



Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School

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Whole School Policy for SEN Provision

1. Introduction:

This policy was originally drawn up by the teaching staff of Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs. The term Special Educational Needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with difficulties with fine or gross motor skills, and children who have diagnosed disabilities.

In this document, SEN can be taken to be special educational needs in this broad sense. Our SEN position encompasses what were previously termed Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers.

The policy is based on Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills).

2. School Information:

Scoil Bhríde, Loreto NS caters for children from Junior Infants to Sixth class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Kerry. The school currently has five mainstream class teachers.

Scoil Bhríde, Loreto NS was allocated 34 hours 2019/2020 with 9 hours available for clustering with other schools. One SET teacher is based in the school, (One Special Education Teacher is shared with The Mercy Convent National School and Gaelscoil Faithleann).

3. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective 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).
- This policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs. The term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with difficulties with fine or gross motor skills, and children who have diagnosed disabilities.
- In this document, SEN can be taken to be special educational needs in this broad sense. Our SEN position encompasses what were previously termed Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers.

- The policy is based on Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills).

4. Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School/Belief Statement

In our school we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of Support is integral to this commitment. 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. Through consultation with parents, staff and, where appropriate, the child we strive to develop a support plan to meet these needs. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

5. Aims of SEN Support.

- To support the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary schools.
- To ensure that the Staged Approach / NEPS Continuum of Support is implemented.
- To *“optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school”* (Learning-Support Guidelines [LSG]: p. 15). This support may be provided by the Class Teacher and / or the Support Teacher (Appendix 1: The Staged Approach, described in Circular 02/05).
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and / or Mathematics
- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum
- To encourage differentiation in the classroom
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
- To support attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To involve parents in supporting their children through effective parent-support programmes
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for pupils
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning
- To guard the self-esteem and self-image of the learner.

6. Principles.

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Quality of teaching.
- Effective whole-school policies
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
- Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support / School Support / School Support Plus
- Provision of the Model of intervention appropriate for the pupil and the difficulty they are experiencing, including:

(1) Withdrawal Model:

- 1:1 interventions (vital when e.g. difficulties are very significant; when pupil needs do not match to form a small group)
- 1.2 Small group interventions

(2) In-Class Support Model:

- In-class support model/Station teaching / Team Teaching / Peer tutoring/ Parallel teaching etc...
- Collaboration between Teachers
- Maintenance of Support Plans by Class Teachers and Support Teachers at Class Support / School Support / School Support Plus
- Thorough Assessment procedures
- Regular contact with SEN pupils
- Manageable caseloads / timetables
- Prevention of failure
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Support from Outside Agencies
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

7. Continuum of Support – Staged Approach

Stage 1. Classroom Support

If a class teacher or parent has concerns about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a child, the class teacher will then construct a simple, individual plan of support to be implemented in the normal class setting. This plan will form the 1st instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be based on screening measures administered by the teacher. The plan will be reviewed after each instructional term (using the Review Page from the Continuum of Support document). If the plan is working well for the child it may be decided to continue with it. It should be noted differentiation should not be taken to mean engaging the children in class work of a lower level ie. Pupil in 6th class using workbooks from 5th. If work from lower class levels is being administered to a child as part of a classroom support plan it should be done so with the utmost discretion. If insufficient progress is made and the child is still having difficulty then Stage 2 (School Support) is implemented

Stage 2. School Support

If further intervention is deemed necessary (after further diagnostic testing by the Special Education Teacher) and the child is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level then a letter of consent will be sent to the parents by the Special Education Teacher in question. The class teacher and Special Education Teacher then draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child. This plan will form the 2nd instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be implemented in conjunction with the child's Classroom Support Plan (1st Page). The child's parents/guardians will be informed of this plan, invited to contribute and asked to sign it. This plan will be reviewed in February and if significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as NEPS or the HSE.

Pupils with school support plans will have access to a mixture of withdrawal and in-class support throughout the school year.

