



SEN Policy

Introductory Statement

This SEN policy was coordinated by class teachers and learning support in consultation with the principal. This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary as part of our School Self Evaluation (SSE). This policy was first circulated to staff in September 2025 and made available on our website in September 2025

School Information

Our Lady's NS, Nurney is a Roman Catholic co-educational primary school of the parish of Bagenalstown, under the Patronage of the Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin. The school has a catholic ethos and we commit ourselves to making our school a safe and enjoyable place of education through an integrated and challenging curriculum. Each pupil will be respected and encouraged to develop to his/her potential and to grow in love and respect for God, for self, for others and for our environment. We are open to the challenge of the future, encouraging effective co-operation between pupils, staff, parents, management and the local community.

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.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000)
- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

Belief Statement

Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their 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 SEN 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 also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

Principal:

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

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
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SEN
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress

Together the SET and Class Teacher 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 SEN team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- collaborate with class teachers 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

Class Teacher:

The class teacher should:

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 SET 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 Student Support File(SSF) once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support before school support is implemented
- collaborate with staff to develop Student Support File(SSF) for each pupil in receipt of School Support or School Support Plus
- meet with SET, 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
- meet regularly with SET, relevant staff and parents to review SSF
- where applicable, collaborate with the SET 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 SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned

Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET 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 Student Support Files 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 SSF
- collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an SSF for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review SSFs
- meet at the beginning of the school year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review SSFs.
- 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

Special Needs Assistant:

The duties of the SNA 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 SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

The SNA should

- support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils, accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate.
- support learning and teaching in the classroom
- attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM
- 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

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 SEN 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.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows: 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 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 (SEN 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

while most pupils' initial needs should be met through classroom based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.

CLASSROOM SUPPORT PROCESS

STAGE 1

Starting Point Concern is expressed by parent/teacher or other professional

The teacher considers-Can concerns be met through whole class teaching approaches & differentiation?

Yes

No

Classroom Support Process Class teacher & parents complete formal & informal information gathering and assessment to inform Classroom Support Plan

Continue with differentiated teaching approaches.

Class teacher redefines problem, reviews and amends Classroom Support Plan

Planning & Intervention Classroom support Plan is agreed and is implemented by class teacher and parents if applicable

Continue at classroom support level

Discontinue Classroom Support Plan

Review Classroom Support Classroom Support Plan is reviewed after a set time. Classroom teacher decides to....

Some progress made

If concerns remain after a number of reviews, the class teacher brings the case to the SEN team and they decide to.....

Initiate School Support Process

* adapted from NEPS Continuum of Support. For more detailed steps see page 22 – 25 of the continuum of support – Guidelines for teachers

SCHOOL SUPPORT PROCESS

STAGE 2

Starting Point Child has made progress after interventions at classroom support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 2 intervention after Standardised testing. SEN teacher and class teacher review the records detailing the classroom support process, re-define the problem and....

Gathering Information SEN teacher and class teacher gather further information by completing formal & informal assessments to identify specific needs and strengths.

Agree & implement Classroom Support Plan

Planning & Intervention A School Support Plan is agreed & implemented by class teacher & SEN teacher.
This may include the introduction of supplementary teaching.

Continue with differentiated teaching approaches.

Review, redefine needs if necessary and amend School Support Plan

Planning & Intervention Classroom support Plan is agreed and is implemented by class teacher and parents if applicable

Continue at School support level

Discontinue School Support Plan

Review School Support School Support Plan is reviewed after a set time. Classroom teacher & SEN teacher decides to....

Some progress made

If concerns remain after a number of reviews, the case is brought to SEN Team planning meeting to the they decide to.....

Initiate School Support Plus Process

SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS PROCESS

STAGE 3

Starting Point Child has not made progress after interventions at school support level or child meets the criteria for a stage 3 intervention after a diagnosis from an outside agency. SEN teacher and class teacher consider...

Are the pupil's needs causing significant barriers to learning or impeding development of social relationships?

