



**Boher National School**

Boher, Ballina,

Co. Tipperary, V94T635

E: admin.boherns@gmail.com

Roll Number: 09190G

Charity Registration Number: 20204935

Principal: Brian McKeogh

Acting Deputy Principal: David Horan

# Boher N.S. Special Educational Need Policy



## 1. Introduction/ Rationale

Boher National School is a vertical co-educational primary school with one Early Intervention Classroom that caters for children with a diagnosis of Autism. This policy on special educational needs (SEN) is a statement in relation to the provision for special educational needs in our school. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers and parents/guardians and the school community on the provision of effective support to pupils experiencing learning difficulties within the mainstream setting. The policy was prepared in line with the Guidelines for Primary School Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs (DES 2017), Special Educational Needs: A continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers & Resources Pack for Teachers, Circulars no. 0013/2017 and 02/05, the Learning Support Guidelines (DES 2000) and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equality Status Act (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, Disability Act (2005).

## 2. Aims

This Policy will help us to:

- Support the inclusion of all pupils and facilitate pupils to participate in and benefit from the full curriculum.
- Ensure that the Continuum of Support is implemented.
- Ensure that those with the highest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.

‘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. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning.’ (2017 Guidelines:P.19)

- Support positive self-esteem, social and emotional function and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies for pupils with additional educational needs.
- Develop early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning.

- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners

### **3. The Continuum of Support and the Selection of Pupils for Support Teaching**

#### **3.1 Selection of pupils for Support Teaching:**

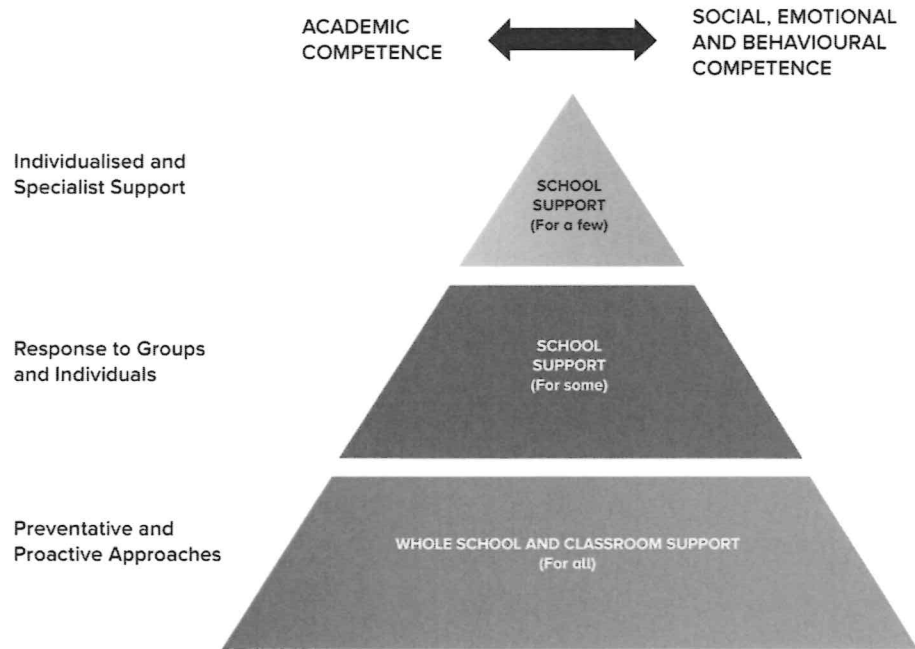
In the allocation of places for support teaching we are guided by the 2017 Guidelines that state 'pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support' In identifying pupils for support, Boher N.S. will consider the following:

- Pupils with significant Special Educational Needs including pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical, and sensory needs. This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Boher N.S. also considers needs set out in professional reports, where available.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social, emotional or behaviour difficulties, coordination difficulties and attention control difficulties.
- Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.
- Pupils performing below the 10th percentile on standardised tests will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy
- Pupils presenting with difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy e.g. difficulties that present a barrier to learning and full access to the curriculum.
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need English Additional language Support.
- Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"). Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all its pupils.

#### **3.2 Levels of Support:**

Support may be provided to pupils at Classroom Support / School Support / School Support Plus level of the NEPS' Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010).

The 2017 Guidelines (p. 8) present the NEPS Continuum of Support as follows:



### 3.3 Provision of Supplementary Teaching

A three – step process to support pupils with Special Educational Needs

#### Step 1: Identify Needs

##### Identification:

Using the Continuum of Support Framework, Boher N.S. identifies pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

From the 2017 Guidelines. Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process.

##### Classroom Support:

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.

A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.

This is informed by:

- Parental consultation
- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures /assessments
- Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist
- Literacy and numeracy tests
- Screening tests of language skills

A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support:

At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour
- Functional assessment as appropriate

A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support Plus:

This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:

- Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Functional assessment
- Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.

A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

## Planning

A **Student Support File** is used by Boher N.S. to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support over the pupil's time in the school. It facilitates

teachers to document progress and needs over time and assists teachers in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need over time.

Within the Student Support File will be the **Student Support Plan**:

A Student Support Plan will address a pupil's full range of needs and will be devised between the class teacher (including Autism Class Teacher), SET teacher, Parents/Guardians and SNA (if applicable). Teachers may meet parents, psychologists and SNAs to discuss the child's progress throughout the school year.

Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time – frame for review.

The class teacher has the responsibility of ensuring the pupil's learning needs are met. This is achieved through collaboration with the SET team, through in-class support as well as out of class support. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support. (See Appendix 1 for Student Support File/Plan Template, Appendix 4 PPP Template, Appendix 5 Behaviour Plan Template.)

{Many different types of support plans can be included in the Support File. A support plan can take the form of a general plan for support, a behavioural plan, an individual profile and learning programme, an individual educational plan or a personalised pupil plan}

#### SEN Register:

A list of pupils who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework is maintained and saved on the shared drive. Class teachers in collaboration with the SET teacher are responsible for keeping this working document updated (See Appendix 2 for Template)

#### Step 2: Meeting Needs:

- This step focuses on the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies and the benefits of early intervention and prevention programmes.
- Mainstream class teachers have first – line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, teachers may need to adapt their teaching approaches for

some pupils with additional learning needs. All class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with SEN. These include cooperative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms, collaborative problem-solving activities, group work, differentiation, interventions to promote social and emotional competence, embedding ICT in teaching, learning and assessment.

- SET teachers are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies, and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches may include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early interventions and small group or individual support. Interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs including multi – disciplinary assessment when necessary.
- Target Setting: Good target- setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with SEN. Targets are informed by priority learning needs and linked to suitable interventions. (See Appendix 3 on Target Setting)

### Step 3: Monitor and Record Progress

- Monitor Progress: Pupils' progress is regularly monitored. Progress is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This progress review may include measures of communication, independence, social inclusion and well-being as appropriate.
- Record Progress: Results of such monitoring will inform planning and next steps.

### 3.4 Screening and Diagnostic Assessment:

Class Teachers will carry out initial screening tests and standardised assessments. The Special Educational Needs Teacher (SET) will discuss each class's recorded results with the Class Teacher and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests will inform the selection process.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### 4.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on Special Educational Needs (SEN). The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, teaching resources are provided for the SEN team.
- Ensure a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils.

#### 4.2 Principal

The Principal teacher has overall responsibility for the schools SEN program and for the provision of services for children with Special Educational Needs.

The Principal will:

- Help teachers/SNAs to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Special Educational Needs teaching by encouraging them and providing opportunities for them to avail of relevant professional development.
- Meet regularly with the Special Education Teacher (SET) team.
- In conjunction with the SET team, the principal will liaise with outside agencies on SEN related matters.
- Review/monitor and apply for additional teaching and learning resources for SEN children, e.g., Assistive Technology.
- Review applications to outside Agencies for Special Educational Needs support.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with low achievement so that such pupils can be provided with the support that they need.
- Oversee SEN related policies and procedures.
- Be responsible for the allocation of SET/SNA positions and class allocation within the SET Department.
- Oversees the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening program to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need. (See Assessment Policy)
- Keeps SEN Teachers/Class Teachers/SNAs and parents informed about relevant external assessment and Special Needs services that are available.
- Maintains a list of pupils who are receiving SEN support.
- Helps to coordinate the caseloads / work schedules of the SET Team.
- Liaises with external agencies such as Psychologists/Family Doctors/Speech and Language therapists/NEPS/SENO to arrange assessments and special provisions for pupils with Special Needs.

- Collaborates with SET Team/Class teachers in the identification, screening and referral procedures.
- Maintains records and disseminates information to relevant school personnel.
- Orders, purchases, distributes, and informs staff on class screening materials and procedures. (See Assessment policy)
- Ensures that all documentation relating to children who receive Special Education Teaching is properly filed and secured.

#### 4.3 The Mainstream Class Teacher and Autism Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the pupils in their class including those receiving Special Education Teaching.

The class teacher:

- Liaises regularly with parents on children's progress.
- Facilitates the implementation of various models of support provided by the SET Team.
- Liaises initially with parents to make them aware of the difficulties their child may be experiencing.
- In conjunction with the SET Team, uses class observations, standardised and diagnostic test results to highlight children's specific required level of support.
- Collaborates with the SET Team/teacher/SNA on a Student Support File for children with access to SET support.
- In conjunction with the SET Teachers/SNA/parents creates and updates Student Support File and attends Student Support File Meetings.
- Meets with the SET Team/Teacher on a regular basis to monitor progress and adapt the learning program as necessary.
- Collaborates with the SET Teachers/ SNA/ Parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Liaises with outside agencies (Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with Special Educational Needs.
- Team teaches with the SET team, rotating learning stations to ensure a knowledge of all progress of all pupils.
- SEN teaching for children in our autism classes is carried out by the autism class teacher.

#### 4.4 Special Education Teacher

The role of the SET Teacher includes:



- Maintaining a file for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate: psychological reports, reports by other agent, diagnostic tests and work samples.
- Developing a Student Support File with the class teacher to address the needs of children with additional needs.
- Maintaining relevant progress reports on children/groups of children in receipt of Support Teaching.
- In conjunction with the class teacher, implementing various in-class models of support.
- Withdraw children individually or in small groups, groups will be kept to a maximum of four to enable effective support.
- In collaboration with the class teacher, gathering information/data on children to create a profile of children experiencing difficulties. (See SEN Continuum of Support)
- In consultation with the class teacher, administering relevant diagnostic tests to children who have been identified by the class teacher as experiencing difficulties.
- Collaborates with the Class Teacher/ SNA/ Parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
  - o Liaising with outside agencies (Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with Special Educational Needs.
- Setting specific targets for specific children and/or groups of children and agreeing these with the class teacher and parents.

#### 4.5 Special Needs Assistant SNA

The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is to provide schools with additional support in assisting children with Special Educational Needs who also have additional and significant care needs (Circular 07/02, Circular 0030/2014).

The role of the SNA includes:

- Assisting children to board and alight from school transport.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing/writing, including assistance with assistive technology where applicable.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with Special Educational Needs during assembly/recreational, dispersal periods and transitions.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups on movement breaks and quiet breaks from the classroom.

- Attend and provide input into Student Support File meetings regarding specific child/children with whom they are assigned to.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans. (PPP, See Appendix 4)
- Liaise regularly with the class teacher/s who teach the specific children with whom they are assigned to.

#### 4.6 Parents/Guardians

The role of the parent/guardian of a child with Special Educational Needs is important to their education. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and SEN Teacher.
- Creating a home environment where literacy/numeracy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Attending Student Support File and Parent Teacher Meetings and providing input/feedback to Class Teacher/SEN Teacher/SNA.
- Collaborating with SEN/Class Teacher and SNA in implementing a Student Support File and helping to establish specific goals and targets for their child at home and school.
- Sharing insights and feedback on their child's development and learning difficulties. This information is obtained through school enrolment form information and consultation with parents.
- Collaborating in the generating of pupil profiles.

#### 4.7 The Role of the Pupil

In recognition of the child-centred nature of the school's ethos, we recognise the importance of the child's own role in the provision of Special Education Support. A child-centred approach will enable the SEN team to work with the child to:

- Help the child to understand their own learning.
- Take ownership of their own learning – making it real and memorable.
- Recognise their own needs and strengths.
- Take on a responsibility for their achievements and work hard to succeed.
- Work together from a shared understanding of the difficulties the child is experiencing.

- Set clear realistic and achievable goals so that the child experiences a sense of achievement.

#### 4.8 The Role of External Agencies and Bodies

Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals.

The school has established procedures for liaising with these services and bodies to optimise the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs at the individual, group or whole-school level.

The needs of many pupils' span both health and education services. Health services (HSE and HSE funded services) will continue to play an important role in early identification, assessment and diagnosis, intervention, and review for pupils with special educational needs. The school is familiar with the range of health services in our locality, including referral pathways. The school will endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support. (2017 Guidelines: p. 25).

### 5. Enrolment of children with identified SEN

In keeping with Section 2 of the EPSEN Act (2004), a SEN child is welcomed to the school and educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have SEN where this serves the best interests of all children involved.

Prior to a child's enrolment, relevant staff in the school will familiarise themselves with the child's particular needs as required, by:

- obtaining copies of reports, assessments, etc. from parents
- meeting with parents/principal/class teacher/special needs staff
- contacting the SENO, NEPS psychologist or other therapists or agencies where applicable

In determining whether the pupil should receive support at the 'Classroom Support', 'School Support' or 'School Support Plus' level the above (meetings, reports, standardised test etc) as well as further testing by class teacher and SEN teachers will inform the decision of what level of the support continuum to place a newly enrolled child at.

To ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school the following steps will be taken as appropriate: Parental visit/s to the school, pupil visits to school and staff visits to special schools/special settings. Liaison with SENO to arrange additional resources may be necessary.

Where health and safety issues may arise in relation to mobility, care or other needs, these will be identified, and strategies developed to address them.

## **6. Autism Class**

Boher N.S has one Early Intervention class for children with a diagnosis of Autism who meet the criteria as set out in our Admissions Policy. The window for enrolment is set out in our Annual Admission Notice.

Please see point 8 below regarding inclusive practice.

## **7. Prevention Strategies/Models of Support**

Within the school there are a number of successful prevention strategies/models of support in operation.

The following outlines the models of support prioritised in our school. Appropriate interventions will be based on need.

Junior and Senior Infants:

- Differentiation
- Station Teaching
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Write from the start
- Jolly Phonics Programme
- Literacy Lift Off
- Numicon Maths
- Ready Set Go Maths
- In class support and one to one and group teaching where necessary

1st and 2nd Classes

- Differentiation

- Station Teaching
- In class support and one to one and group teaching where necessary
- Ufli
- Literacy Lift Off

#### 3rd and 4th Classes

- Differentiation
- Station Teaching
- In class support (Literacy/Numeracy)
- In class support and one to one and group teaching where necessary
- Dcode & Ncode for children with reading or spelling challenges

#### 5th and 6th Classes

- Differentiation
- Station Teaching
- In class support (Literacy/Numeracy)
- In class support and one to one and group teaching where necessary
- Literature Circles
- Spelling For me programme
- Transition to post primary school
- Dcode & Ncode for children with spelling/reading difficulties

### **8. Inclusive Practice**

- All children get the chance to participate in all curricular areas, differentiating by task, questioning, outcome, extension.
- Inclusion of children from our early intervention class in mainstream where appropriate. We value meaningful inclusion. We endeavour to include all pupils where possible and where it is mutually beneficial. Such inclusion is a graduated process e.g. inclusion for lunch breaks, arts subjects, academic subjects, or in a subject area a child has a particular strength in. Time spent included in the mainstream class increases or decreases as appropriate. This process requires regular consultation between the Autism Class teacher, class teacher and parents/guardians.
- All children take part in whole school activities as suits their needs.

- Where the curriculum is adapted to suit individual needs, this is not highlighted, and all children are still challenged and given the opportunity to experience perseverance, progression and success.
- Children sit in mixed ability groups.
- We recognise that the Social, Personal and Health education programme along with our Catholic Ethos supports inclusive practice, raising awareness and understanding around areas such as friendship, assertiveness and bullying.
- Whole class drama and Circle Time are used to develop social skills and encourage integration and inclusion of all pupils.
- Yard Breaks. All Pupils are entitled to their breaks and playtimes. Pupils with additional needs are supported in the following ways:  
SNA's and Teachers on yard duty supervise diligently, dealing with, recording and reporting any incidents that occur. Different strategies including visual prompts may be used by SNA's to manage particular behaviours. Staff will be aware of different behaviour plans and targets that are relevant to a child's yard time if necessary.

## **9. Transfer to Post Primary**

The school uses the NCCA developed suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and include:

- 6th Class Report Card
- My Profile Sheet (for children)
- My Child's Profile (for parents)
- A Special Educational Needs Summary Form is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.
- School report card

## **10. Collaboration and Communication**

We have devised the following Timetable to facilitate collaboration between all those involved in a child's education.

September

- SEN team updating SEN Register and devising timetables

- SEN Teachers meeting with relevant class teachers/SNA's
- SEN team and Principal meet with NEPS psychologist
- Autism Class Teachers liaising with class teachers re inclusion plan
- Diagnostic testing if required

#### September - October

- School Support Plans devised (Staff, Parents/Guardians) liaison with outside agencies if relevant.

#### November

- Parent Teacher Meetings with Class Teachers, relevant SET team member may join some of these meetings where relevant.

#### January - May

- School Support Plan Reviews

#### May

- NRIT (Non Readers Intelligence Test) as required
- Sigma T and Micra T Early Numeracy and Literacy Tests
- Standardised Testing (1st to 6th classes inclusive)

#### May/June

- Literacy stations Junior and Senior Infants
- SEN Team and Class Teachers liaising to look at test results, review school support plans, communicate with parents before end of year reports if necessary
- SET and 6<sup>th</sup> Class teacher updating SEN Register
- Transition to secondary passport/communication with secondary school.
- Meeting with pupils/ parents of any incoming JI with additional needs ahead of next academic year.

### **11. Record Keeping**

Files for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate; psychological reports, reports by other agents (S&L etc.), Student Support Files and reviews, diagnostic tests and work samples are stored in a locked filing cabinet. The SET teacher working with a child is responsible for updating the child's file and the class teacher will contribute to this. While records are secure to

ensure confidentiality, they can be made available to relevant parties, Class teacher, SENO, psychologist, inspector or parents, on a need-to-know basis, via a member of the SET team. In the case of personnel shared among a cluster of schools the individual SET teacher is responsible for records of a child in their care and they will store these in their base school.

Records for each child are retained in the school according to the school's record retention schedule, as outlined in Boher's Data Protection Policy.

## 12 . Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

This SEN Policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed. It is an ongoing and developmental process.

Updated: ~~3/6/2022~~  
18/6/2024

Signed: Patricia Byrne  
Brian McKeogh

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Support Plan Template

Appendix 2 SEN Register Template

Appendix 3 Pupil Personal Plans/Care Plans

New SEN Guideline documents from 2024 (to become part of our ongoing work in SEN):

Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Children with Special Education Needs in Mainstream Classes

Indicators of Effective Practice for Primary Schools: Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes

NCSE Relate Document