Stage 3. School Support Plus

The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme, as appropriate. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with and with the permission of the child's parents/guardians. Following the consultation, the class teacher, Special Education teacher, parents and outside professional (if available) will draw up a Learning Programme for the child. This plan will form the 3rd instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support. In case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such children and primary responsibility for the child

will remain with the class teacher in consultation with the designated Special Education teacher. Pupils with school support plus plans will be prioritized for withdrawal throughout the school year.

8.Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Board of Management:

The Board of Management shall:

- Be informed of the reviewed SEN policy.
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
- Ratify the policy
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation is provided for the Support Teachers.
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN.

8.2 Principal:

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He/She will work closely with the SEN team and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN team to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- 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

8.3 Class Teacher:

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. (Guidelines 2017)

The class teacher will:

- 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
- 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 Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support using school template. Log actions in the support plan
- collaborate with staff to develop or Group Profile and Learning Programmes (GPLP) for each pupil in receipt of School Support
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child
- meet with Special Education 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 Individual Education Plan (school support plan plus)

- collaborate with Special Education Teachers and relevant staff to develop an Individual Education Plan (Support Plan) for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- regularly meet with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff to review plans at least twice a year.
- where applicable, collaborate with the SET team 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 along with the school principal
- The class teacher assigns homework each night for every child in their class including those in receipt of supplementary teaching

Identification of Learning Difficulties:

- The Class Teacher plays an important role in the initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning disabilities.
- In supporting the development and implementation of the school SEN Policy, the Class Teacher will administer and score appropriate screening measures, and discuss the outcomes with the Support Teacher(s).
- The Class Teacher will liaise closely with Parents and elicit relevant information from them regarding e.g. hearing / vision checks.

8.4 Special Education Teacher (SET)

The central role of the support teachers will be to:

- a) Support the class teachers in optimizing teaching and learning opportunities and
- b) Provide specialized teaching to those children with identified special educational needs. Support teacher responsibilities will consist of both teaching and non – teaching duties.

These will include:

- Familiarizing themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
- provide supplementary teaching to meet children's additional needs on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- collaboratively develop School Support plan and School Support Plus plan for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review IEPs when needed
- meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review IEP – October and February
- update and maintain planning and progress records i.e selection of work for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- 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
- provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received in collaboration with the class teacher and principal.
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of policy on SEN at the whole school level / at the cluster level, if requested.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties
- Meeting with Class Teachers of each pupil who is in receipt of School Support / School Support Plus, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported throughout the school day.

- Meeting with Parents of each pupil who is in receipt of support, if possible, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc...
- Implementing school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.

8.5 Role of the Parents:

The central role of parents/guardians of children with SEN is the same as all parents/guardians ie. to support the work of the school and to optimize teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home.

The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

8.7 Role of the Pupils:

The role of the child with SEN will be that of active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs.

8.8 Role of External Bodies and Agencies:

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Age Teams, Tusla, Visiting Teachers for children with vision impairment, Visiting Teachers for children with hearing loss, and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

9. Prevention and Early Intervention.

Prevention / early intervention is a cornerstone of supporting learning.

9.1 Prevention Strategies.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. (See Plean Scoile for English and for Mathematics).

- Careful development of phonological awareness and rhyming skills in the classroom, before the introduction of formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials at every opportunity.
- Implementation of whole school parental involvement programmes e.g.
- Developing children's oral language skills; shared reading at home; developing early mathematical skills etc...
- 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 Teachers and the Support Teachers.
- Thorough Assessment procedures throughout the school
- Provision of additional support in language development / early literacy / early mathematical skills to pupils who need it
- Provision of Assistive Technologies as appropriate
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings

9.2 Early Intervention Programmes.

- Early intervention is a vital component of the NEPS Continuum of Support model.
- Early intervention programmes may be provided by the Class Teacher and / or by the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach (Appendix 1) and the NEPS Continuum.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the Support Teachers, should identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support / School Support level.
- Intensive early intervention programmes in the early primary classes can be an effective response to meeting the needs of children with low achievement. Such programmes will:
 - Be set within a specific time frame (13-20 weeks – depending on the individual child)
 - Be based on a shared expectation of success by everyone involved
 - Involve small group teaching or one-to-one teaching where small group teaching has not been effective / difficulties are significant
 - Include a strong focus on oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills
 - Emphasise the development of phonemic awareness
 - Develop phonic skills, once phonological awareness has been developed well
 - Develop word identification skills
 - Engage the pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension
 - Stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing
 - Focus on language development in mathematics, and in the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.
 - Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the Aistear programme and the new Language Curriculum.

10. Identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support

Children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports. The following selection criteria encompasses current DES Circulars, Guidelines and general good practice. The school will select pupils in accordance with these criteria, starting at point (1) and continuing on through the selection criteria until caseloads /

timetables are full. *"Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support"* (2017 Guidelines: p. 19).

10.1 Selection Criteria:

1. Class Teacher (NEPS' Classroom Support):

Pupils deemed to need additional support with their learning (literacy & numeracy) and / or specific needs (oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning) will be supported in the classroom by the Class Teacher.

2. Support Teacher (NEPS' School Support and School Support Plus):

The Support Teacher may provide additional support for the following pupils, through withdrawal (1:1 or in a small group) or in-class support (e.g. station teaching / team teaching / in-class support / peer tutoring), depending on the child's needs.

The following selection criteria encompasses current DES Circulars, Guidelines and general good practice. The school will select pupils in accordance with these criteria, starting at point (1) and continuing on through the selection criteria until caseloads / timetables are full. *"Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support"* (2017 Guidelines: p. 19).

1. Pupils previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
2. Pupils previously in receipt of "Learning-Support" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties (scoring below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments).
3. Pupils diagnosed as having "Low Incidence Learning Disabilities".
4. Pupils diagnosed as having "High Incidence Learning Disabilities".
5. Pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) i.e. (a) pupils who arrive to our school without any English (b) pupils who have lived in Ireland less than two years, and whose English needs further support.
6. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
7. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy, STEN score of 4 (to allow for a margin of error).
8. Pupils scoring at/below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics.
9. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics, STEN score of 4 (to allow for a margin of error).
10. Early intervention in literacy - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
11. Early intervention in Mathematics - Infant class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early numeracy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
12. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**
13. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in mathematics, who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support

(Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**

14. Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language / social interaction / behaviour / emotional development / application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**

15. Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"). Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. **The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.**

11.1 Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.

- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met
 - *has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?*
 - *will the pupil be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom learning context?*
- *The decision-making process involves consultation between the class teacher, the SET and the pupil's parents.* This must be communicated to the parents in a timely manner by the Class Teacher and/or SET
- The school principal is made aware of the outcome of the consultation process.
- An account is also taken of the overall Support demands in the school.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group. This may also take the form of reduced withdrawal time, movement from withdrawal to In-class support. This will also be communicated to the parents.

12.1 Monitoring Progress:

Monitoring Progress.

The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the Special Education Teacher in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried out at the end of each instructional period. The completed review will be stored in the children's file.

- Weekly Tests if applicable (eg. Spellings/Tables).
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Standardised Tests at end of year (1st – 6th) English and Maths.
- Senior Infant end of year test –Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

13.1 Record Keeping

- Class Teachers will keep a record of teacher designed tests, end of term tests and checklists in an Assessment Folder for their class.

- Children receiving support will have a file opened for them and will be centralized in the support room and held in a locked filing cabinet. These will also be attached to their online Aladdin files.
- Continuum of Support documents for Children with SEN are also kept in these files.
- Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in this filing cabinet.
- Results of Completed Standardised Tests – a copy of each will be filed in the Assessment folders in the office. The Standardised Tests currently used in our school are – Micar T (English) and SIGMA T (Maths). The MIST (Senior Infant Test) are also administered.
- End of Year school Report will be issued to parents/guardians in June.
- Digital or hardcopy of each child's classroom support, school support, school support plus plans, reviews, and end of year summary of work to be submitted to school principal in June of each school year.

