

**St. Attracta's
Senior School**

Meadowbrook - Dublin 16



**Scoil Shinsireach
Naomh Athracht**

Cluain Ghlaise - Áth Cliath 16

Additional Support Needs

Riachtanais Tacaíocht Breise



INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

St. Attracta's Senior National School lies at the foothills of the Dublin mountains and was established in 1980. We aim to provide a quality education in a caring Catholic, Christian community for boys and girls from 3rd to 6th class in primary school. Our primary catchment area is Meadowbrook and Ballinteer but it also covers Dundrum, Rathfarnham and Churchtown. Currently, we have 22 teachers including the Principal, 14 classroom teachers and 7 support teachers as well as 10 Special Needs Assistants.

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance to teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective support to pupils with additional support needs in St.

Attracta's Senior School, with a view to enabling all our pupils to meet with self-confidence and assurance the demands of life, both now and in the future.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic, co-educational, primary school which provides a happy, caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

St. Attracta's Senior National School promotes excellence in teaching and learning. The school community that we create is welcoming, collegial, safe, respectful and inclusive of all its members. All aspects of the child - academic, spiritual, moral and cultural are cherished.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims of Additional Support

The principal aim of additional support is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties and additional support needs to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy, numeracy and life skills needs before leaving primary school.

Subsidiary Aims:

- to enable pupils to participate in full curriculum for their class level
- to develop wellbeing, positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils
- to enable these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- to involve and include parents/guardians in supporting their children's support programmes
- to promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies on support for these pupils, thus enhancing classroom-based learning
- to establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning
- to develop, implement and review Support Plans, based on observations, collaborative input and assessments administered to children receiving support
- to establish a team approach to the provision of support for pupils with additional support needs. This means that the support teachers and classroom teachers, along with the principal, work together in the best interest of the child

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPPORT TEAM

The Support Team

The principal and support teachers work as a team supporting one another and sharing relevant information and expertise. Together they collaborate, consult and plan workloads and timetables to best implement school policy to support children with additional support needs in our school. The teachers meet regularly to discuss programmes of work, resources and any recent information obtained from outside agencies which relates to people with additional support needs. The principal attends these meetings as appropriate and as requested by the special needs teachers.

The other partners in our educational support policy are the children themselves, SNAs, parents and guardians, the Board of Management and a NEPS psychologist. Advice and support is sought from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and from external agencies from the Departments of Education and Health

The role of co-ordinator of additional support needs services is fulfilled in our school by the principal teacher. This co-ordination is carried out in consultation with the class teachers and the relevant support teachers.

The Principal assumes overall responsibility for the school's support programme and for the operation of services for children with additional support needs.

The Principal:

- maintains a list of pupils attending support and acquires a timetable from each support teacher
- helps to co-ordinate the caseloads of support teachers where necessary
- supports the implementation of continuous assessments at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties
- advises parents on procedures for availing of additional support needs services
- ensures that liaison with external agencies to arrange assessments is fulfilled by the relevant teachers and that any necessary follow-up contact is made with these agencies
- arranges for classroom accommodation and resources, as appropriate
- consults with class teachers on how they can contribute to the implementation of the school plan on support
- ensures that the class teacher takes responsibility for planning and directing the appropriate learning activities for each pupil in his/her class who is in receipt of support teaching
- supports the professional development of all staff members and encourages ongoing professional development in the area of additional support needs, particularly for those working in this area
- facilitates parent/teacher meetings to ensure communication between class teachers, support teachers and parents/guardians of pupils in receipt of support teaching
- ensures consultation takes place between support staff and the principal on a regular basis
- encourages consultation with parents/guardians and outside agencies in the support process
- informs parents/guardians of new-comers to the school of our selection policy for support

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for support teaching.

The Class Teacher:

- implements teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils, differentiating the class curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils within the class in order to prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- administers screening tests: Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test and SIGMA-T on an annual basis, and NNRIT in September of 3rd class
- corrects all standardised tests and records results on the Aladdin Administration System
- implements teaching programmes in collaboration with the assigned support teacher(s)
- consults and co-operates with assigned support teacher(s) regarding priority needs, instructional activities and progress of pupils receiving school support teaching
- imparts all relevant information about a child to assigned support teacher(s) and contributes to the drawing up of Student Support Plans
- takes responsibility for implementing differentiated learning programmes as per the staged approach outlined in Circular Sp. Ed. 02/05
- maintains contact with the parents/guardians of each pupil in receipt of such teaching and keeps them informed of their child's progress
- attends meetings with parents of pupils in receipt of support, where appropriate, at the start of the school year and during Seachtain na Gaeilge
- completes - in conjunction and in consultation with support teachers and principal - referral forms of pupils selected for psychological assessment

The Support Teacher provides support for children with additional support needs.

