

## Special Educational Needs Policy

### Guiding Principles

All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum. These are:

- **Setting suitable learning challenges**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve their fullest potential.

- **Responding to children's diverse learning needs**

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning. This may include shortening of a school day where deemed appropriate by the in-school management team, in order to assist the child to access curriculum, particularly during times of transition from another placement.

- **Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment.**

We recognise that our children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements.

### **In making provision for children with special needs, our policy objectives are:**

- To ensure that our duties, as set out in The Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 and the EPSEN Act 2004 are fully met.
- To enable our children to join in the normal activities of the school as fully as possible. To ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have an opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs.
- To use our resources as efficiently and equitably as possible when assessing and meeting the special educational needs of our children.
- To develop a partnership with parents/ carers in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist us in assessing and providing for their children.
- To take into account the ascertainable wishes of the children concerned and, whenever possible, directly involve them in decision making in order to provide more effectively for them.
- To ensure collaboration with the DES in order to take effective action on behalf of children with special needs.
- To monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives.

### Inclusion

The goal of inclusion is to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that values their individuality. This school attempts to promote inclusion through:

- Modifying activities and materials used so that all can participate.
- Allowing all children the opportunity to participate in group work (*where behaviour does not present a significant risk to the health and safety of others*)

- Providing appropriate tasks and practical work

Teachers are aware that some children may need constant positive reinforcement, simplified task breakdowns, adapted resource materials, simplified communications and consideration for their individual attention span. Children with particular sensory impairment will be given appropriate resources and individual attention. Children who excel in any curricular area will be encouraged to extend their abilities and will be given opportunities to lead group where appropriate.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

Teachers will make every effort to ensure that equality of opportunity is provided for both girls and boys in all activities, and that non-discriminatory practice is applied at all times.

#### **Communication**

Communication in relation to Special Needs is ongoing with –

- Parents/Guardians
- Health Service Executive
- Special Education Needs Officer
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Educational Psychologists

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BOM, Principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available, and with due regard to their responsibilities regarding health and safety, to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision and training required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel.

#### **Management team**

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. She will work closely with the staff and will keep the BOM informed about the working of this policy. She will encourage members of staff to participate in training to help them meet the objectives of this policy. In consultation with the deputy principal, she will liaise with the SENO with regard to support hours and either herself or the deputy will attend meetings with external bodies. The management team will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the SEN policy
- Coordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in service training of staff.
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating provision
- Overseeing the records of all children with special needs

- Liaising with external agencies including the psychology services – organising assessments
- Liaising with the health and social services in consultation with our home / school liaison teacher

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

All staff should be fully aware of the content of this policy and of the procedures described below. Appropriate in - service will be made available where appropriate.

### **Classroom Practices**

“The teacher must be expert in monitoring performance at the level of each student in the class as corrective feedback is geared to individual needs and learning rate” – Westwood.

In Saplings, Goresbridge teachers are encouraged to:

- Review the work of the previous day.
- Present clearly new skills and concepts, and monitor the reinforcement and maintenance of same in the work of the auxiliary staff.
- Guide student practice through provision of feedback
- Provide modified instruction appropriate to developmental age, ability and learning style.
- Adjust questioning to different ability levels
- Present materials at the appropriate level of difficulty.
- Present materials geared to learning styles and tailor individual programmes, taking into account sensory needs.

### **Involving Parents/Carers and Children.**

Parents/carers are encouraged to be fully involved at all times in their child’s education. If they have any concerns they are encouraged to make an appointment to see the class teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal. The views of parents/carers will be sought at all stages of assessment and provision. Whenever and wherever possible the views of the child will be ascertained and the child will be directly involved in the process.

### **Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that “A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs”. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child’s psychological report. The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability, (i.e. severity of Autism diagnosis) traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstance, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria.

### **Special Facilities**

Saplings Special School, Goresbridge is a single storey school with ramps to each building. There is a soft-play room where PE equipment is in use. Where specialised equipment is used, training will be given to staff where appropriate. Quiet rooms are in use for children who may need a break from the demands of the classroom, and regular movement breaks are built into the classroom routines where appropriate.

### **Assessment**

The class teacher will perform diagnostic tests on these children periodically. These tests will include, but may not be exclusive to the Pep-3, ABLLS, T-TAP (seniors where appropriate), sensory checklists and teacher designed tests. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies. This information will be recorded in a pupil portfolio which will form the basis of the IEP. Assessment may also take the form of:

- Record of experiences and experimentation in student portfolios
- Data collection where appropriate
- Teacher designed checklists
- Anecdotal evidence
- Photographic evidence
- Video footage

#### **Individual Educational Plans**

Based on Psychologist's reports, SLT and OT reports, tests, the class teacher, SNA , parents and representatives of outside agencies (if necessary), develop an Individual Education Plan . This is formulated by breaking down the existing levels of attainment of the child into finely graded targets, taking into account parental concerns and priorities. This is a collaborative process between class teachers, management team, behaviour analyst, parents, SENO, and outside agencies.

The plan includes:

- ✓ The nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- ✓ The degree and nature of the child's Special Needs
- ✓ The child's present level of performance
- ✓ Priority learning needs
- ✓ The services to be provided
- ✓ Targets and goals over a 6 month period

The school has its own particular IEP template. The management of the IEP strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, data collection and its feedback to the class teacher will be the responsibility of the behaviour analyst. Data will be collected on all IEP goals by either the behaviour analyst or the teacher where appropriate, and this will be reviewed regularly. Any trends in behavioural data will be discussed by the class teacher and behaviour analyst on an ongoing and regular basis. A further review will be conducted with the parents at the end of 6 months. If a child is reaching targets consistently, goals and targets will be adjusted appropriately. The strategies set out in the IEP will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting or in naturalised environment. Provision will be made for generalization across settings, materials and personnel.

#### **Success Criteria**

- Review and evaluation of IEPs
- Positive inclusion practices
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher observation, data collection and testing

### **Monitoring**

The school will evaluate the effectiveness of Special Needs Provision through monitoring standards reached, case samples from children, the views of parents, staff feedback and continued levels of intervention.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This **SEN policy** was reviewed and re-ratified by the Board of Management, Saplings, Goresbridge on **29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025** and was subsequently shared with stakeholders via agreed minutes. It is due for review in the school year 2027/28 or as legislation dictates.

Signed by Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chairperson of the Board \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_