14. Timetabling and Work Schedule

- Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.
- Co-teaching, where two teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, sharing the same classroom and can operate during English and Maths times in class. If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the Support Teacher, they can be withdrawn to a quiet space. (This is not to reduce teacher pupil ratio)
- In so far as is practicable children should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.
- The Support Teaching Team will review the timetable at the end of each instructional term/block.
- Class teachers and SET's to work together each term on a timetable for team teaching. Team teaching should be incorporated into a 4 week block each term (Literacy & Numeracy). Blocks do not have to be consecutive. Refer to section 7 continuum of support.

15. Liaising with Parents.

Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of a support programme.

- Class teacher meets with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
- Special Education teacher and Class Teacher meet with parents to agree a School Support Plan for the child
- Special Education teacher liaises with parents of children in receipt of supplementary teaching to demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the child's learning.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. Activities are organised throughout the year to support this e.g. Maths Week etc.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November.
- An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.

Staff Meetings.

SEN provision in our school will be included on the agenda for staff meetings twice per school year. Any shared Support Teachers attend staff meetings at their base schools.

Parent-Teacher Meetings.

The nature of SEN support means that communication/ meetings with parents are on-going and regular. The Support Teachers will fulfil the 'out of school' requirement of parent-teacher communication/ meetings at the base school.

Resources:

- Support resources will primarily be used in the Support Room. These resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the Special Education Teacher. All resources borrowed are to be returned at the end of a school term.
- Classroom resources will be made available to Special Education Teacher following consultation with class teacher. All resources borrowed are to be returned at the end of a school term.

Success Criteria

A whole school approach to the implementation of our SEN policy will:

- ensure that children with SEN gain access to a broad, balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
- develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils.
- improve standards of academic performance and achievement.
- enhance parental involvement in supporting their child's learning.
- increase collaboration between school personnel.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through: feedback from teachers, children and parents/guardians; child's achievements and ongoing analysis of children's academic performance and attainment of personal targets.

Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.

A review of this policy will take place every two years after NCSE school profiling is completed. Next review date September 2021.

Acknowledgements

- Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (Department of Education & Skills)
- "Managing the Transition to the New Model of Special Education" (Dr. Mairéad De Búrca / INTO 2017)
- Circular 30/2014 Special Needs Assistants
- Circular 13/2017 Special Educational Needs – New Model
- <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/a-new-model-for-allocatingspecial-education-teachers-to-mainstream-schools.pdf>

Useful websites:

- Department of Education & Skills: www.education.ie
- National Council for Special Education: www.ncse.ie
- National Council for Curriculum Assessment: www.ncca.ie
- Health Service Executive: www.hse.ie

FAQs to accompany SEN policy

1. What is SEN?

SEN means special educational needs. Under the new model of allocation, the term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty attaining literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with fine or gross motor skills in so far as they impact on the children's progress, children who have English as an additional language (if that impacts on their progress) and children who have diagnosed disabilities. The new model of allocation for SEN teaching provides for appropriate teaching for these children using what is called a staged approach.

2. What do you mean by a staged approach?

We take a step-by-step approach to understanding and supporting children who are presenting with a special educational need. There are three main stages and they are outlined in the policy document under the heading Continuum of Support. The Continuum of Support is developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and is used in all primary schools.

3. Who has access to my child's reports?

Professional reports are often provided to the Principal to assist us in planning appropriately for your child. The reports are confidential and are only shared with teachers of your child.

4. What is an SNA?

An SNA is a Special Needs Assistant who is employed to assist with the care needs of a specific child or children while in the care of the school. The allocation of SNAs is governed by DES Circular 30/2014.

5. What is a Personal Pupil Plan?

A Personal Pupil Plan outlines a pupil's special care needs and shows how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan is developed with the parents and teachers of a pupil, and refers to the pupil's support plan (based on the Continuum of Support).

