



Ballinahinch National School

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Special Educational Needs Policy

1. Introduction and Rationale

The aim of Ballinahinch National School is to promote the fullest possible development of every child as a whole person. The school provides a broad and balanced primary education and plans coherently for the inclusion of pupils with additional and special educational needs, so that each pupil is supported to achieve the highest level of attainment and participation consistent with his or her abilities, strengths, interests and needs.

Ballinahinch National School recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children. Effective support for pupils with additional needs depends on respectful partnership between home, school, pupils and relevant outside professionals.

This policy applies to pupils enrolled in mainstream classes in Ballinahinch National School. It sets out the whole-school approach to identifying need, planning support, deploying Special Education Teacher resources, monitoring progress and working collaboratively with pupils, parents, staff and external agencies.

1.1 Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is informed by relevant legislation, Department of Education circulars and national guidance, including:

- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN)
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2018
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Department of Education Circular 0064/2024: The operation, application and deployment of Special Education Teacher resources

Note:

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- Department of Education Guidelines and Indicators of Effective Practice for Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, 2024
- NEPS Continuum of Support framework
- NCSE guidance for schools, including the SET Model and Indicators of Effective Practice
- Circular 0030/2014 and current NCSE/Department guidance in relation to the SNA scheme
- Circular 0054/2022 in relation to exemptions from the study of Irish in English-medium primary schools
- Circular 0040/2024 and Circular 0064/2024 in relation to standardised testing and use of assessment data
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools currently adopted by the school.

Circular 0064/2024 replaces Circulars 0013/2017 and 0014/2017. The school will continue to update practice in line with new Department of Education, NCSE and NEPS guidance as it becomes applicable.

2. School Context

Ballinahinch National School is a co-educational Catholic primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cashel and Emly. The school promotes equality, inclusion, participation and respect for diversity. The school aims to provide an inclusive learning environment in which pupils with additional and special educational needs are welcomed, valued and supported to participate meaningfully in school life.

3. Guiding Principles

- All pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced and appropriate education.
- Inclusion is a whole-school responsibility and is promoted through high-quality teaching, early intervention, differentiation and collaboration.
- Pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support.
- Support is informed by evidence, assessment, professional judgement and ongoing review.
- Support should be strengths-based and should address academic, social, emotional, behavioural, communication, sensory, physical and wellbeing needs where relevant.

The views of pupils and parents/guardians should inform planning and review, as appropriate to the pupil age and stage of development.

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- Special education teaching resources are deployed flexibly and reviewed regularly to meet changing pupil needs.
- Support may be provided through in-class support, team teaching, small-group teaching, individual support, consultation, targeted programmes and environmental adaptations.
- Records are maintained securely and processed in accordance with data protection requirements.

4. Aims of the Policy

The principal aim of special education needs support in Ballinahinch N.S. is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with learning difficulties. Special education needs support provision also seeks to:

- Set out a clear whole-school approach to supporting pupils with additional and special educational needs.
- Ensure that pupils with additional needs have access to an appropriate, inclusive and balanced curriculum.
- Identify pupils needs as early as possible through observation, screening, assessment and consultation.
- Use the Continuum of Support to provide graduated, targeted and reviewed support.
- Deploy Special Education Teacher resources effectively and transparently, prioritising pupils with the greatest needs.
- Support pupils academic, social, emotional, behavioural, communication and wellbeing development.
- Promote meaningful partnership with parents/guardians and pupil voice in support planning.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management, principal, SENCO, class teachers, SETs, SNAs, parents/guardians, pupils and external professionals.
- Support transitions into, within and out of the school.
- Provide a framework for monitoring, recording and reviewing the effectiveness of supports.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

In attempting to achieve these aims and objectives the school will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements set out in this policy.

5.1 Board of Management

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of this policy.

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- Ensures that the policy is informed by current legislation and Department of Education guidance.
- Ensures that appropriate teaching accommodation, resources and secure storage of records are provided within available resources.
- Supports the professional learning of staff in relation to inclusive education and special educational needs.
- Reviews whole-school assessment data and SEN provision at an appropriate level of generality, while respecting confidentiality.
- Ensures that SEN provision forms part of whole-school planning and School Self-Evaluation where appropriate.

