

# Tallaght Community National School

## Additional Needs and Support Policy

### Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their unique individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

### Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- *identify* additional needs that our pupils may have
- allocate resources to effectively *meet* the needs of children with additional needs
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs
- track, monitor, *review* and report on the progress of children with additional needs
- communicate information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Board of Management:***

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They, in conjunction with our Education and Training Board, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire (DDLETB), also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

### ***Principal:***

The school principal should\*

- Implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Officer)
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- \*Many of these duties are carried out in conjunction with the SENCO as below.

***SEN Co-ordinator:***

SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- Liaise with SEN Class Co-ordinators to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- Oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

***Class Teacher:***

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- Administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN Class Co-ordinators to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- Open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- Collaborate with staff to develop School Support Files for each pupil in receipt of School Support from their class
- Meet with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Education Plan
- Collaborate with Special Education Teachers and relevant staff to develop an Support Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- Regularly meet with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff to review Support Plans
- Meet regularly with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff and parents to review Support Plan
- Where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the ISA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned
- Liaise with and seek advice from their SENCC

### ***Special Education Teacher (SET)***

The SET teacher should:

- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- Collaboratively develop Individual Profile and Learning Programmes (IPLP) for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- Meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Education Plan (Support Plan)
- Collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an Individual Education Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- Regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review Support Plans
- Meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review Support Plan
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- Support whole-school procedures for screening
- Administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received

### ***Additional Needs Assistant***

The duties of the ANA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the ISA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

The ANA should

- Support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM
- Attend Support Plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- Ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty
- Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN pupil
- Accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate

***Parents/Guardians:***

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parent/Guardian should:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage

***Pupils:***

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

# Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

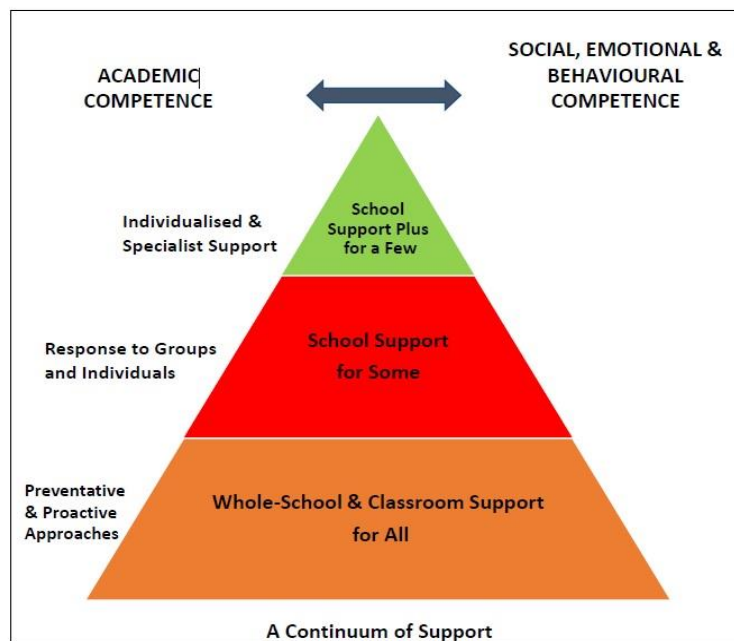
## Continuum of Support

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

**The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:**



### ***STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT***

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, Class Co-ordinator and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

### ***STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT***

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

### ***STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS***

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers:

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)



