

Scoil Chearbhaill Uí Dhálaigh  
Policy regarding the provision of Learning Support- Revised 2010

Scoil Chearbhaill Uí Dhálaigh (the school) is a co-educational Irish medium Primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It operates under the regulations of the Department of Education and Skills (An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna – An Roinn ). In accordance with the enrolment policy of the school, pupils are welcomed from various cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. This includes pupils with special needs.

### **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS**

A pupil with special needs is one whose ability to participate in and benefit from education is limited because of a permanent physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability. This includes pupils who have minor speech and language problems, minor co-ordination problems as well as attention deficit conditions like dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Included here are Autism and Down Syndrome.

The Policy of the Department of Education and Skills is to provide, as far as possible, special needs education in mainstream educational settings. The 2004 Act states that pupils should be educated in a comprehensive setting; this to be to the benefit of the child and to the provision of effective education for the other mainstream pupils.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The school recognises that effective teaching programmes should be based on the following principles :

- ... effective whole school policies
- ... whole school participation
- ... the provision of resources for those who most need them

### **THE AIM OF THIS POLICY**

With the introduction of this policy the school aims to

- ... clarify procedure regarding pupils with special needs
- ... to maintain a whole school approach regarding teaching/learning in the context of pupils with special needs (daltaí le riachtanais speisialta – DRS)
- ... to enable DRS to share a total educational experience with their peers as far as is possible
- ... To put in place an enduring communication structure so that parents of DRS participate fully in the education of their children
- ... to ensure systems of record keeping and assure security thereof
- ... to ensure integration of DRS and as a result to develop his/her self-confidence and self-respect
- ... to provide a range of aids and resources for DRS
- ... to provide the physical conditions in the school for DRS.

## **A. NEW PUPILS**

Reference must be made here to the school's enrolment criteria.

In a case where a child has been diagnosed as a pupils with special needs previous to enrolment in Junior Infants, the parents are asked for a copy of the assessment report as early as possible to enable the school to make preparations for the pupil's coming to school and if necessary, seek resources from An Roinn.

Where a pupil with special needs is transferring from another school, parents will be asked to provide a copy a the latest assessment reports. The pupil's existing school will be asked for the results of the standardised assessments as well as the history of learning support for the pupil. The Learning Support Teacher (An Múinteoir Tacaíocht Foghlama - MTF) in Scoil Ui Dhálaigh will speak with the MTF in the pupil's existing school as ascertain other relevant information.

DRS for whom resource hours have been allowed :

Pupils for whom hours have been allocated on grounds of low-incidence special needs are included, in accordance with the Education Act, in learning support groups. Guidance and advice is sought from experts such as doctors, psychiatrists, Speech and Language specialists. etc. The recommendations in the assessment reports of the pupils will be implemented throughout the school.

## **B. PUPILS ALREADY IN THE SCHOOL**

As part of the day to day work of the school, strategies are constantly employed to help pupils avoid learning problems and to recognise them

- ... to come to a consensus regarding language development and other aspects regarding the teaching of Irish, English and Maths and to ensure progress and continuity from class to class.
- ... The application of the station approach for the teaching of reading of English in 1<sup>st</sup> class.
- ... to monitor an constantly assess the language skills, literacy and numeracy of pupils in the infant classes in order to facilitate the early recognition of learning problems.

### **EARLY SCREENING BY THE CLASS TEACHER**

#### **Senior Infants**

Screening check lists

Rating scales

Screening profiles

Curriculum Profiles

MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) in the month of May.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class**

Standardised norm-referenced tests such as :

Drumcondra English Reading Test and Triail Matamataice Dhroim Chonrach in the month of May.

A DRS need not necessarily be given the standardised test if it is the opinion of the MTF that it would not benefit her/him.

### **HOW PUPILS ARE ALLOCATED TO LEARNING SUPPORT**

... The MTF will meet, in June, with the parents of pupils in Senior Infants whose score was 3 or lower on MIST in order

- (i) to explain the 'FORWARD TOGETHER' programme which will be done at home during the summer holidays
- (ii) to obtain permission, in writing, to do a diagnostic test and extra testing of the pupil and to provide learning support during the following year.

cf : Consent Form (an Fhoirm Cheadaithe) Aguisín 1

- (iii) The MTF administers the diagnostic assessment to the pupil.

### **READING RECOVERY**

This is a programme which has been specially designed for early intervention with pupils under 7 years of age who have not mastered the basic skills of literacy. A MTF specially trained in this programme will choose the pupils who will follow, with parental consent, the Reading Recovery programme.

Preference is given to pupils whose score is on the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower.

Pupils whose score is at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher are catered for according to the school's resources, either in the classroom or in the learning support room.

### **DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT**

... The class teacher consults with the MTF to ascertain which pupils need diagnostic assessment.

... The class teacher meets with the parents of the pupil to inform them of the concern regarding the pupil's progress; to explain the results of the standardised tests and to get permission to allow the pupil to take a diagnostic test.

.... Permission is sought from the parents for the pupil to attend learning support classes and to allow the pupil take other extra tests throughout the year.

cf: An Fhoirm Cheadaithe

The MTF administers the diagnostic test. Depending on the age of the child, one or more of the following tests will be used. This is not an exhaustive list.

WRaPS (Word Recognition and Phonic Skills)

Neale Analysis of Reading Ability

Aston Index

Graded test of Reading Experience

One-minute Tables Tests

Early Dyslexia Screening Test

Basic Number Screening Test

Non-Reading Intelligence Programme

## **PLANNING A LEARNING PROGRAMME**

- ... Medium term planning is done through the Individual Profile and Learning Programme (Profil agus Clár Foghlama Aonair – PCFA) before the commencement of teaching.
- ... The MTF designs the PFCA in consultation with the class teacher, parents and the individual pupil at a meeting which, if possible, the class teacher attends
- ... The PCFA will be reviewed at the end of every teaching block.
- ... The MTF does short-term planning, progress reports, and assessment of the programmes by filling the Weekly Planning and Progress Report. (Tuairisc Pleanála agus Dul chun Cinn na Seachtaine)

## **PROVISION OF EXTRA TUITION**

Intervention, which has been meticulously planned, takes place in the classroom and , if necessary, in the Learning Support Room. The effectiveness of the intervention depends on the level of co-operation and co-ordination between the MTF what the pupil adds to what has been learned in the classroom.

- ... Extra Tuition is provided for three teaching blocks, each of 10 weeks duration.
- ... The class teacher records the progress of every pupil in the class.
- ... The MTF records the progress of every pupil who attends the Teaching Resource Room.

The class teacher and parents will have constant input : cf Summary of Progress at the base of Tuairisc Pleanála agus Dul chun Cinn na Seachtaine.

The individual pupil will have an input in the determination of his/her learning goals, depending on her/his age.

## **REVIEW OF PROGRESS AT THE END OF THE LEARNING MODULE**

... The MTF does an in-depth review of every pupil's progress at the end of every teaching block as follows :

1. A review of the Planning and Weekly Progress Report.
2. Administer or re-administer diagnostic tests.
3. Discuss the pupil's progress with the class teacher.
4. Discuss the pupil's progress with her/his parents and explain to them the results

of the assessment tests at the end of the school year.

5. Decide, in consultation with the class teacher and parents which would be best : continue with the same level of extra tuition, reduce or discontinue it.
6. To make out a new PCFA as necessary or if needs be seek assessment by NEPS or privately.

#### **An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Siceolaíochta Oideachais**

At present, the school is entitled to 3 educational psychological assessments per year from NEPS.

The MTF shortlists pupils for whom psychological assessment is indicated in the context of their learning difficulties. The list is compiled in September in conjunction with the relevant class teachers.

The MTF, Maighréad Ní Éalaithe is the NEPS liaison person in the school. The NEPS advisory service is also used when needed.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS PUPILS LEAVING SCHOOL IN 6<sup>TH</sup> CLASS.**

Class teachers, MTF are afforded an opportunity at the end of the school year to meet with teachers from the post primary to which the DRS will transfer to ensure that they are well informed regarding the learning needs of the DRS.

#### **REVIEW**

The effectiveness of this Policy will be reviewed during the school year 2011-2012. The principal will co-ordinate the review process and the teaching staff, parents and the Board of Management (An Bord Bainistíochta – BB) will also be party to the review.