The Support Teacher:

- carries out and interprets diagnostic assessments on all pupils selected for School Support and School Support Plus
- develops - in consultation with class teacher and parents/guardians - a School Support Plan for each pupil receiving learning support in English and/or Maths
- develops - in consultation with class teacher and parents - a School Support Plus Plan for each pupil on Stage Three of the Continuum of Support
- maintains a weekly planning and progress record for each individual or group of pupils
- maintains an attendance record for each individual attending support classes
- contributes to the development of policy on additional support needs at the whole school level
- provides assistance to class teachers by assisting in the interpretation of psychological reports and recommendations
- contributes at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with additional support needs in their mainstream classrooms, in the school library and in the support teacher's room
- reviews pupil progress regularly, and specifically during Seachtain na Gaeilge and in June
- maintains and reviews pupil records
- consults on a regular basis with teachers and parents/guardians
- arranges, in conjunction and in consultation with class teachers and principal for any necessary psychological assessments of pupils in the support category
- makes any necessary contact with speech therapists and/or psychologist regarding pupils in support programme
- assists class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of ICT and suitable software and range of other related matters

- meets, consults with and advises parents, accompanied by the class teacher and principal, when necessary, but in particular when meeting parents of new children who are on Stage Three of the Continuum of Support
- meets with relevant professionals, e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists etc. and informs class teacher of outcome.

The Special Needs Assistant is recruited to assist a child or children with disabilities in an educational context and to assist the teacher in the classroom with organisational issues.

The duties of the SNA are of a non-teaching nature and will include any special assistance the child may require. (cf: SNA job description). The Special Needs Assistant is an invaluable resource in supporting the child with additional needs, in progressing tasks outlined by the support teacher in consultation with the class teacher and in encouraging a level of independence in the child with additional support needs.

Duties of the Special Needs Assistant

SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the principal and at the principal or teachers' direction, the duties are focussed on supporting the particular care needs of the student with special educational needs.

All children require care and attention in school and all schools have responsibility to provide for the care and wellbeing of all the pupils who attend their schools including children with special educational needs.

Children who require access to SNA support usually have significant care needs which are beyond that which would normally be expected to be provided to a child by the child's class teacher, support teacher, or other school teachers, or beyond the level of assistance which could be offered to the student by his/ or her fellow pupils in school.

It is not possible to list all of the care needs that may arise. However, according to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), examples of the **primary care needs** which would be considered significant – and which might require SNA support are:

1. **Assistance with feeding:** where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
2. **Administration of medicine:** where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
3. **Assistance with toileting and general hygiene:** (including catheterisation) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
4. **Assistance with mobility and orientation:** on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)
5. **Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds:** at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that 6 existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision
6. **Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions:** such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.

7. **Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential:** This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
8. **Assistance with moving and lifting of children,** operation of hoists and equipment.
9. **Assistance with severe communication difficulties** including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

Examples of the **secondary care needs** which would be considered significant – and which might require SNA support are:

1. **Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms** or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another and to assist with cleaning of materials.
2. **Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans** for children 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.
3. **Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system** for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
4. **Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements** associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal.
5. **Assistance with enabling a pupil to access** therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class teachers or support teachers.
6. **Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities:** walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

In St. Attracta's Senior School, SNAs work in close collaboration with class and support teachers. All SNAs keep a daily journal in which they record significant interactions with the pupils in their care. They also help with the preparation of Pupil Personal Plans (PPPs)

Along with attending to care needs and enabling the children to access the curriculum, SNAs also have a pastoral care role, in keeping with our mission statement and our emphasis on pupil wellbeing. This might include providing time-out sessions, visiting the cool room, facilitating movement breaks and motor skills development activities, organising activity sessions to let off steam and providing breakfast or 'chat and cocoa' sessions.

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, IDENTIFICATION & SELECTION

Prevention or at least alleviation of learning difficulties can be achieved by implementing appropriate whole-school strategies in English and Maths, where we observe and assess pupil progress on an ongoing structured basis

- provide additional support to pupils who need it
- implement parent/guardian and SNA involvement programmes, e.g. Paired Reading, Toe by Toe

Early intervention is central to our selection process with priority given to children in 3rd and 4th class.

A class teacher who feels that a child in his/her class is in need of additional support should start by initiating Stage One of the Continuum of Support (see page 7).

Children who join the school mid-year can only be accommodated in support classes if they meet the criteria laid out below and a place is available. In the meantime, the teacher will implement Stage One of the Continuum of Support.

Identification of pupils in need of support and/or assessment by a school psychologist is based on the following criteria:

- teacher observation
- results of standardised tests administered on an annual basis
- results of diagnostic tests administered by the support teachers
- psychological or other relevant reports
- consultation with parents/guardians, support teachers, class teacher, principal

Selection of pupils for support is based on the following criteria:

- children who fall below the 12th percentile in standardised tests in literacy (DPRT) and numeracy (SigmaT)
- children who score between the 12th – 15th percentile in standardised tests provided resources are available – these children will receive support in order of need
- children on Stage Three of the Continuum of Support and/or in receipt of SNA support
- children who are deemed to be in need of support for emotional, social or behavioural reasons that effect their performance in the mainstream class
- children who require support in English as an additional language, who are struggling to keep up with the daily work in the classroom
- children for whom there is a significant discrepancy (20+ percentile points) between vocabulary and comprehension scores in standardised tests
- children who present with specific problems in literacy/numeracy following end-of-year review and in consultation with class teacher

Taking the above criteria into consideration, the final decision for selection of pupils, rests with the principal.