# Support Pathway

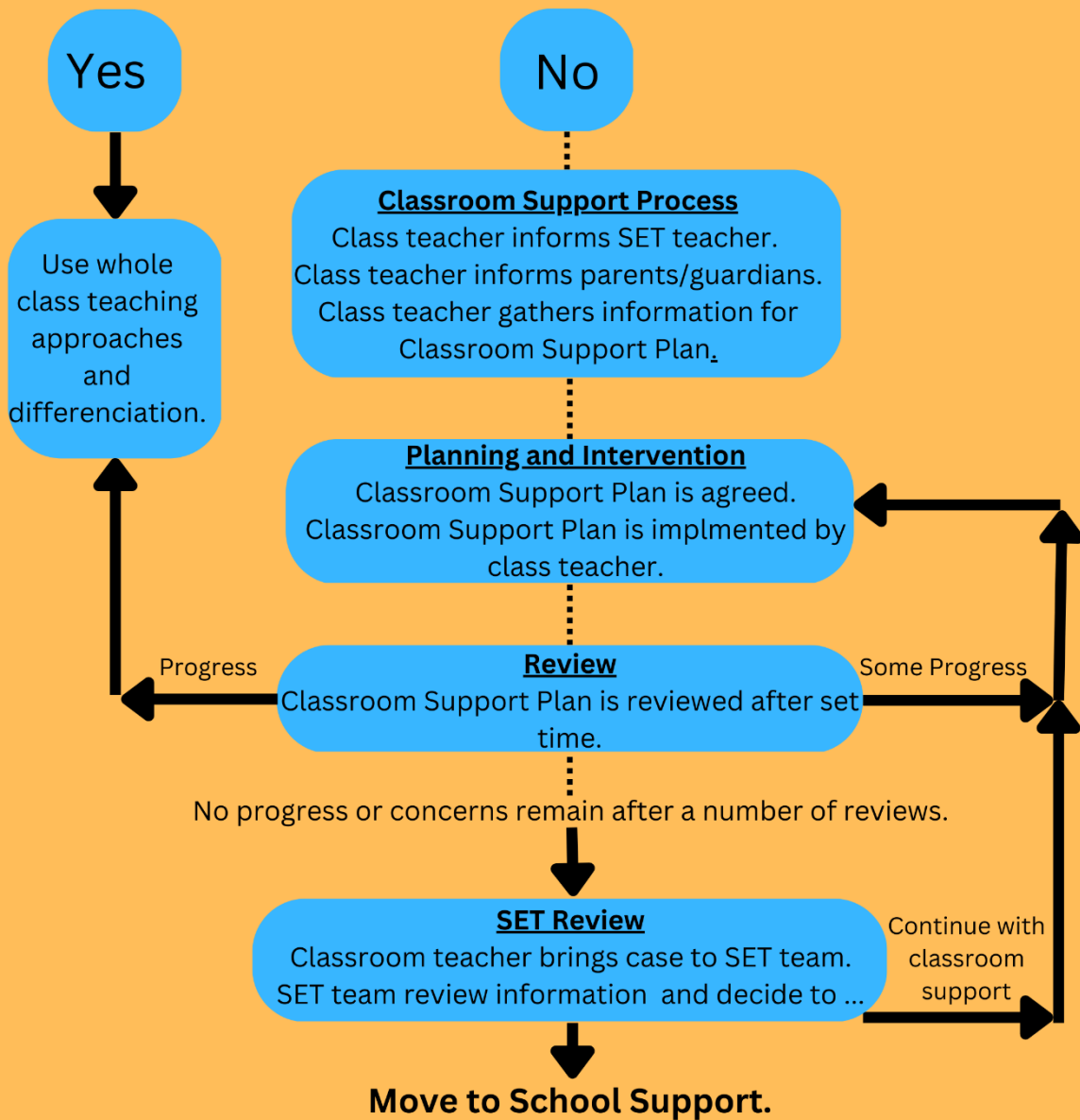


## Stage 1: Classroom Support

Concern is expressed by teacher, SNA, parent, child or professional

Teacher decides

→ Can these concerns be met through whole class teaching approaches or differentiation?