5.2 Principal

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the SEN policy.
- Leads the whole-school approach to inclusive education and the deployment of SET resources.
- Assigns staff strategically to teaching and special education roles.
- Ensures continuity of provision for pupils across classes and school years.
- Ensures that systems are in place to identify needs, plan supports and monitor progress.
- Facilitates communication between class teachers, SETs, SNAs, parents/guardians, external professionals and the Board of Management.
- Liaises with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), NEPS and other external agencies as appropriate.
- Supports staff professional learning and ensures that staff understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Oversees assessment and screening procedures and ensures that data is used appropriately to inform teaching and support.
- Allocates time for SET planning, consultation and review, subject to school resources.

5.3 SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO)

- Communicates regularly with the principal in relation to SEN matters.
- Supports the coordination of SEN provision across the school.
- Works with the principal, SET team and class teachers to identify pupils needs and prioritise support.
- Coordinates regular SET planning and review meetings.
- Supports the creation and review of SET timetables and early intervention initiatives.

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- Coordinates standardised testing and supports the tracking of assessment data on Aladdin or other secure school systems.
- Maintains an overview of pupils receiving support across the Continuum of Support.
- Liaises with external agencies, including NEPS and the NCSE, as appropriate.
- Supports teachers in the use of Student Support Files and support planning.
- Shares relevant CPD information with staff.

5.4 Special Education Teachers (SETs)

- Collaborate with class teachers to identify needs, plan interventions and review progress.
- Use a range of evidence-informed approaches, including in-class support, team teaching, small-group teaching and individual support.
- Assist class teachers in creating and reviewing Student Support Files and support plans.
- Develop targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, and linked to priority needs.
- Administer and interpret diagnostic tests where appropriate and communicate outcomes to relevant staff and parents/guardians.
- Maintain planning and progress records for pupils and groups receiving support.
- Meet with class teachers and parents/guardians to discuss needs, targets and progress.
- Support whole-school screening, early intervention and prevention initiatives.
- Consult with external professionals, with parental consent where required.
- Provide relevant information to a receiving school when a pupil transfers, in line with data protection requirements and school procedures.

5.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching, learning, inclusion and progress of all pupils in their class, including pupils with additional and special educational needs.

- Create a positive, inclusive and well-structured classroom environment.
- Differentiate teaching approaches, expectations, content, process and outcomes to meet pupils diverse needs.
- Use Universal Design for Learning principles, where appropriate, to reduce barriers to learning.
- Administer and correct standardised tests in line with school procedures.
- Use observation, teacher-designed tasks, samples of work and assessment data to identify needs and monitor progress.

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- Initiate Classroom Support and open a Student Support File where additional needs are identified.
- Collaborate with SETs to develop School Support and School Support Plus plans.
- Communicate with parents/guardians regarding concerns, targets, supports and progress.
- Coordinate the daily work of any SNA assigned to support pupils in the class, under the direction of the principal.
- Ensure that pupils receiving withdrawal support do not repeatedly miss the same curricular area where possible.
- Liaise with the SENCO and principal as required.

5.6 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs are allocated to the school to assist teachers in meeting the core care needs and student support duties of some pupils with special educational needs. In accordance with Circular 0032/2026, SNA support is provided to facilitate pupils' access to education, participation in school life, inclusion, independence, wellbeing and safety. SNAs work under the direction of the Principal and class teachers. They do not have responsibility for teaching, assessment or curriculum planning.

- Support pupils with significant care needs as outlined in relevant care, support and healthcare plans and in line with school procedures.
- Promote independence, self-management and participation, avoiding unnecessary over-support and fostering the gradual development of pupil autonomy.
- Assist with personal care, mobility, communication, supervision, safety, organisation and regulation needs where relevant.
- Support pupils' participation during transitions, yard time, school activities, extracurricular activities, school tours and other aspects of school life.
- Support the implementation of agreed care, healthcare, behaviour, communication, sensory and regulation strategies under teacher direction.
- Encourage positive peer interactions, social inclusion and participation in age-appropriate activities.
- Communicate relevant observations relating to pupils' care, wellbeing, participation and support needs to the class teacher, SET teacher, SENCO and/or Principal.
- Participate in relevant school-based training and professional learning opportunities as directed by the Principal.
- Maintain confidentiality and uphold the dignity, privacy and rights of all pupils at all times.

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- Refer all matters relating to curriculum, teaching, assessment, pupil progress, discipline or educational planning to the class teacher or Principal.
- Recognise that SNA support is allocated to the school and may be deployed flexibly by the Principal to meet the changing needs of pupils across the school.