6. What is NEPS?

NEPS is the National Educational Psychological Service and is a service of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and aims to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. It has particular regard for children with special educational needs.

7. What is NCSE?

The National Council for Special Education. It was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special education needs. The NCSE is responsible for the allocation of teaching supports and SNAs to support children with special education needs. This is organised locally through Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs).

8. What is a screening measure or test?

Screening tests are easy to administer, contain relatively few items, and can be completed in a relatively brief time, sometimes only a few minutes per child. They can be paper and pencil tests, rating scales, checklists or observations of skills/abilities. They are used to alert the school to a possible problem and can be followed up with more in-depth assessment.

9. What is a diagnostic test?

A diagnostic test or assessment can provide a profile of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses and can help the teachers develop appropriate teaching plans for the pupil. These plans form part of the Pupil Support Plan.

10. What is a STEN score?

Basically a STEN score means a score out of ten. It is used as a marker to compare children's results on a standardised test with other children who took the same test. About 68% of children score between 4 and 7 as this is the average range.

11. What is a percentile score on a test?

A percentile score compares a child's test score with other children who took the same test. For example, a child who scores the 60th percentile has done better on the test than children who score 59th percentile or below on the same test. Standardised tests give teachers norms to compare scores with so that we know how children score compared to other children in Ireland taking the same test.

12. What is meant by Low Incidence Learning Disability?

Low incidence learning disability refers to disabilities which occur less frequently in the general population. These include moderate, severe or profound general learning disability, significant physical or sensory impairment (eg: vision or hearing), severe emotional or behavioural problems, autistic spectrum disorder, and other diagnosed syndromes.

13.What is meant by High Incidence Learning Disability?

High incidence learning disability refers to disabilities which are seen more frequently in the general population. These include specific learning disability (dyslexia) and mild general learning disability.

14.What is Aistear?

Aistear is part of the National Curriculum framework for early childhood education. In our school, Aistear takes the form of structured play-based learning around chosen themes.

15 .What is Guided Reading?

Guided reading is an instructional approach that involves a teacher working with a small group of students who demonstrate similar reading skills and can all read similar levels of texts.

Appendix 1.

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning (Appendix 3 of DES Sp Ed Circular 02/05).

Stage I

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles for pupils in senior infants and first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate.

The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the special education support team or the learning support/resource teacher in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II.

Stage II

If intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the pupil should be referred to the learning support/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. In the case of pupils with learning difficulties, if the classroom support plan fails to achieve the desired outcome the pupil should be referred to the learning support teacher/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this should be arranged. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the learning-support/resource teacher in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching.

The learning support/resource teacher and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching. If significant concerns remain

after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage III.

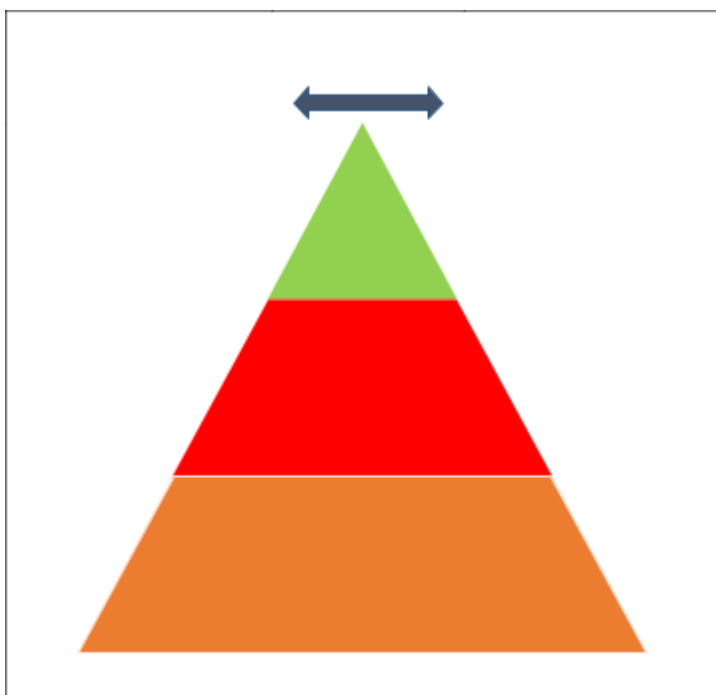
In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs should, with parents' permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (stage III).

