

Scoil Chaitríona Junior, Renmore.

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Scoil Chaitríona Junior is a mixed, co-educational, junior school catering for pupils from junior infants to second class. Scoil Chaitríona Junior is under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway and was originally established in 1973 as a six-teacher school. Now, there are approximately one hundred pupils at each level. The school is in Band 2 of the urban/town strand of the school support programme *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)* under the direction of the Department of Education and Science (DES). The school has the following teachers catering for pupils who need Learning Support and pupils with Special Educational Needs:

- 1 Four Learning Support Teachers
- 2 Five Resource Teachers
- 3 Three Language Support Teachers
- 4 Shared home- school- community liaison teacher
- 5 Four Special Class Teachers for:
 - (a) Pupils with speech and language difficulties (2)
 - (b) Pupils with moderate learning difficulties (2)

Belief Statements:

In our school an effective Learning Support programme is based on the following principles:

- 1 Enabling pupils, staff and parents to be the best that they can be.
- 2 Inclusion and respect for all, irrespective of ability level.
- 3 A high level of collaboration and consultation involving the Board of Management, the Principal, the Class Teacher, the Learning Support/Resource Teacher, the Parents and relevant professionals.
- 4 Provision of intensive early interventions to prevent failure.
- 5 Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Aims of Learning Support:

- 1 The principle aim of learning support in our school is to optimize the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in Literacy and Numeracy before leaving Primary School.
- 2 To enable these pupils to participate in the curriculum of their particular class.
- 3 To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning.
- 4 To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for pupils with learning difficulties in Literacy and/or Numeracy.
- 5 To involve parents in helping their children in the most effective supportive way possible.
- 6 To establish early intervention programmes to aid the pupil as soon as possible and to reduce any learning deficit.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

The role of learning support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all including: The Board of Management, the Principal, Learning Support/ Resource Teachers, Class teachers, Parents and Pupils.

Role of the Board of Management:

- 1 To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school.
- 2 To ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher.
- 3 To provide a secure facility for the storage of records.

Role of the Principal:

- 1 To assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support.
- 2 To work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan and to monitor the implementation of the school plan on an on-going basis.
- 3 To monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils in greatest need.
- 4 To 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.
- 5 To oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very high achievement in Literacy and Numeracy based on standardised tests.
- 6 To keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals.
- 7 To help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support.

Role of the class teacher:

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the pupils in his/her class including those selected for supplementary teaching. 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 an Individual Profile and Learning Programme.

Role of the class teacher:

In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Support, the class teacher should:

1. Implement teaching programmes, which optimize the learning of all pupils.
2. 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, by organizing classroom activities to achieve those targets and by adjusting the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
3. With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:
 - Group teaching
 - Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximize the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
 - Place emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
 - Provide pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
 - Set learning targets at an appropriate level
 - Provide learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress

Role of the Learning Support Teacher:

The activities of the learning support teacher should include:

- 1 The development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parents.
- 2 Maintain a planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support.
- 3 Provide teaching in Literacy and Numeracy to pupils in the school who experience low achievement and also to pupils who are high achievers.
- 4 Pupils who are well above average in Literacy on the standardised tests are taught extra Literacy activities in small groups in the learning support room by Caitriona Daly.
Pupils who are well above average in Numeracy are taught extra Maths activities in small groups in the learning support room by Edel Linnane.
- 5 Contribute to the development of the policy on Learning Support at whole school level.
- 6 Provide advice to the class teacher in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing, and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties and also for high achievers.