Exceptionally Able Pupils

The Education Act, 1998, makes provision for the education of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational need. 'Special educational needs' are defined in the Act as referring to the needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students.

No single agreed international definition of 'exceptionally able' exists. A range of terms is used interchangeably in the literature and includes 'gifted', 'talented', 'exceptionally able' and 'exceptional'. Such students require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students.

In St. Attracta's Senior School, differentiation is central to our teaching methodologies and in the case of pupils with exceptional ability, all teachers differentiate upwards and provide more challenging and sometimes additional work for the pupils in their classes.

THE STAGED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT, IDENTIFICATION & PROGRAMME PLANNING

In St. Attracta's Senior School, we follow a Staged Approach suggested by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), which we have modified to best support the teaching and learning of the children in our school. This is better known in our school as the **Continuum of Support**.

CONTINUUM of SUPPORT

The needs of pupils with additional support needs can best be considered in terms of a continuum and therefore support given is also on the basis of a continuum. The focus is on identifying actions which can be taken to make a positive difference to the pupils. These actions are identified using a problem solving approach. An incrementally more systematic process is outlined depending on where the pupil's needs lie on the continuum in terms of intensity and duration. There are three stages in the Continuum 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/guardian or class teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The class teacher and parents/guardians 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.** The Classroom Support Plan process that occurs during Stage One provides a record of intervention(s) that take place in the classroom and informs future teaching and learning in relation to the child with emerging needs. At Stage One the procedure that is followed is:

1. Class teacher identifies need
2. Class teacher informs support teacher and together a Student Support File ('yellow form') is opened
3. A Log of Actions is commenced
4. Cover page of Student Support File and Log of Actions are filed by support teacher under the child's name in the support classroom

5. Classroom teacher completes Classroom Support Plan in consultation with the support teacher and this is recorded in the Class Support Grid
6. In the Classroom Support Plan targets and strategies are identified and recorded
7. After an average of 6 weeks the classroom teacher completes the Classroom Support Review Record in consultation with the support teacher
8. Depending on the outcome of the review, the necessary course of action for the child is agreed by the classroom teacher and support teacher
9. A copy of the Classroom Support Plan and the Classroom Support Review Record becomes part of the child's Student Support File

Stage 2: SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. This level of support requires collaboration between class and support teacher(s) in the problem-solving process, after a review of the Classroom Support Plan has taken place, in consultation with the parents/guardians of the child and, if appropriate, the child him/herself. School Support involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan (formerly referred to as an Individual Pupil Learning Profile).

Stage 3: SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

If a pupil's 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.** It is at this point that the school psychologist will normally be contacted. However, the information from Classroom and School Support Plans 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 School Support Plus Plan (formerly referred to as an Individual Education Plan).

ORGANISATION & TIMETABLING of LEARNING SUPPORT

Support teaching is provided for pupils from 3rd – 6th class as follows:

1. **Learning support on a withdrawal basis:** This usually involves small group tuition. In order to maximise the benefit to the children, support groups should be kept to a minimum, usually no more than four pupils. One to one tuition on a withdrawal basis may also be provided for selected pupils only
2. **In-class support:** This is also an effective way of providing support. The support teacher comes into the classroom and works in direct partnership with the class teacher, based on a co-teaching model suitable for the needs of the children in the class
3. Children may also be supported during **Literacy Hour** and during **Station Teaching** in Maths
4. Further support for children can take many other forms including buddy reading, peer mentoring etc.

Children - especially third-class pupils - need a two-week settling in period with their new class teacher before commencing support classes. During this period the support teachers set up timetables, organise programmes and equipment, test new pupils to the school (who have not come from the Junior School) and meet with parents and teachers before formal classes begin.

Each Support Team Member is given an allocation of children for whom they prepare an individual School Support Plus Plan (SSPP) each year. They are responsible for these specific children, and by writing up the SSPP, they ensure that the child receives suitable support. A child might often work with more than one support teacher, requiring collaboration between the teachers.

TIMETABLING

The principal oversees timetabling in the school and support for children with additional support needs is allocated based on DES circular 07/2019. Support timetables are drawn up by the support teachers in consultation with the class teacher(s). Once finalised, timetables are given to the class teacher, who will ensure that their children with additional support needs and the Special Needs Assistant have copies of same. The timetable will be reviewed for as necessary, and especially during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Every effort is made by teachers to ensure that Visual Arts, PE and swimming, computers, curriculum room and library time will not be infringed upon in order to avoid negative associations with support/additional support needs. Every effort is made to avoid children missing out on the *same* curricular area each time they receive support teaching.

Such flexibility in timetabling involves the classroom teacher and the support teacher taking into account the needs of their pupils. Flexibility is also required in order to ensure integration and inclusion of all pupils in school life and activities, such as school and class assemblies, Book Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge, etc.

There are two instructional periods for learning support, from mid-September to March and from March to mid-June. The three critical periods in the provision of learning support are September, March and June.

