘buddy systems’ in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading
* Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.

A key role of successful Learning Support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes

**Learning Support Teacher**

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

* Develop an individual profile and learning programme(IPLP) for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
* Maintain and planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
* Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school’s selection criteria
* Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
* Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupil’s assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
* Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room.
* Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Needs and Learning Support services in the school.
* Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
* Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support.
* Track the progress pupils who have discontinued Learning Support.

**Parents**

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

* Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
* Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
* Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
* Participation in shared reading programme
* Encouraging the child to visit library
* Developing the child’s oral language
* Developing the child’s social mathematics

**Communication Strategies**

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

* Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher following a low score on a screening test
* 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 of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
* Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and the Class Teacher, through the weekly completion of the Classroom Work Schedule in English and Maths and the participation in formal and informal meetings
* Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and parents

**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
* Learning Support provision continuously focused on children from Junior Infants to Rang 2.

**Homework and Spellings**:

(refer to Homework Policy) These are done in conjunction with the class teacher.

**Code of Behaviour**: The school code of behaviour applies to all pupils.  In our code of behaviour we set out to foster an atmosphere that is characterised by respect for all.  We try to achieve this by encouraging good behaviour, tolerance, courtesy, respect for self and others and a good relationship among all members of the school community.  Pupils are expected to behave with respect for the teacher and their fellow pupils when they attend learning support and resource class.  The sanctions outlined in the code of behaviour policy will apply to the pupils who misbehave in learning support/resource class.  The learning support/resource teacher should endeavour to ensure that the Golden Rules are understood by the pupils in his/her care.

**Health and Safety:** Pupils who are withdrawn from their classes for learning support/resource are collected and left back to their classroom by the learning support/resource teacher.  The school’s Health and Safety and Child Protection policies apply to all activities involving special education and supplementary teaching.

**Tests:**At present the Drumcondra Reading Test and Sigma-T tests are used for general testing in all classes from 1st to 6th The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is used to test all Senior Infants in May.

**Resource Teaching Policy**

**Entitlement to Resource Teaching**

* When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 10th percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents, and may then be supported by a Resource Teacher.
* See Circular 02/2005 for list of categories of disability relevant to LITH/Resource hours.
* Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated resource hours.
* Children with learning difficulties who are integrated into mainstream education may also be allocated resource time.
* Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy are usually allocated resource hours.

**The Role of the Resource Teacher**

The Resource Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the Resource Teacher should advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and other professionals in the children’s interests. More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for:

* Developing an individual learning programme(IEP/PPP) 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
* Team teaching  when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
* Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
* Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
* Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child’s interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.
* **Special Needs Assistants (SNA):**A SNA is appointed to the school following application to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO).  The SENO works under the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and is an important link between the school and the Council.  For example, the SENO deals with applications for additional support for pupils with learning needs.  The SNA is then assigned to work with a child or children.  It is the responsibility of the Principal to assign SNAs to children.  The SNA may work with small groups or help individuals who require assistance, while still maintaining a supportive role with regard to the pupil for whom they have responsibility.    
  The class teacher and the SNA will plan for the individual needs of the child. The SNA will be given clear instruction on his/her role, but there will be room for the SNA to take initiative where appropriate. The SNA will be involved in tracking progress, drawing up and reviewing IEPs, record keeping and observation.

**Role of Class Teacher, Parents, Principal, Board of Management**

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

**Enrolment and Integration of Children with a Disability and/or Special Education Needs in Carrigeen NS**

Applications 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. The school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

* A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
* To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times
* Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis.
* An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our 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 ongoing 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.

**Educational Provision for Overseas Children**

**Introduction**

Carrigeen NS welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures. This document sets out our policy in relation to the enrolment and education of overseas children.

**Principles**

* Our school supports the principle of inclusiveness
* Our school respects the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life of all its pupils
* All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school.
* Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism
* Our school is committed to the principle of inter-culturalism, and seeks to actively promote an environment in which cultural differences can be explored and respected, where pupils can learn from each other, and where cooperative learning activities are employed across the curriculum.

**Enrolment of Overseas Pupils**

* The school’s Enrolment Policy governs enrolment of all pupils.
* The enrolment procedure for non-national pupils is exactly the same as that for Irish pupils
* Overseas children are welcome to enrol in our school, provided there is a place in the appropriate class, in line with our enrolment policy
* Parents of overseas children will be afforded help in completion of enrolment documentation, should they require it
* Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment for overseas parents who approach the school to enrol their children.

**Education of Overseas Pupils**

* Overseas pupils will be placed in an age appropriate class as far as possible
* Every effort will be made to help the pupils to settle socially in the class, and a ‘buddy’ will be appointed to help all new pupils to settle in. Every effort will be made by all school personnel to help the child settle in his/her new environment
* The child will not be required to study Religion, should the child be non – Catholic. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Religion time
* In general, as per Circular 12/96, if English is not the first language of the child, s/he may qualify for exemption from the study of Irish, and the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Irish time
* The school has a Uniform Bank to help all needy children to access uniform.
* All relevant text books and stationery will be made available to children who may not have adequate funding to purchase same.
* Overseas children will not be excluded from school tours and outings for financial reasons.
* While we recognise that all new pupils need time to settle in and adjust, we require all pupils to adhere to the school’s Code of Behaviour, in the interest of all. Overseas children enjoy the same rights and privileges, and the same responsibilities, as all other pupils.
* Home school liaison is central to the successful integration of overseas children into the school, and the school will be pro-active in promoting positive home school relations.

**Provision of Supplementary English Support for Overseas Children**

* The school currently has two LS teachers to support the language needs of overseas pupils.
* The amount of time allocated to any child will depend on his/her current command of the language, and his age
* In general, older pupils will be offered more LS time, as there will be more pressure on them to attain mastery.
* LS time will be offered on a one to one basis, or in a small group setting, depending on the needs of the child. This will be determined by the LS Teacher
* The DES allows two years of language support for each child, and in general, the child’s supplementary support will be phased out after this period

**Whole School Measures to ensure successful integration of overseas pupils**

* Schools with an inclusive curriculum, which reflects and affirms diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, will help to ensure that children from ethnic minorities feel valued and accepted. To promote appreciation of diversity, our school is committed to
* The delivery of an intercultural education to all pupils which is cross curricular, and which permeates the ethos of the school
* The provision of books that give a world view from a variety of perspectives and that portray characters from different ethnic backgrounds
* The provision of arts education experiences which reflects different experiences and cultures
* The effective delivery of the SPHE programme
* The affirmation of the languages and cultures which our overseas pupils bring with them
* The annual celebration of an intercultural day
* The school will make every effort to combat racism, and this will be underpinned by the schools Code of Behaviour
* The school will encourage overseas parents to become actively involved in Parents’ Association activities.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_15/4/2016\_\_\_\_\_\_