Stage III

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.¹

The learning support/resource teacher, resource teacher, if available, and the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the learning support/resource /or resource teacher.



Appendix 2.

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

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

The 2017 Guidelines (p. 11-12) describe the NEPS' three tiers of support as follows - "*As special educational needs can vary from mild to transient to significant and enduring, educational planning should reflect the level of need of the individual pupil. In this regard, the Student Support File facilitates a graduated response across the different levels of the Continuum: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, is advised (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist)*".

Appendix 3.

Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) To be adapted for individual needs.

Personal Pupil Plan for _____ SNA support is vital in all of the areas ticked	
1. Primary Care Needs SNA Tasks (as per Circular 30/2014):	√
Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.	
Administration of medicine: Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.	
Assistance with toileting & general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, & until such time as they are able to do so.	
Assistance with mobility & orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a pupil to access school transport), or to help a pupil 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.)	
Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground & school grounds: At recreation, assembly, & dispersal times including assistance with arriving & departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.	
Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.	
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 pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.	
Assistance with moving & lifting of pupils, operation of hoists & equipment.	
Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs & those with significant, & identified social & 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.	
2. Secondary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks) (as per Circular 30/2014):	

Preparation & tidying of workspaces & classrooms or assisting a pupil who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare & tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.	
Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned & the review of such plans.	
Assist teachers & / or Principal in maintaining a journal & care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance & care needs. Assist in preparation of school files & materials relating to care & assistance required in class by students with special needs.	
Planning for activities & classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers & other Teachers such as the Resource Teacher & School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement & guidance of class Teacher/Principal.	
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.	
Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.	
<u>3. Other Vital SNA Tasks:</u>	
Preventing the child from harming self	
Preventing the child from harming other children	
Preventing the child from harming staff	
Preventing the child from destroying property	
Careful supervision of the child to prevent the child from climbing / squeezing into tight spaces etc...	
Supervising the child who is a flight risk	
Accompanying the child to and from Learning Support / Resource	
Removing the child from whole school activities, if the child becomes distressed / overwhelmed	
Removing the child from the classroom when meltdowns occur	
Assisting the class teacher to raise the alarm if dangerous situations occur (children cannot be left alone)	
Assisting the class teacher to comfort other children who are injured / frightened by explosive behaviour	

Appendix 4.

Transition from Primary School to Post-Primary School

Taken from the 2017 Guidelines:

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from preschool to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school and between special and mainstream settings. Effective transition support and planning can enhance the educational experience of the child and help reduce potential anxiety. Many schools already have excellent practices in place to support pupils at various transitional points.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has developed a suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post- primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and are available at www.ncca.ie/transfer. They include:

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

Since the 2014/15 school year schools have been required to use the Education Passport materials detailed above and forward to the relevant post-primary school, following confirmation of enrolment, ideally by end of June (Circular 45/2014).

Additional resources for schools in planning for effective transitions are available at the Department of Education and Skills and NCSE websites.

Appendix 5.

Table 1: from the 2017 Guidelines. Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures /assessments • Basic needs checklist * • Learning environment checklist* • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures / assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.</p> <p>A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support Plus	<p>This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment
	<p>Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>

*These checklists are available in the *Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers*
Appendix 6.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support Plus				

Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard

⁵ Schools may hold information on pupils and level of support on a class basis, as an integral part of classroom planning.

Appendix 7.

Educational Planning (2017 Guidelines).