5.7 Parents and Guardians

- Share relevant information, reports and concerns with the school at enrolment and as needs arise.
- Provide copies of professional reports, where available, to support planning.
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher, SET or principal.
- Contribute to the development and review of support plans.
- Support agreed targets and home-based activities, where appropriate.
- Keep the school informed of changes that may affect the pupil learning, wellbeing or care needs.
- Engage with transition planning, including sharing relevant information with post-primary schools.

5.8 Pupils

- Contribute to the setting and review of their targets, appropriate to age and ability.
- Develop ownership of strategies that support their learning and participation.
- Engage with support teaching and classroom learning to the best of their ability.
- Participate in self-assessment and reflection where appropriate.
- Maintain attendance and punctuality as far as possible.

5.9 External Professionals

Educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, behaviour specialists, visiting teachers and other professionals may be involved in assessment, consultation, therapeutic intervention and advice. The school will engage with outside professionals, where appropriate and subject to consent, in order to support pupil inclusion, planning and review.

6. Whole-School Approach to Inclusion

Ballinahinch National School adopts a whole-school approach to special educational needs. This involves collaborative action by the school community to improve learning, participation, behaviour and wellbeing. It includes regular reflection on how needs are identified, how interventions are delivered, and how outcomes are measured and reviewed.

Inclusive practice in Ballinahinch National School is characterised by:

- A welcoming ethos and a sense of belonging for all pupils.

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- High expectations and appropriate challenge for all learners.
- Meaningful participation in classroom learning and school life.
- A focus on strengths, interests and pupil voice.
- Attention to academic, social, emotional, sensory, communication, physical and independence needs.
- Collaboration between class teachers, SETs, SNAs, parents/guardians, pupils and outside professionals.

7. Admission and Enrolment of Pupils with Additional Needs

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Admission Policy.

Ballinahinch National School will not discriminate in admission on the grounds of disability or special educational needs. The school will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance of its functions under the EPSEN Act 2004 and relevant legislation.

Parents/guardians are asked to share relevant reports and information at the earliest possible stage so that the school can plan appropriately. Information provided by parents/guardians will be used to support the pupil and to identify reasonable accommodations, supports, resources, care needs, access needs and risk reduction strategies where relevant.

Where a pupil presents with significant and complex needs, the principal may liaise with parents/guardians, the SENO, NEPS and relevant professionals to plan for transition and support. This may include meetings, classroom visits, social stories, staff training, environmental adaptations, assistive technology applications, SNA access applications or the development of support and care plans, as appropriate.

8. Early Intervention and Prevention

Ballinahinch National School recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention. Special education teaching resources may be used to support evidence-informed early intervention and whole-class or small-group initiatives, particularly in language, literacy, numeracy, social communication, emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Examples may include:

- Station teaching in junior classes.
- Early literacy and phonological awareness programmes.
- Oral language and vocabulary development.
- Early numeracy and number-sense interventions.
- Fine motor, handwriting or organisational supports.
- Social skills, friendship and emotional regulation programmes.
- In-class support and team teaching to reduce barriers and promote participation.

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Interventions will be monitored to assess their impact on pupil progress, participation and wellbeing.

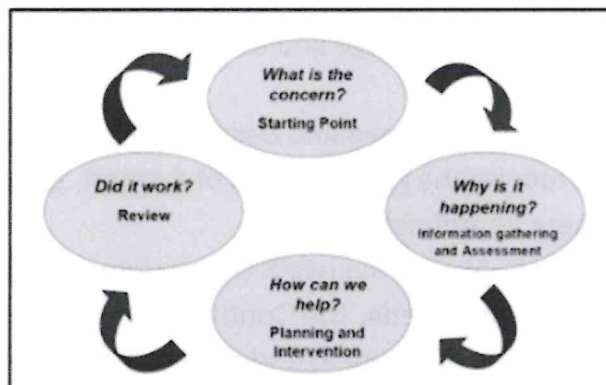
9. Identification of Special Educational Needs: Continuum of Support

Ballinahinch National School uses the NEPS Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. The Continuum recognises that needs may range from mild to severe and from transient to enduring. It provides a graduated model of assessment, planning, intervention and review.

Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, from transient to long-term and that pupils require various levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

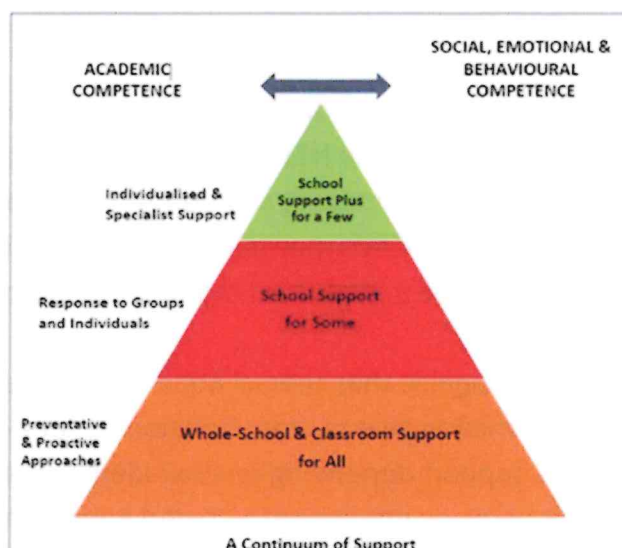
This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

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Ballinahinch N.S. uses the Department of Education's Continuum of Support framework to identify, plan for, support and review pupils with special educational needs.

This three-step approach ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and responded to appropriately, beginning with classroom-based support and progressing to more targeted or individualised support where required.

The framework helps staff to gather information, assess pupils' academic, social, emotional, physical, sensory, language and communication needs, and monitor progress over time.

Support is flexible, evidence-informed and based on the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support. External professionals may also be consulted where appropriate.

Ballinahinch National School uses the NEPS Continuum of Support framework to identify and respond to pupils needs. The Continuum recognises that needs may range from mild to severe and from transient to enduring. It provides a graduated model of assessment, planning, intervention and review.

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.

1. Pupils diagnosed as having significant and enduring Complex Needs.
2. Pupils scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
3. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy (to allow for a margin of error).

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4. Pupils scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics.
5. Pupils scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Mathematics (to allow for a margin of error).
6. 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 level.
7. Early intervention in mathematics - Infant Class pupils who continue to experience difficulties in early mathematics skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support level.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Pupils experiencing 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.
12. Support for the new language curriculum by providing in-class support to infant classes.
13. Transition to Post-Primary School (if required)
14. Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95th percentile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and / or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"), where their needs cannot be adequately met within the classroom.

9.1 Classroom Support

Classroom Support is the first level of response and is led by the class teacher. It is used when a pupil needs additional support beyond usual classroom differentiation. The class teacher gathers information, consults with parents/guardians and develops a short plan with clear targets and strategies.

Information may include:

- Teacher observation and records.

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- Teacher-designed assessments and samples of work.
- Parental consultation.
- Pupil consultation, where appropriate.
- Learning environment checklist or basic needs checklist.
- Screening tests in literacy, numeracy or language.
- Attendance, wellbeing or behaviour information.

A Classroom Support plan operates for an agreed period and is reviewed. If concerns persist, the pupil may move to School Support.

9.2 School Support

School Support is used where Classroom Support has not sufficiently addressed the pupil needs or where the level of need requires additional support from the SET team. A School Support plan is developed collaboratively by the class teacher, SET, parents/guardians and pupil, where appropriate.

Information may include:

- Teacher observation and teacher-designed assessment.
- Parent and pupil interviews.
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy, numeracy or language.
- Formal observation of behaviour, including ABC charts or frequency measures where appropriate.
- Screening measures for social, emotional or behavioural needs.
- Review of response to previous interventions.

Support may include in-class support, team teaching, small-group support, short-term targeted intervention, consultation, individual teaching or a combination of these approaches. The plan is reviewed after an agreed period.

9.3 School Support Plus

School Support Plus is used for pupils with more complex, significant or enduring needs. Planning is more detailed and individualised and may involve external professionals. The plan may include long-term and short-term targets, specialist recommendations, care needs, behaviour support, assistive technology, environmental adaptations and transition planning.

Information may include:

- Detailed teacher observation and assessment data.
- Parent and pupil consultation.
- Professional reports and recommendations.
- Diagnostic and standardised assessment information.
- Functional assessment or behaviour support information where relevant.
- Information on communication, sensory, physical, emotional, social and independence needs.

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10. Student Support Files and Support Planning

A Student Support File is used to document a pupil pathway through the Continuum of Support. It records strengths, priority needs, assessment information, targets, interventions, personnel involved and review outcomes.

Support plans will include:

- The pupil strengths, interests and views, where appropriate.
- Priority learning, participation, wellbeing or care needs.
- A small number of clear targets.
- Strategies and interventions to be used.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Resources required.
- Timeframe for review.
- Evidence used to evaluate progress.