The role of co-ordinating the learning support service in Scoil Chaitríona Junior has been assigned to the Assistant Principal, Edel Linnane. The duties assigned to this role include the following:

- Test, screen and select pupils for supplementary teaching in Literacy and or Numeracy by timetabling, administrating and scoring the standardised tests: (Micra-T/Sigma T/ Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy and of Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy).
- For supplementary teaching we prioritise children scoring at or below the 20th percentile.
- Record the results of all the Standardised Tests on the Computer.
- Analyse and graph the results of the Standardised Tests in Literacy and Numeracy and report results to the Principal and all the teachers.
- Report the results of second class pupils in Standardised Tests in Literacy and Numeracy to the Department of Education and to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that all second class teachers report results of the Standardised Tests in Literacy and Numeracy to Parents.
- Co-ordinate the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the selection criteria specified in our school plan and with input from teachers and parents
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching.
- Record the list of all the pupils who are receiving learning support on the computer.
- Co-ordinate the provision of in-class support in Literacy through Intensive Literacy Lessons for all the pupils in second classes, first classes and senior infants by testing the pupils on the British Abilities Scale and grouping the pupils based on their reading age from this test.
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding 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.
- Consult regularly with Class Teachers to ensure all pupils who need support are receiving it.
- Review the Learning Support Policy in consultation with the Principal and the staff.

Role of the Resource Teacher:

- 1** To develop an individual profile and learning programme (I.E.P.) for each pupil who is selected for resource teaching in consultation with class teacher and parents.
- 2** Maintain a weekly planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual in receipt of resource teaching.
- 3** Meet with parents of each pupil who is in receipt of resource teaching to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- 4** Provide advice to teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- 5** Liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care.

Prevention Strategies and Parental Involvement:

- (1) Development of an agreed approach to language development and to teaching other aspects of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure continuity and progression from class to class
- (2) Implementation of a shared reading scheme where parents are advised on the best practice for carrying out a daily shared reading programme through our daily Intensive Literacy Lessons. Parents are encouraged through our Intensive Literacy Lessons to read to, and with, their children and to have books readily available for them.
- (3) Encouragement of pupils in a whole school strategy to view reading as a recreational exercise. Ability and age appropriate books are made available to all.
- (4) On-going structured observation, especially in the infant classes, to assess language, literacy and numeracy skills, will lead to early identification of learning difficulties and speedy implementation of support strategies.
- (5) Literacy and Numeracy to be provided in small group situation with in the classroom or by withdrawal to another room [Circular Special Ed. 02/05 – Page 3].
- (6) Intensive Literacy Lessons: In-class Support by the team of Learning Support teachers in guided reading, writing, comprehension and phonological awareness. Intensive Literacy lessons take place in all the first and second classes for six weeks and in Senior Infant classes for two weeks.
- (7) Maths Recovery Programme is being provided to individual pupils in first classes by Ruth Keenan and Edel Linnane.
- (8) Maths Blast: a numeracy intervention based on Maths Recovery is provided once a week in the first classes by Ruth Keenan, Edel Linnane, Caitriona Daly, Mary Kearney, John Elwood and the class teacher.

Assessment and Reporting:

Early Intervention Strategies:

1. Pupils are screened in Junior Infants using teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests and The Belfield Individual Assessment Profile (B.I.A.P).
2. If a pupil has speech and language difficulties or has emotional or behavioural difficulties the class teacher will inform the Principal so that the pupil may be referred to an educational psychologist once the continuum of support is completed.

Assessment and Reporting:

Identification of children needing supplementary teaching:

1. Pupils in Senior Infants are selected to receive Learning Support on the Junior Infant Teacher's recommendation and on a screening test by the Learning Support teacher.
2. Pupils in 1st Class are selected to receive Learning Support in Literacy based on the results of the Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy administered the previous May, on the results of their reading age on the British Abilities Scale Reading Test after Intensive Literacy Lessons and on teacher recommendation. Pupils in 1st class are selected for Learning Support in Maths based on Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy screening test results administered in May/June and also on teacher recommendation.
3. Pupils in 2nd class are selected for Learning Support in Literacy and in Numeracy based on the Micra-t and Sigma-t test results administered in May and also on teacher recommendation.

Assessment tools used:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- B.I.A.P. (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)
- Standardised Tests administered by the Learning Support Teacher
- Diagnostic Tests administered by the Learning Support Teacher

Standardised Tests used:

- Drumcondra test of Early Literacy
- Drumcondra test of Early Numeracy
- Micra-t
- Sigma-t

Diagnostic Tests used:

- Non-Reading Intelligence Test
- Jackson Test –Get Reading Right
- British Abilities Scale
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- Aston Index (Parts of it)

Timetable for Testing Classes:

Class	Test	Time	Administered by
Snr. Infants	Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy	May	L/S R Teachers
	Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy	May	L/S R Teachers
1st Class	Micra-t Level 1	May	L/S R Teachers
	Sigma T Level 1	May	L/S R Teachers
2 nd Class	Micra T Level 2	May	L/S R Teachers
	Sigma T Level 2	May	L/S R Teachers

Supplementary Teaching:

1. Supplementary teaching will be offered in the first instance to pupils at or below the 15th percentile. However, in consultation with teachers we aim to accommodate children above this score up to the 20th percentile on standardised tests.
2. Class teacher informs parents to discuss concerns re standardised tests and permission is sought from the parents to see the Learning Support Teacher for diagnostic testing.
3. Administration of Diagnostic Tests by Learning Support Teacher towards assessment of needs.
4. Consultation by Learning Support Teacher with Class Teacher and Parents.
5. Determination of the nature of intervention to be provided to the pupil, such as additional support from the Class Teacher and/or supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher.
6. Identification of learning targets and the development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme for each pupil to whom supplementary teaching is to be provided, in consultation with the class teacher and parents.
7. Teacher Observation: When the class teacher recognizes a pupil in Senior Infants, 1st or 2nd class is not performing in class as well as his score in the Standardised tests suggest, that pupil is selected for further testing by the Learning Support Teacher. In certain circumstances this child may be selected for learning support, after consultation between class teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Parents.
8. Tuition is normally in a group setting in the Learning Support room with the Learning Support teacher. Supplementary teaching in Literacy and Numeracy may be daily or twice or three times a week depending on the group needs. In-class literacy support is also provided through daily Intensive Literacy lessons. In-class Numeracy support is also provided weekly through a Maths Blast programme based on Maths Recovery.
9. In general, supplementary teaching will be in addition to the regular class programme in Literacy and/or Numeracy. Pupils should not miss out on the same curriculum area each

day. These two principles suggest a flexible approach to timetabling by the class teacher.

Criteria for Continuing/Discontinuing pupils in Receipt of Supplementary Teaching

Instructional Terms: **Sept - Jan** **Feb – June**

At the end of each instructional term the pupil's progress is evaluated by the learning support teacher and the class teacher. If it is considered that the pupil has reached a level where she/he can cope in class without intervention the supplementary teaching is discontinued and the pupil is monitored by the class teacher.

Monitoring the Progress of Individual Pupils

The Learning Support Teacher will maintain records of the outcome of diagnostic assessment, of the agreed learning programmes and of pupil's progress. This will include:

- (a) Pupil's individual profile and learning programme.
- (b) Fortnightly planning and progress records.
- (c) The Resource Teacher will liaise with class teacher to draw up an IEP as appropriate.

Record Keeping:

Test results are kept in a locked filing cabinet by the Learning Support Teacher and a copy is kept by the Principal.

Liaising with Parents:

(1) Role of Class Teacher:

- Make parents aware of concerns about their child's progress.
- Seek approval from parents to have their child assessed by the Learning Support Teacher.
- Indicate to parents that a meeting with the Learning Support Teacher will follow the assessment.
- Maintain regular contact with parents of each pupil.
- Report results of standardised tests to parents of pupils in second class.

(2) Role of Learning Support Teacher

- Learning support teacher will meet with the parents of each pupil selected for learning support.
- Learning Support Teacher will discuss the outcome of assessments.
- Learning Support Teacher will demonstrate techniques and strategies to enable parents to help with their child's development in such areas as oral languages, reading, writing and maths.
- The Learning Support Teacher will discuss the child's needs and learning targets in the child's individual learning profile so that the parents, class teacher and Learning Support

Teacher can work together as a team for the benefit of the pupil

Links with outside Agencies:

The Principal and or Learning Support/ Resource Teacher will liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care. There will be regular consultation by the Principal with the SENO and NEPS Psychologist.

Review of Policy:

This policy was formally adopted for use in the school following a meeting of the Board of Management on _____.

It will be reviewed every year.

Signed by: _____