CALENDAR FOR SUPPORT

Month	Week	
Sept	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and decide on support groupings • Send home Parent/Guardian SSPP Input form to parents/guardians of children on Stage 3 of the Continuum • Liaise with parents/guardians of new children to support (identified in June) • Add newly received reports and information to existing Student Support Files • Identify and assess (if necessary) newcomers
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with children on Stage 3 of the Continuum and complete Child Input form • Read and analyse all information pertaining to children in receipt of SSPPs • Organise resources • Draft timetables • Meeting between Support and Class teacher to discuss all children with a Student Support file: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the needs of the children b. nature of support to be provided c. groupings d. timetable e. Class Teacher SSPP Input form given to class teacher
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent, Class Teacher and Support Teacher SSPP consultation meetings • Support teachers meet with new class groupings • Support classes commence during week 3
Oct	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and distribute the NNRIT to 3rd class teachers (to be administered by class teacher) and newcomers/absentees (to be administered by support teachers)
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher to complete Teacher Input form in collaboration with support teachers or independently while support teacher teaches the class • Collation of all information to date on children with SSPPs by support teachers on the day of Cake Sale
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting between support and class teachers to agree on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strengths, needs and home/school targets for SSPP children (Stage 3) b) Support for children on Stage 21 and Stage 2
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise SSPPs: • Give all SSPPs drafts to the principal

Midterm		
Nov	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with class teachers to prepare for P/T meetings • Draft form of IEP to be given to parents on the Friday before the week of the PT meetings with cover letter.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-teacher meetings • At the PT meeting, any issues arising over SSPPs will be resolved with parents
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completed SSPP is filed by the principal and the support teacher in the Student Support File • SSPP targets are printed separately from the main document and given to the class teacher and support teacher for their own record keeping

Dec	3	SET teachers available to help with Christmas preparations and Carol Service
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Mar	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative review of SSPP targets between class and support teacher • Review meetings with parents/guardians and class teacher/support teacher(s) as necessary
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Apr	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order and organise DPRT, DPST and Sigma Standardised Tests
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May	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute DPRT, DPST and Sigma Standardised Tests • Class Teacher administers DPST*
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher administers DPRT*
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher administers Sigma* • In-house SET assessments
	4	Confirmation Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete, correct and collate in-house SET assessments • SET teachers support and help with confirmation preparations • 3rd class SET teachers for next academic year to liaise with current 2nd class SET teachers

Assessments will be administered by the support team to children who are absent

Jun	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting between SET and current class teacher to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review SSPs and SSPPs to establish targets for the next academic year b) Help with the input of end-of-year school reports c) Discuss all children with a Student Support File and also any child for whom a file needs to be opened
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SET teacher (and Class teacher when necessary) to meet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Parents of Current pupils with an SSPP b) Parents of children who are to be released from learning support c) Parents of learning support children, where necessary • SET teachers to complete Transfer Forms • SET teachers to upload current SSPs and SSPPs
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed handover between current and next year's SET teachers
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to assess and identify needs and programmes for the following year

PLANNING FOR SUPPORT TEACHING & LEARNING

Planning forms an integral part of our support policy. In St. Attracta's Senior School, our planning is based on two instructional terms: September to March and March to June.

Typically, every Support Teacher's folder should include the following:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Guidelines when Working with Children
- TUSLA Certificate
- Dignity in the Workplace Charter
- Additional Support Needs Policy
- List of pupils attending support
- A weekly timetable
- Long term plans
- Short term plans
- SSPPs – Targets
- Assessment Folder/Pupil Profiles

Each Support Teacher will have a scheme of work for each child or group of children. This can take the format of a 'scheme of work' or School Support Plan, depending on whether the child is receiving in-class support, withdrawal or a combination of both. Copies of these documents are available to the class teacher and principal, and filed in the individual child's Student Support File.

In addition to this, each Support Teacher plans on paper for the week ahead and writes an account either daily or weekly on the progress made by each child. This documentation is stored in the child's personal file in the Support Teacher's room.

Every child attending support has one of the following constructed within each teacher's overall plan of work for the year:

- School Support Plan
- School Support Plus Plan

Both documents are prepared by a teacher on the Support Team, in consultation with parents/guardians, class teachers and other professionals working with a child.

School Support Plus Plans (SSPPs) are drawn up using information given by class teacher, parents/guardians and the child themselves (see templates). All SSPPs are finalised by the end of October every year. Copies of the finished documents are given to the principal and a copy is kept in the child's personal Student Support File. Targets for school from the SSPPs are given to the class teacher and support teacher for their own assessment and record keeping.

A soft copy of all SSPs and SSPPs are upload and stored on the Aladdin system each October and March.

School Support Plans (SSPs)

School Support Plans are formulated in September for children receiving learning support in English and/or maths. This plan is reviewed in March each year.

School Support Plans are prepared by the support teacher in consultation with the class teacher. The SSPs then becomes part of the class teacher's own scéim bliana. A copy of the SSP is also put into each child's Student Support File which is kept in a locked cabinet in the support room.

School Support Plus Plans (SSPPs)

A School Support Plus Plan is formulated in September for each child on Stage Three of the Continuum of Support. This is a working document which is passed on and updated each year. It outlines the child's abilities, skills and talents along with his/her special educational needs and background. It culminates with a set of specific targets to be achieved by the child.

SSPPs are prepared by the support teacher and the class teacher, with input from the Special Needs Assistant, the parents/guardians of the child and the child him/herself. (See Consultation Forms) The class teacher, the support teacher and the SNA assigned to the child will meet regularly to discuss targets set down in the plan and to monitor the progress being made.

Formal meetings involving parents/guardians and teachers take place in September, in November, in March and in June to assess, evaluate and plan the first and second instructional term's work for each child.

Support Programmes

The Support Programme for each school year applies to:

- Pupils who qualify for Learning Support in English and/or Maths as per school policy.
- Pupils with a diagnosis of a specific Special Need as approved by the SENO (Special Educational Needs Officer) and as sanctioned by the Department of Education & Science.

Planning templates and master copies of letters to parents are attached to this document and are available on the Aladdin system under 'Documents'

Programmes used for support and supplementary teaching are attached to this document.

Pupil Personal Plans

When children present with significant care needs, a **Pupil Personal Plan (PPP)** is prepared by the support teacher in consultation with the class teacher and Special Needs Assistant. Such support is provided in order to facilitate their attendance at school and minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the pupils concerned, or for their peers, and with a view to developing their independent living skills.

A PPP is submitted with all applications for SNA support. This outlines the pupil's special care needs and shows how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan demonstrates how the school intends to actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe.

The plan includes time-bound targets for the development of independence skills. The PPP is developed in conjunction with the Student Support File which has been developed by NEPS and we use the Continuum of Support framework when planning for pupils with significant care needs.

While dependency on an SNA may reduce as the child matures and progresses from 3rd to 6th class, careful monitoring of children with a diagnosis of special needs is necessary to ensure there is no regression as this support is withdrawn. If and when access to SNA support is reduced, the SNA is deployed to the area of greatest need within the school.

Resources for Support Teaching and Learning

A wide range of resources is available to the support team. This inventory is updated in June each year. These resources are kept in the support rooms and are shared by the support team. Personal resources paid for by individual support teachers are the property of that teacher and should be labelled as such. All other resources are school property and may be used by any member of the support team.

A library of reference books is available in the support room and the principal's office to update teachers on current developments in the area of special needs. It is recommended that teachers who require information on a specific area of needs source and purchase the relevant material and be reimbursed by the principal.

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

As stated in the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. In St. Attracta's Senior School, we recognise the importance of assessment in making learning more enjoyable, more motivating and overall a more positive experience for both the children and teachers. It enables teachers, pupils and parents/guardians to monitor learning outcomes and identify learning needs. Informal tests, individual teacher-designed class tests and teacher observations are regularly carried out in class. This enables the class teacher to monitor educational progress in relation to the child's own development and that of his/her peers.

All teachers use Assessment of Learning and Assessment for learning strategies in their class.

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Standardised tests are administered to all pupils in all classes in April/May each year.

Results of standardised tests are reported to parents of all pupils in written form at the end of each school year. Where there is an issue requiring discussion, teachers will arrange to meet parents.

Class teachers administer, correct and score the following standardised tests:

3 rd Class	Schonell Spelling Test	September
3 rd Class	NNRIT	September
3 rd to 6 th Class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test	April/May
3 rd to 6 th Class	Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test	April/May
3 rd to 6 th Class	Sigma-T Maths Test	May

The support teacher administers the NNRIT test to children who enrol mid-year and standardised test results, as well as school reports are requested from their previous school.

Administering of assessments may take place on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (mornings only). All assessment results are recorded on the Aladdin system and are available to the support team.

Children who receive support and who are not present on testing day will be tested by a support teacher as their progress in particular needs to be monitored, although it is acknowledged that their results will then not be standardised. However, it gives an indication of the child's level.

Parents/guardians are notified once teachers feel there is a notable change in their child's academic progress or attitude. When a child is finished in support parents/guardians are notified in writing. Parents/guardians are also informed of their child's standardised tests results.

Permission for testing and for inclusion in learning support is sought from parents/guardians at the start of the school year. Parents/guardians are made aware of the results of the tests and are invited to have an input in planning a programme for their child.

Standardised testing takes place in the third term and results are conveyed to parents in June.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Diagnostic testing is carried out in May by the support teachers using a selection of assessments, which may include among others:

- Neale Analysis of Reading / Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- Jackson Get Reading Right
- Cloze Tests.
- Early Literacy Test
- Aston Index (parts of)
- Schonnel Reading and Spelling Test
- Lucid Cops
- New Group Reading Test
- DIBELs
- Free writing

Parental/guardian permission is sought in writing before testing takes place.

Following these diagnostic tests, the support teacher conveys the results to the class teacher and on this basis they discuss the possibility of individual children being released from support classes, thus allowing other children to join the class. Parents/guardians are notified in writing when a child is being released from or accepted into support class.

See our school policy on Assessment for an elaboration of AoL and AfL strategies.

Storage & Archiving of Assessment Records

Psychological assessments and reports are securely kept in the principal's office, along with applications to the NCSE for resource hours and SNA support.

All psychological assessments received by the school are passed immediately to the principal. The principal stores the original report in the Student Support File for a specific child in a locked cabinet in the principal's office. A copy of the psychological report is given by the principal to the class teacher to read. After 3 to 5 days this is then passed to the support teacher to read and subsequently stored in the Student Support File for the individual child in a locked cabinet in the support room.

Every child attending support has a Student Support File in a locked filing cabinet in the support classrooms, which contains copies of their psychological assessments and reports. The children's files also contain a Log of Actions, other professional reports, a SSPP or SSP, and results of various diagnostic and other tests conducted over the years.

These files are available for class teachers to read, but should not be taken out of the room for security purposes.

In the interests of pupil confidentiality, test results, psychological assessments and progress reports are made available only to the teachers working with the child, the parents of the child and the principal of the school.

All standardised tests booklets for all children are kept for their time our school and for one year after the children leave.

When children leave in sixth class, the support teacher(s) remove their files from the cabinet and retain keep the child's final SSP/SSPP and all psychological assessments. These files are stored under the calendar year in which these children leave the school in the school's strong room. They are retained in school for ten years. All other documentation pertaining to particular children is shredded.

Test results – including cover page where appropriate - are kept until the child is 21 years of age/ for 10 years after the child leaves the school. Scripts may be kept for one year for AFL purposes. All documents are finally disposed of by shredding.

Please see our school policy on Data Protection for more information on the GDPR Schedule procedures in place in our school.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS

Review of Progress

The review of each pupil's progress at the end of each instructional term will assess the learning targets achieved in their SSP or SSPP. Evaluating the progress made will determine the level of continued support provided. This decision will also be informed by the class teacher's observations on the pupil's progress in class and by parents'/guardians' observations about progress and behaviour. Outcomes of targets in the SSP/SSPP are the main focus. If supplementary teaching is to be continued, previous targets may be extended or new targets established. The type of continued support would also consider whether in-class support or withdrawal is the most suitable intervention.

Discontinuation of Support

A child is deemed to be ready for release from support when:

- s/he has made significant progress in support (e.g. exceeded the 25th percentile)
- s/he has attained a level of competence to be able to work independently at class level
- s/he has the confidence to be integrated into the classroom environment

At this stage the child's parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the school's decision. On return to class the teacher will carefully monitor the child's work and keep the support teacher advised of his/her progress. The principal, class teacher and support teachers in consultation with parents/guardians will, to the best of their ability provide the most suitable support for each child.

Communications

In St. Attracta's Senior School, we recognise that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children and that liaison with parents/guardians in relation to their child's education is essential. When a child with additional support needs first enrolls in the school, especially those children on Stage 3 of the Continuum, the principal meets with the parents/guardians of the child. This meeting occurs in February with a view to:

- determine the nature/level of current support
- ascertain what supports may be needed in the Senior School
- prepare necessary applications to the NCSE

The principal may also meet with these parents/guardians again in June or September, prior to their child commencing in the Senior School, depending on the nature of support required.

In the case of children who attend support, the class teacher and the support teacher(s) meet with parents/guardians in September and March to discuss the child's progress and to plan and assess the child's educational programme.

Where a child with additional support has an SNA allocated to him/her, the principal will also attend formal meetings where necessary, which take place in September and March.

Formal parent/guardian and teacher meetings take place in the first term each year, during which the class teacher meets with parents/guardians to discuss their child's overall progress and development.

Communication with parents/guardians will also happen quite often during a school year, as the need arises. It is imperative that the class teacher is informed of all communications with the parents/guardians of children with additional support needs.

Parents/guardians are advised of ways in which they can help their child at home and they are invited to become involved in programmes such as paired reading and Toe by Toe. Parents/guardians are notified once teachers feel there is a notable change in their child's academic progress or attitude. When a child is finished in support parents/guardians are notified in writing.

Strategies for Communicating Information:

Communication with all parties involved in the child's education is imperative:

- The support team meet regularly with the principal to discuss the whole area of additional support needs.
- Formal meetings with parents/guardians take place regularly. Other meetings with parents/guardians take place on a regular basis as the need arises.
- The class teacher and the support teacher(s) meet formally in September and March to discuss progress and to plan and assess the child's educational programme.
- Informal meetings between class teachers and support teachers take place on a regular basis, usually between 10.45am – 11.00am. More formal meetings involving class teachers and support teachers take place where necessary at a mutually convenient time.
- The principals of St. Attracta's Senior & Junior Schools meet in the second term to discuss the transfer of pupils from the junior to the senior school. Once children are registered in the senior school, a formal letter requesting copies of school reports, standardised test results, psychological assessments and relevant reports is sent to the principal of the junior school. (following parental/guardian consent).
- The principal in the Senior School then meets with parents of children from the Junior School who have a School Support Plus Plan and/or assistance from a special needs' assistant, with a view to re-applying to the NCSE for continued support in the Senior School. These meetings take place in February each year.
- Principals of both schools facilitate meetings between third class teachers and the previous second-class teachers in order to transfer general information about incoming classes and to identify specific needs within a class.
- The support teachers meet with the Junior School support teachers in the final term each year, in order to identify those children who may need support and to allow planning time prior to September.
- Structures are then set up for information to be passed on to all those who will be involved in the child's educational provision.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Enrolment of Children with Additional Support Needs

St. Attracta's Senior School is academically non-selective and welcomes children of any and all abilities, including those with additional support needs and the exceptionally able. It seeks to provide for the needs of each individual child, accepting that children with additional support needs learn at a different pace and in a different way from other children. They need to belong to a peer group and to mix with children of different abilities in a variety of situations. Children will be catered for in the mainstream classroom but may be withdrawn in small groups for additional support. Before children join St. Attracta's from another school, school records and up to date standardised test results are sought from their previous school.