10.1 Target Setting

Targets should be few in number, strengths-based, linked to priority needs, informed by assessment and achievable within an agreed timeframe. They should be observable and measurable where possible. Parents/guardians and pupils should be involved in target-setting and review, appropriate to age and ability.

11. Meeting Pupils Needs

11.1 Role of High-Quality Classroom Teaching

High-quality classroom teaching is the foundation of inclusive education. Class teachers plan to meet diverse needs using differentiation, scaffolding, active learning, cooperative learning, visual supports, explicit teaching, assessment for learning and flexible grouping. Teaching approaches may be adapted in relation to content, process, product, pace, support, resources, environment and assessment.

11.2 Role of Special Education Teaching

SET support may be provided through:

- In-class support and team teaching.
- Cooperative teaching or station teaching.
- Small-group targeted intervention.
- Individual teaching for specific priority needs.
- Consultation with class teachers and parents/guardians.
- Assessment, planning and review.
- Support for transitions and assistive technology.

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The balance between in-class and withdrawal support will be determined by pupil needs, targets, age, context, evidence of progress and available resources. Withdrawal support will be used where it is the most appropriate means of addressing identified priority needs.

12. Planning and Deployment of SET Resources

The overriding principle in deploying SET resources is that pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support. The school uses assessment data, teacher professional judgement, parental information, pupil voice and professional reports to identify needs and plan provision.

The school follows these actions when planning support:

1. Identify pupils needs using school-based data, teacher observation, parental input, pupil voice and professional reports.
2. Match needs to the appropriate level of the Continuum of Support.
3. Set clear targets linked to priority needs.
4. Select evidence-informed teaching approaches and interventions.
5. Organise early intervention and prevention programmes where appropriate.
6. Group pupils with similar needs where this supports effective teaching and learning.
7. Create SET timetables that prioritise pupils with complex and enduring needs while also supporting early intervention.
8. Track, record and review progress at pupil, group, class and whole-school level.

13. Screening and Assessment

Assessment is used to inform teaching, identify needs, monitor progress and evaluate interventions. Standardised test results will not be used in isolation; they will be considered alongside teacher observation, classroom performance, diagnostic assessment, pupil voice, parental information and professional reports.

13.1 Informal and Classroom-Based Assessment

- Teacher observation and anecdotal records.
- Questioning and discussion.
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests.
- Samples of work and portfolios.
- Self-assessment and peer assessment, where appropriate.
- Checklists and rating scales.
- Behaviour, attendance and wellbeing information.

13.2 Whole-Group Screening and Standardised Assessments

Assessment	Class Level	Purpose
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ALPACA	Junior Infants & Senior Infants	To identify early literacy and phonological awareness difficulties so that targeted support and intervention can be provided.
JOLST	Junior Infants & Senior Infants	To identify pupils who may be at risk of literacy and language difficulty.
MIST	Senior Infants	To screen language skills and identify pupils who may require further support.
PM Benchmark / reading benchmark assessment	Infants to Second Class and as needed	To identify instructional reading level and comprehension needs.
CORE Phonics Screening	First to Sixth Class	To provide information on phonics skills.
CORE Vocabulary Screening	First to Sixth Class	To provide information on vocabulary skills.
MASI Oral Reading Fluency	First to Sixth Class	To assess reading and comprehension and monitor progress.
LETRS Spelling Screener	First to Sixth Class	To assess students ability to spell regular phoneme-grapheme correspondences and orthographic patterns
Micra-T/ Drumcondra Primary	First to Sixth Class	To assess reading attainment and inform teaching and support.
Sigma-T / Drumcondra Primary Maths Test	First to Sixth Class	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.
Basic Number Diagnostic Test	Infants to Second Class and as needed	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.
Chinn 60 Second test for Addition/ Subtraction	First to Sixth Class	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.

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Chinn 120 Second test for Multiplication/ Division	Third to Sixth Class	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.
Chinn 15 Minute Mathematics Test	First to Sixth Class	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.
PDST Checklists for strands in Maths	Any class as needed	To assess maths attainment and inform teaching and support.
Basic Skills Checklist	Any class as needed	To assess students with autism or additional needs

13.3 Diagnostic Assessment

Where further information is required, the SET team may use diagnostic assessment tools such as dyslexia screening measures, WIAT subtests or Diagnostic Reading Analysis or other appropriate tools available to the school.