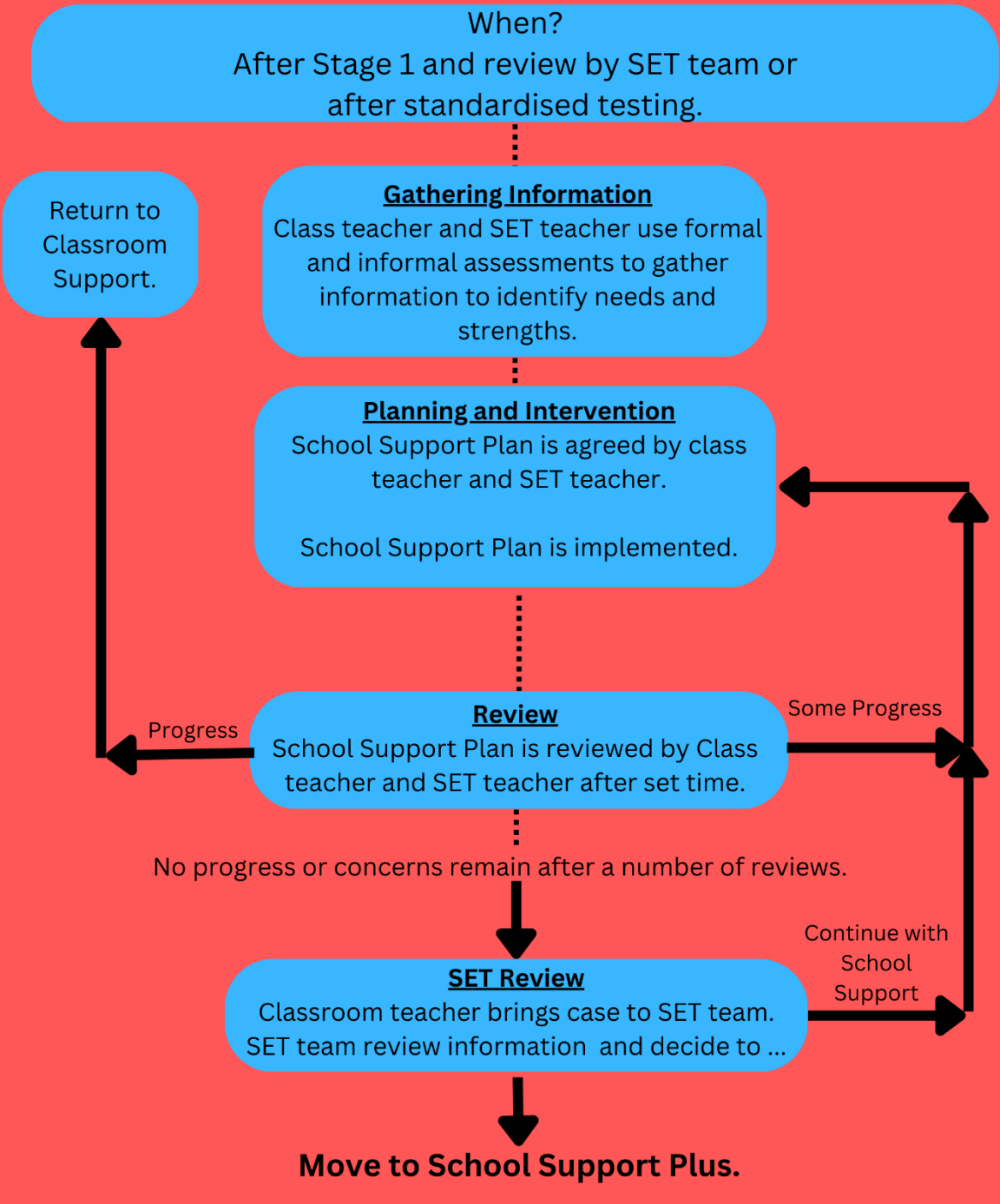




# Support Pathway



## Stage 2: School Support





# Support Pathway



## Stage 3: School Support Plus

### When?

After Stage 2 and review by SET team or after diagnosis of specific need from outside agency.

Return to School Support

### Gathering Information

Class teacher, SET teacher and appropriate professionals use formal and informal assessments to gather information to identify needs and strengths.

It is helpful if all interested including teacher, parents, SET teachers and SNAs are involved in the process.

### Planning and Intervention

School Support Plus Plan is agreed by class teacher, SET teacher and all interested.

Can HSCL be involved?

Can SCP be involved?

School Support Plus Plan is implemented.

### Review

School Support Plus Plan is reviewed by Class teacher and SET teacher after set time.

Progress

Some Progress

If the concerns remain about the child's needs;  
→ Can the family be linked with outside agencies?  
→ Are there any diagnostic tests/assessments that could provide more information?

## Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Teachers in Tallaght CNS employ strategies from across the continuum of assessment to assess the students' learning. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans.

### Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists, BIAP, BPVS III, PM+ Running Records, Junior Infants Literacy Assessment
- Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, MIST, PM+ Running Records, Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy, Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy
- 1st class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths, NRIT, PM+ Running Records, NVRT
- 2nd class: Observation, Checklists, PM+ Running Records, Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths, NGRT
- 3rd class: Observation, Checklists, PM+ Running Records , Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths, NGRT
- 4th class Observation, Checklists, PM+ Running Records , Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths, NRIT
- 5th class: Observation, Checklists, PM+ Running Records, Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths
- 6th class: Observation, Checklists, PM+ Running Records, Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

## Inventory of Test Materials

### Screening Tests

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)</li> <li>• British Picture Vocabulary Scale III (BPVS)</li> <li>• Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)</li> <li>• Non- Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Group Reading Test (NGRT)</li> <li>• York Assessment of Reading (YARC)</li> <li>• Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy-Screener</li> <li>• Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy-Screener</li> <li>• Non Verbal Reasoning Test</li> </ul>
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### Diagnostic Tests

Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy	Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy
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## Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teacher and the SET team.
- The school Literacy Policy including First Steps Writing Programme, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Guided Reading, Literacy Lift Off, Spellings for Me, Heggerty Programme, Free Writing
- The school Maths Policy including e.g. Ready Set Go Maths, Hands-on approach, Maths Recovery, Mathletics
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g. School Open Night, Reading for Fun
- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment.
- Classroom Chill Out Zones – For emotional regulation
- In-class support from the SET team.
- Team Teaching/Aistear.
- Withdrawing individuals/groups.

## Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

## SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

<b>Stage 3 School Support Plus</b>	<p>Children with identified complex needs who are currently attending outside agencies for support or children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1/2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Disability</li> <li>• Hearing Impairment</li> <li>• Visual Impairment</li> <li>• Emotional Disturbance</li> <li>• Moderate General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Severe/Profound General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Autistic Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>• Assessed Syndrome</li> <li>• Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment</li> </ul>	<b>Individual Education Plans</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b> In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies</p>
<b>Stage 2 School Support</b>	<p>Children in JI &amp; SI whom English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland in 1st – 6th</p> <p>Children on or under the 15th Percentile in Literacy Standardised Tests</p> <p>Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 15th percentile in Literacy such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>- Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>- Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>- Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ul> <p>Children on or under the 15th Percentile in Numeracy Standardised Tests</p> <p>Children with a identified need by external professionals who are not on or below the 15th percentile in Numeracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>- Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>- Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>- Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ul> <p>Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1</p> <p>Children in 1st – 6th who have not made adequate progress after EAL interventions</p>	<b>Group or Individual Profile and Learning Programme</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b> In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> SET teacher Class Teacher</p>