Prior to the child's enrolment, the school will acquaint themselves with a child's additional support needs. This may be done by:

- Meeting between parents/guardians/principal/class teacher/support staff and SENO, as appropriate
- Obtaining copies/details of reports, assessments etc. from SENO, parents/guardians, ...
- Contact with Special Educational Needs Organiser, NEPS Psychologist or other psychologist/speech therapist/ occupational therapist/other agency

Other steps which are taken to ensure a smooth transition into the school the pupil include:

- Parental/guardian visits to school
- Pupil visits to school
- Staff visits to special schools/special units
- Making all school employees and pupils aware of the need for inclusion as per our school's Mission Statement
- Liaison with SENO to arrange for additional personnel, resources, training
- Establishment of a 'Buddy system' between new and existing pupils

When there are health and safety issues arising from the child's mobility and care needs, these can be identified and strategies developed to address them e.g. access, toilets, supervision, administration of medicine, intimate care, course for SNAs etc.

TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

While consultation takes place between our school and the second-level schools in the area, when a child is transferring into secondary school, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the school authorities of their child's additional support needs and to furnish them with all relevant information about their child, including psychological reports, when available.

St. Attracta's Senior School will make every effort to facilitate the transition from primary to secondary school and when requested, will pass on standardised test results as agreed to on our school's registration form. We will adopt the Education Passport with effect from June 2014. We feel it is important to give relevant information, but allow the secondary school to form their own views of a pupil, as some pupils perform differently in new circumstances.

LINKS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The principal and/or school co-ordinator liaises with all external agencies, particularly NEPS (National Educational Psychological Services) and the SENO (Special Educational Needs Officer). Each year, class and support teachers are asked to identify concerns in relation to pupils and a list of priority pupils for assessment by NEPS is then drawn up by the principal, in consultation with the teachers.

The class teacher will oversee initial contact with parents/guardians. The support teacher(s) will liaise with assessment services and, where appropriate, make arrangements for additional educational provision for children with diagnosed additional support needs. Class teachers and support teachers are invited to be in attendance at meetings when appropriate.

Support and advice is available through the SESS (Special Educational Support Services) and the PPDS (Primary Professional Development Services), as well as through colleagues who have developed an expertise in particular areas of special need.

Social welfare services are available through the H.S.E., while speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc. are available through the Lucena Clinic, by appointment.

When a specialist comes to the school to speak about a particular child, as many members as possible of the support team should be in attendance in order to avail of their expertise as part of the professional development of the support teachers.

DEPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The principal is responsible for the deployment of teachers, including the support team and this is done on an annual basis due to changes of personnel and resources.

Teachers who are interested in taking on the position of learning support/special needs resource teacher should indicate this preference when classes are being allocated each year. The position of learning support teacher usually follows a 5 year cycle in order to allow teachers the opportunity to vary between class teaching and support teaching.

The support teacher is not expected to provide teaching cover for colleagues who may be absent except in exceptional circumstances where there may be regular disruption of the support teacher's timetable in a given week, e.g. preparation for Confirmation, Book Week, Christmas carols, etc.

The staff are supported in availing of professional development in the area of additional support needs, by facilitation of release time and substitute cover where possible and by encouragement of teachers to pursue the Graduate Diploma in Additional Support Needs in St. Patrick's College, University College Dublin or the Church of Ireland, summer courses, contact with the PPDS, courses in Blackrock Education Centre, and by provision of books, articles and literature made available in the school. If a teacher attends a professional course relevant to additional support needs, it is recommended that they transfer information and knowledge to other teachers.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy on additional support needs was first developed in April 2003. It was reviewed and updated in the light of changes in Special Education and Department of Education guidelines and circulars. The policy is available to all parents and partners in education.

All members of the teaching staff (principal teacher, class teachers, support teachers) along with parents, pupils and the Board of Management have been involved in the preparation of this policy.

This policy on additional support needs has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. The views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.

**St. Attracta's
Senior School**

Meadowbrook - Dublin 16

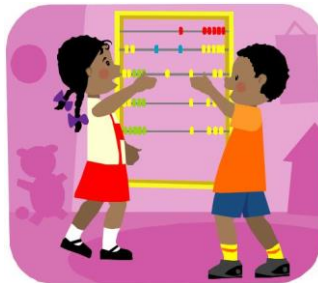


**Scoil Shinsireach
Naomh Athracht**

Cluain Ghlaise - Áth Cliath 16



Learning Support Programme/Resources



PROGRAMMES/RESOURCES

Area 1: Phonic and Word Attack Skills, Sight Vocabulary

A Lexia Computer Programme

Level 1 uses games and sight

Level 2 and 3 target

vocabulary to target:

- Short vowel sounds
- Consonant blends (e.g. sn, sk, dr)
- Letter confusion/reversals: b p d q
- Middle vowels
- Short vowel words
- 2-3 syllable words
- Sentences and paragraphs, cloze activities
- Vowel digraphs (e.g. aw, ai, oa)
- Suffixes

Sight Vocabulary lists:

- Derrn, Dolch vocabulary lists

B 500 Word Code Book:

- Independent activity
- Focus on alphabetical order to develop dictionary skills
- Short activities ideal for focusing on joined writing and penmanship skills

C PAT Programme:

- Phonological awareness programme using onset and rime.
- Helps spelling through a focus on pattern recognition.
- Dictation exercises help transfer reading and spelling knowledge to all written activities.

D Stile trays:

- Phonics, Dyslexia, Spelling, Comprehension Stile trays
- Independent activities to improve phonic skills, patterns, reversals, confusions

E Games:

- Swap card game - focus on consonant blends and digraphs (ph, gh) and vowel digraphs
- Smart Chute game: Triple consonant clusters, final consonant clusters, blend endings, long vowel phonemes, split digraphs, grammar sentences, singular and plural, medial vowel sounds, vowel phonemes, irregular nouns, idiom
- Chunks (building words)

F Written Phonic Work

- *Sounds, Patterns and Words* booklets by Collins Educational

Area 2: Language: Improving the understanding and use of language

Resources:

1. *Oral Comprehension* by Prim-Ed
2. *Listening Comprehension* by Prim-Ed
3. *Processing Auditory Messages* by DeGaetano
4. *Auditory Processing Activities and Practical Language Activities* by ECL
5. *Black Sheep Press Publications*: idioms, homonyms, speech
6. *Sequencing Stories Book 2* by Easylearn
7. Files obtained from Ballinteer Health Centre
8. Clinical Language Intervention Program (CLIP)
9. *Spelling and Language Board Games* by SmartKids

Area 3: Spelling

1. McKay spelling activities focusing on recall and memory
2. *A Hand for Spelling* by Cripps
3. Newell Literacy Programme
4. Wordshark
5. *Spelling Pattern and Spelling Card* programme by Cambridge Educational
6. *Sound Sense* programme by A.E. Tansley
7. *Master your Spelling* by GC Davies, S.M. Dillon and T.D. Dillon
8. Educational games: 6 Spelling Board Games Brendan Culligan

Area 4: Reading and Comprehension Skills

1. Reading Schemes including Oxford Reading Tree Books, GINN 360
 - i. Improving motivation and confidence by listening daily to reading
 - ii. Developing speed and fluency
 - iii. Used as a resource to improve comprehension skills (prediction, cause and effect, explaining, drawing conclusions, summarising)
 - iv. Sight vocabulary and phonological awareness
2. *Reading and Thinking* programme by Arthur J. Evans
3. *Looking and Thinking* programme by Arthur J. Evans
4. Stile Comprehension
5. RIC Publications Comprehension Cards
6. *Between the Lines* programme (Following the steps: recall, reflect, reinforce, react)
7. *Clash* by Ticktock publishing company (excellent reading material suitable for 6th class pupils)

Carroll comprehension and skills series (*Ghosts Secrets & Thieves*, etc.)

Area 5: Maths

The same textbook as the mainstream class may be used or a different one with a differentiated approach depending on the ability of the pupils (in class and/or withdrawal).

The Florence Gavin Maths programme (Maths Together) is used for children who need an individualised maths program and who are not able to work at the present standard of their class. This program is used only by the Learning Support team when the children are withdrawn either individually or in a small group.

Hands-on equipment and resources are used in maths particularly for the following areas: money, multiplication, division, time and data.

Tables:

1. Florence Gavin Multiplication and Division tables books
2. www.mathsisfun.com
3. *Master Your Tables* by Blackwell's
4. *Table Toppers* by CJ Fallon
5. *The Tables Book* by Stanley Thornes Primary Maths
6. *Step into Tables* by Prim-Ed
7. Smart Chute game: Multiplication tables

Area 6: Social Skills

1. *The Me Book* (book to develop self-awareness)
2. *Talkabout* by Alex Kelly
3. *Social Skills for Special Children* by Darlene Mannix
4. *Self-awareness* by Frank Smith
5. *Dealing with Feelings* by Tina Rae
6. *Self-esteem, Skills to Build Self-Worth* by Prim-Ed
7. *Socially Speaking* by Alison Schroeder
8. *Cool Kids Teaching and Learning About Managing Anger in the Junior School* by Paula Galey

Games:

- Socially Speaking
- Speaking & Listening (6 games)
- Social skills (6 games)

Area 7: Writing

- Scholastic Writing Guides

Area 8: Developmental Co-Ordination Disorder (DCD) – Dyspraxia

1. Learning Breakthrough DCD programme – 2 DVDs and book, balance board, pendulum ball, beanbags, visual motor control stick
2. An individualised OT programme created by the occupational therapist in Lucena
3. Threading boards, Sewing skills, Cutting and pasting (for fine motor skills)
4. Gym balls (for gross motor skills)
5. Typing skills (Mavis Beacon)
6. Sequencing, memory and writing activities

**St. Attracta's
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**Scoil Shinsireach
Naomh Athracht**
Cluain Ghlaise - Áth Cliath 16

Learning Support Templates & Communications with Parents





Cláracha Ama srl. Timetables & Allocations



WHAT IS THE CONTINUUM 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 learning support/resource teachers 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 or an Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP).

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.** It is at this point that the school psychologist will normally be contacted. 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 (IEP).