Is progress inadequate despite support provided?

Were interventions: based on evidence from assessment; well planned and given sufficient time to work?

Gathering Information SEN teacher co-ordinates further information gathering & assessment involving class teacher & other supporting teachers, external professionals, the pupil & parents.

Agree & implement Classroom Support Plan

Planning & Intervention A School Support Plan is agreed & implemented by class teacher & SEN teacher.

This may include the introduction of supplementary teaching.

Planning & Intervention A School Support File is agreed by class and SEN teacher, SNA if applicable, pupil & parents and is implemented by class and support staff in school.

Review, redefine needs if necessary and amend School Support Plus Plan

Continue at School support Plus level

Discontinue School Support Plus Plan

Review School Support Plus On a given date, class teachers, supporting teachers & external professionals review progress on the SSF, with the pupils and parents. They decide to....

Some progress made

* adapted from NEPS Continuum of Support. For more detailed steps see page 32 – 35 of the continuum of support – Guidelines for teachers

Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. 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 (CSP, IPLP/GPLP and IEP)

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- **Junior Infants:** Belfast Infant Assessment Programme (BIAP).
- **Senior Infants:** Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T).
- **First to Sixth Class:** Micra-T (Reading) and Sigma-T (Maths) screening tests are to be carried out from First to Fifth Class during the month of May or early June every year.

As a school, we also carry out a range of other assessments when necessary.

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.

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.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g., Hands-on approach, Maths for Fun
- Differentiation – adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SET.
- Literacy Hour/Team Teaching/Aistear/Maths stations
- Withdrawing individuals/groups.

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils needs have been identified, the Special Education Teacher (SET) is deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy the SET in a variety of ways 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.

At the end of each term the SET meets class teachers and SNA and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. As the SET, 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

Stage 3 School Support Plus	Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a Physical Disability Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment Emotional Disturbance Moderate General Learning Disability Severe/Profound General Learning Disability Autistic Spectrum Disorder Assessed Syndrome Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment	Individual Education Plans	Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies
Stage 2 School Support	Children on or under the 12th Percentile in Literacy/Maths Standardised Tests Prevention and Early Intervention Programs. Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Literacy/Numeracy such as Borderline Mild General Learning Disability Mild General Learning Disability Specific Learning Disability Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Children in JI & SI whom	Group or Individual Profile and Learning Programme	Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher

	English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland in 1st – 6th Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1		
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Timetabling

When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- All staff need to be as flexible as possible
- timetables should be continually reviewed
- children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn
- if a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the co-operation of another teacher.
- interruptions to classes/classrooms/SEN timetable should be kept to a minimum.

Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

Student Support File

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored on the school server. All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with pupil's details
- A timeline of actions

- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans (See below)
- Checklists

A class teacher or SET should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 –Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored digitally on the Aladdin Records, SEN Team and class teachers have access to files on their caseload.

Support Plans

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SET which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term.

Stage 2 – School Support

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a plan drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken.

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

A Support Plan at stage 3 is a plan drawn up by the class teacher and appointed Special Education Teachers, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out;

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents

- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:
- Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
- Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
- Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
- Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
- Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if appropriate
- The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
- The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

SSF meetings are coordinated by a member of the SEN team. This is usually one of the child's Special Education Teachers. Parents will be kept informed of developments.

IEP CYCLE

SEN Records

Individual SEN Files

All pupils' SEN files are stored in the office. It is the responsibility of SET to update and manage the files of the children on school support and school support plus that they support. The following should be stored

- Student Support File
- Psychological Report

- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff

Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers

At the beginning/end of each term planning/review meetings between class teachers and the SET will take place. The regular SEN timetable will not be followed during these weeks. This flexibility ensures adequate cover for class teachers and facilitates regular SET planning.

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both themselves and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SEN teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2025

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from September 2025. It will be reviewed in 2026/27 by the Special Education Teacher and all staff at Nurney NS.

Signed:

Genevieve Maher
(Chairperson)

Date: September 2025