Educational planning

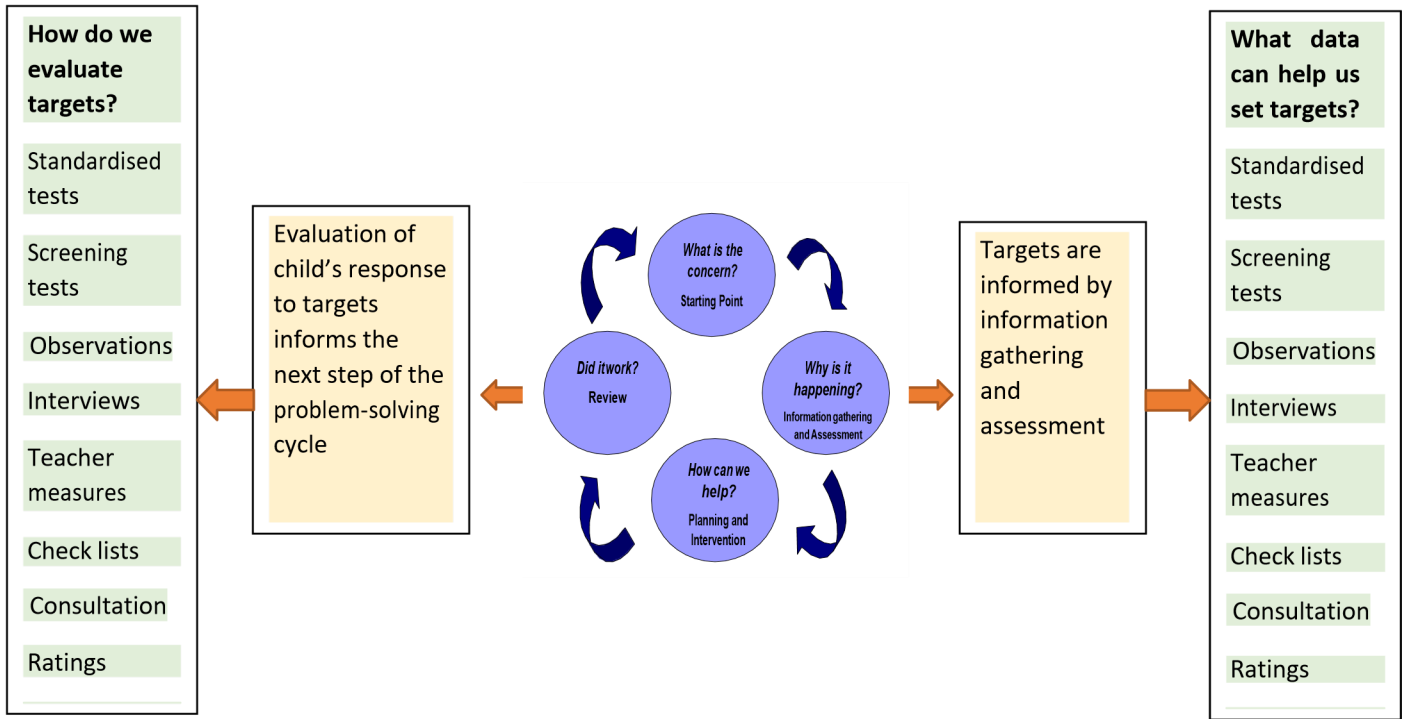
Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. The process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time-frame for review.

Student Support File

A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

Appendix 8.

From the 2017 Guidelines Appendix 1: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving framework



Targets are written as desired skills which are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time Limited



Targets should be written in definitive language to facilitate monitoring and review of progress, for example:

John will correctly identify the first 50 Dolch Words with 80% accuracy

Sean will speak in a full sentence which includes a subject, verb and object

Anne will use her PECS to request an activity break

Appendix 9.

Table 2: from the 2017 Guidelines - Planning the allocation of special education teaching supports

Table 2: Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	
Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	<p>Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data, and any information from parents and external professionals.</p> <p>Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support.</p> <p>Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching.</p> <p>They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.</p>
Action 4: Organising early-intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early-intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	<p>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.</p> <p>Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.</p>
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	<p>Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Whole-school and Classroom Support level by all teachers • At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers

