

**Polasaí Ar Oideachas Speisialta**  
**[leagan Béarla]**  
**Gaelscoil na Lochanna**



**Introduction:**

This policy was first written during the 2014/5 school year and reviewed in 2015/16 and again in 2016/17. We have had a learning support policy since 2007 and this policy now replaces that. This policy is arising from consultation with NEPS psychologist, Department Guidelines for New Model for redistribution of support in school, Teachers and Support Teachers and the school Principal. The policy has been discussed among the board of management, parents' committee and the school community.

We have a whole school approach to learning support in the school and we have high expectations that children receiving support in school will do well in school.

The teaching staff will take a problem solving approach to supporting children. (i.e. Collecting information, exploring the concern, trying strategies to find a solution, reassessing the concern after a period...)

This Policy is based on the Continuum of Support.



Classroom Support - Children receive help from classroom support teacher

School Support = Children receive help from learning support teachers

School Support Plus = Children receive help from multiple teachers or external help

**About our school :**

Gaelscoil na Lochanna is an interdenominational school. The school was founded in 2006. There are over 200 children in the school. From September 2017, there is one stream of each class in the school.

Currently we have 39.25 learning support hours in the school.

We have one Special Needs Assistant in the school with two children in her care.

### **Main aim of the Policy**

The aim of this policy is to set out clearly how the school deals with the issue of Learning Support

.i.e.

- What are the preventive strategies for effective education that we provide?
- What support is available?
- What are the principles that guide who gets extra help?
- Who is given priority?
- How does the continuum of support function?
- When and How is the progress of children's progress reviewed?
- The different roles of various members of the school community

### **General Aims of Learning support in the school**

- To make the most use of the teaching and learning process.
- To help students with learning difficulties attain acceptable levels of competence in literacy, numeracy and literacy (Irish and English) before leaving the school.
- To help students with social problems or specific behavior.
- That children's self-confidence to be maintained and strengthened.
- To ensure co-operation between Teachers, Parents, Support Teachers in devising and implementing the Support plans
- That pupils with have special educational needs will be enabled to take an active part within the normal classroom setting, at an appropriate level for them.
- To develop the Basic skills so that they can participate in the curriculum fully.
- To develop a positive attitude and to foster positive attitudes to learning to school
- To lead Students towards learning independently.
- To provide additional resources in the subjects especially English & Maths. (And since 2017, in Irish)
- To obtain cooperation and support of parents / guardians by implementing an appropriate Education Support plan
- To establish an effective monitoring system to assess progress of pupils
- To gain the help and support of teachers in implementing an educational support policy

## Guiding Principles

The Learning Support System of this school system follows 4 principles

1. That the class teacher plays the central role in the provision of learning support to children in his/her classroom.
2. That the children with greatest need get the most support in school  
Needs would include
  - Social,
  - Academic (Literacy, Numeracy, other),
  - Emotional
  - Behavioural
  - Other learning needs.

Information of these needs could be gathered from:

Registration forms, professional assessment, teacher observations, attendance records, conduct records, examinations at school, standardised tests or from concerns of parents or teachers.

The support given to the child will aim to match to the needs of the child and will be given based on gathered evidence and given in a staged approach.

3. Priority is given to early intervention

Priority is given to early intervention and support in numeracy and literacy in the junior classes (Infants to 2nd). (Guidelines recommendation of the Department)

4. It is our aim that no more than 15% of children will be removed from their classrooms for additional aid.

On the whole, it is deemed best that children remain in their classrooms while receiving support and help instead of being taken out of class to the support teacher's room. The support teacher may come into the classroom to assist the classroom teacher or to take an individual or group in the classroom. The support teacher will not take more than 15% of those receiving help out of the classroom.

## Communication

This policy will be discussed by the teachers, the school board, the parents' committee and the parents and the policy will be available on the school website.

## The school year

The school year is divided into three parts:

September to December, December to Easter, Easter to June.

The support being given to children will be reviewed at Christmas, at Easter and during September.

During September every year, time will be taken to observe and assess the needs of the children and to plan any interventions. (Extra time will be allotted to this in the Infant classes where children need time to settle into school life and get used to Irish language immersion system)

## Preventative strategies

It is acknowledged that the best preventative strategies are run in Junior classrooms (up to Rang 2) while the children are acquiring the basic skills for language and mathematics

List of Preventative programmes in school

<b>Naí Bheaga agus Móra</b>	<b>Ranganna eile</b>	<b>Rang 6</b>
Aistear with stations for literacy and numeracy every day	Powerhour for English (widened to 3 classes in 2017/18)	Transfer to second level school programme (starting 2018)
Cleite - Phonic scheme as Gaeilge (2018/19)	Rang 3: Friends for Life (2018)	
Jolly Phonics- Phonics Scheme for English	Incredible Years (beginning Sept 2017)	
Réidh sochar déan - Maths Programme (Trial in 2017/18, begin in 2018/1019)		

Other strategies: station work, paired reading programmes, team teaching programmes planned from time to time as needs arise.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

### **An Príomhoide/ Príomhoide Tanáisteach:**

- To keep and maintain an up to date masterlist of all children receiving support in school.
- To contact external agencies and educational psychologists when necessary
- To monitor the selection procedure for children to receive support
- To consult with the teachers on a continual basis and to discuss the annual results with them.
- To conduct reviews of school support in the school (formally 3 times a year)
- To inform parents/guardians of available supports

### **Classroom Teacher**

- The school recognises the central role of the class teacher in the development and progress of each child in their class, including children with learning or special needs.
- Teachers will create a plan to serve the needs of children in their class
- Teachers will adjust their teaching strategies and learning objectives to enable children with learning needs progress in accordance with their ability. This is Stage 1 of the learning support Continuum. Parents will be consulted when extra help is being planned for their child and a record will be kept of targets to be reached, how the teacher will support the child and when it is expected to reach these targets.
- The teacher will take note of any learning needs when setting out homework.
- There will be continuous contact between the learning support teacher and the classroom teacher.
- The teacher will encourage activities that improve numeracy and literacy and spellings
- Teachers will encourage activities that promote and enhance the self esteem of children in their class.

### **The Learning Support teacher**

- The role of the learning support teacher is to help create and implement an effective support plan for children not achieving their targets at stage 1, in consultation with the class teacher. This is Stage 2 of the Continuum of Support and the learning support teacher may help children within the classroom setting i.e. during station teaching, team teaching or outside the classroom as part of a group or individually.
- To prepare individual Learning Plans (IPLP or IEP) for children receiving Learning Support at stage 2 or 3 or group plans where a group is receiving a period of support together.
- To coordinate the plan and the timetable for learning support in the school.
- To keep in contact with parents/guardians regarding children attending support at stage 2 or 3.
- English support will be given through English.
- Mathematical support will be given through Irish.
- From Sept 2017, it is intended that support for Irish language skills will be included also.

## **Parents/ Guardians**

- The central role of parents/guardians in motivating their children and in giving extra support at home to children in need of support, is acknowledged.
- The school organises parent teacher meetings for every child in November and report to parents on progress of children's learning.
- Any parent/guardian is welcome to arrange to speak with the class teacher, learning support teacher and Principal when they have concerns regarding their child in addition to discussing progress with them at the agreed review times throughout the school year (September, Christmas, Easter). The review discussions may be facilitated through meetings or phone calls as deemed appropriate.

## **Board of Management**

- It is the Board that manages policy on behalf of the school. The Board develops and ratifies the policy.
- The board have a role in supplying appropriate rooms and equipment to support the work of the class teachers and the support teachers.
- Policies are developed under the authority of the Board and with their authority policies are implemented.

## **Selection**

It is the the Principal, in consultation with the class teachers, support teachers and parents who confirms which children are to receive extra learning support in the school.

In selecting children, the guiding principles in this policy are used and there is an understanding that there is a maximum amount of children that can receive effective support at levels 2 or 3 of the continuum. Children with high levels of achievement are included in the decision to sanction extra support for pupils.

A review of the list of children receiving support will be carried out at least once a year.

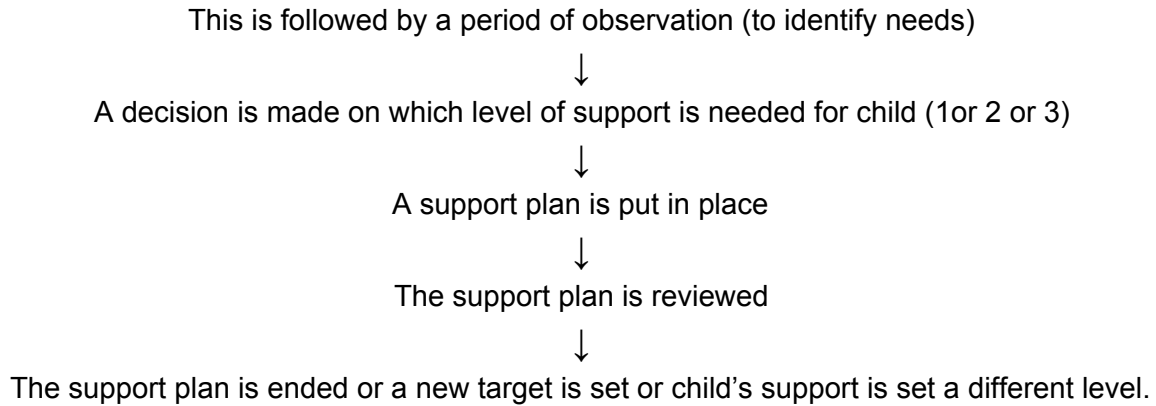
It can happen that children will be moved up or down the continuum throughout the year or will receive short bouts of support i.e. a child may take part in a targeted intervention programme with the learning support teacher for 8-12 weeks (level 2 support) and when learning target is reviewed it may be deemed appropriate to stay at level 2 or return to level 1 support (in the classroom with classroom teacher etc)

The overall aim always is to keep children in the environment of their own classroom when possible.

## **How does the continuum of support work?**

A concern is raised by a teacher/parent





## **The Stages of Support**

### **Stage 1- Classroom support**

When a class teacher has a concern over the work, behaviour, social skills of a child, the parents, Principal and learning support teacher is informed- or if a parent is concerned they come to talk to class teacher.

Information around the concern is gathered from parents, from child themselves, from observations and checklists of teacher and from talking to previous teachers where relevant.

The Class teacher fills out the Stage one checklist

The class teacher puts a support plan in place for the child.

The plan is reviewed after a term by filling out the Classroom Support Review checklist to see if further support is needed or to bring the support to an end.

### **Stage 2- School Support**

This stage is used when extra help is needed by the child after stage 1 support or when it is deemed appropriate to begin support for child at stage 2 (.i.e at or below 10 percentile in standardised testing).

An individual or group IPLP is prepared for the child or group of children and the learning support teacher withdraws the child from the class to get extra support or the learning support teacher gives support in the classroom i.e. during station work or powerhour.

The Support teacher fills out the Stage 2 checklist and the School Support plan is put in place. After a term the school Support Plan is reviewed by filling out the School Support Review checklist.

The learning support teacher makes a decision in consultation with the parents, Principal and class teacher or continuing or discontinuing the Stage 2 support.

Criteria questions for making a decision:

1. Have the targets in the plan been achieved?
2. Is the child able to function independently or almost independently with School support?

### Stage 3 - School Support Plus

Stage 3 support is put in place for children who have taken part in support at level 1,2 without attaining enough improvement or for children for whom Stage 3 is needed from the outset.

This support is for children who need extra help (multiple in school help approaches or help from external agencies).

A meeting is convened between the parents, Principal, Support teacher, Classroom teacher and extra help is recommended (.i.e. Advice or assessment from a doctor, psychologist or other service such as speech Language, occupational therapist).

A child whose needs are complex does not need to progress through stage 1 and 2 to get support at stage 3 help but it may be that receive help at all 3 levels .

The support teacher creates an IEP for children at stage 3.

After a term this IEP is reviewed using the School Support Plus review checklist to gather information on the next steps of support for the child

### Gathering information

Apart from the usual assessment tools used by teachers (Observation, tasks, checklists, profiling, class test results, conferencing with children) here is list of formal tests/assessments given to children that assist teachers in gathering information on needs of the children.

Rang	BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessme nt profile)	MIST (Middle infants screening test)	Gaeilge	Béarla	Mata	NRIT (non reading intelligence test)
NB	✓ if needed	✓ if needed				
NM		✓	✓	✓	✓early numeracy test	
R1			✓	✓	✓	
R2			✓	✓	✓	
R3			✓	✓	✓	✓
R4			✓	✓	✓	
R5			✓	✓	✓	
R6			✓	✓	✓	

The following are also available in the school and administered when necessary by learning support teachers.



1. Dyslexia Portfolio.
2. Non verbal reasoning GI Assessment.
3. Neale Analysis.
4. First School years Literacy Profile.
5. Neps First Hundred Words Checklist.
6. Neps Phonics Skills Checklist.
7. Neps Second Hundred Words Checklist.
8. Dolch lists.
9. Drumcondra Spelling tests.
10. Westwood/Neps Math checklists.
11. Screener Dyscalculia
12. Schnoell word Reading Test
13. Schnoell Word Spelling test

This list is added to from time to time.

Support Programmes run in the school

Don Ghaeilge	Don Bhéarla	Don Mhata	Eile (chun cuidiú le hiompar, díriú ar ghá sóisialta)	
Aistear	Toe by Toe Alpha to Omega P.A.T. Forward Together Nessy Programme Accleread, accelewrite Handwriting SNIP	Réidh Sochar Déan (Ready stedy go maths- from 2018/19)	Transition to Second Level programme (beginning 17/18)  Incredible Years (beginning 17/18)  Friends for Life (beginning 17/18)  Social Stories	
The whole school employs strategies to assist children showing signs or with diagnosis of with dyslexia				

### The Support File

For every child receiving learning support we keep a folder charting their progress and support

plans. (These are stored in hard copy/ school's google drive)

In the folders there is a description of the level of support given to the child (including selected targets, intervention strategies, length of interventions, review checklists, individualised personal learning profiles (where necessary), record of meetings with parents, reports from outside agencies etc).

The plans will be written one term at a time

The folder will be used to map the child's journey of support throughout the year and from year to year where appropriate.

The Class teacher will keep the folders for level 1 support and the Learning support teacher will keep the folders for Level 2,3.

The parents, class teachers , Support teachers, Principal, SNA and with parental permission SENO, Psychologists, Health workers will have access to these folders and reports therein.

Where a learning support teacher is shared between schools- the folders will be kept in the school where child is registered.

The class teacher, support teachers and the Principal are responsible for putting items into folder.

**Review:**

The policy will be reviewed according to Boards' schedule of review.