13.4 Standardised Testing and Reporting

The school administers standardised tests in line with Department of Education requirements. Results are used to inform teaching, identify priority needs and support whole-school planning. Required standardised testing data will be uploaded to the Department portal within the published timeframe each year. Results will be communicated to parents/guardians through the school report and/or meetings as appropriate.

13.5 Parental Consent

Parents/guardians will be consulted when a pupil moves to School Support or School Support Plus. Consent will be sought where required for diagnostic testing, external referral, sharing reports or engaging with outside agencies. Annual consent for certain school-based assessments may be obtained through Aladdin or other school procedures.

14. Timetabling

- SET timetables are prepared by the SENCO/SET team in consultation with the principal and class teachers.

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- Pupils at School Support Plus and pupils with the greatest level of need are prioritised.
- Whole-class and early intervention initiatives are included where appropriate.
- Timetables remain flexible and are reviewed to respond to changing needs.
- Pupils should not repeatedly miss the same curricular area due to withdrawal support, where possible.
- If a session is missed due to special circumstances, the SET will attempt to reschedule where practicable.
- Interruptions to classes should be kept to a minimum.

15. Communication and Collaboration

15.1 Communication with Class Teachers

SETs and class teachers will communicate regularly through formal planning meetings and informal consultation. The purpose is to identify needs, coordinate support, share strategies, review targets and monitor progress.

15.2 Communication with Parents and Guardians

Parents/guardians of pupils receiving School Support or School Support Plus will be invited to meetings to discuss targets and progress. Additional meetings may be arranged where concerns arise. Communication may take place through meetings, Aladdin, phone, email, written notes or a communication copy, where appropriate.

15.3 Communication with SNAs

SNAs receive direction from the principal and teachers. Communication between SNAs and parents during arrival or collection should be brief and related to immediate care or wellbeing matters only. Matters relating to teaching, learning, progress, classroom management or discipline should be referred to the class teacher or principal.

15.4 Communication with Board of Management and External Agencies

The principal will keep the Board of Management informed of SEN provision at an appropriate level, while maintaining confidentiality. The principal, SENCO and SETs will liaise with outside agencies where appropriate and with parental consent where required.

16. Supervision, Child Protection and Safeguarding

All support provision will be delivered in line with the school Child Safeguarding Statement and the Child Protection Procedures currently adopted by the school. Where pupils receive one-to-one or small-group support, staff will ensure appropriate

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visibility and supervision arrangements. Where possible, rooms with glass panels will be used. Where no glass panel is available, the door should remain open or another appropriate safeguarding measure should be used.

- SETs will collect and return pupils to classrooms where appropriate.
- SNAs may support a pupil outside the classroom only where this is part of an agreed plan and under teacher/principal direction.
- Any child protection concern must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in accordance with school procedures.

17. Record-Keeping and Data Protection

Records relating to pupils with additional needs are confidential and are managed in accordance with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, school data protection policies and relevant Department guidance. Records may include professional reports, Student Support Files, support plans, meeting notes, assessment results, care plans, behaviour support plans and correspondence.

- Hard-copy reports are stored securely in locked storage.
- Digital records are stored on secure, password-protected school systems such as Aladdin or other approved platforms.
- Access to records is limited to staff who require the information to support the pupil.
- Information is shared with outside agencies or receiving schools only in line with school procedures, consent requirements and data protection obligations.
- Records are retained and disposed of in accordance with the school data protection and records retention policy.

18. Exemptions from the Study of Irish

Applications for exemption from the study of Irish in Ballinahinch National School will be processed in accordance with Circular 0054/2022 and any subsequent Department of Education guidance. A written application must be made by the parent/guardian to the principal. The school will consider applications only in the circumstances set out in the circular, will maintain records of decisions and will update POD where required.

19. Continuation, Review and Discontinuation of Support

Pupil progress is reviewed regularly. Following consultation with class teachers, SETs, parents/guardians and pupils, as appropriate, a decision may be made to continue, increase, reduce, change or discontinue support. Decisions are based on progress towards targets, current needs, assessment data, classroom functioning and available resources.

Support may be discontinued where targets have been met, where the pupil is progressing appropriately with classroom support, or where another form of support is

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more suitable. Discontinuation may include a transition period, continued monitoring and agreed classroom/home strategies.

20. Transition Planning

The school supports transitions into Junior Infants, between classes, from other schools and from Sixth Class to post-primary school. Transition planning may include meetings with parents/guardians, sharing relevant information with consent, use of pupil passports, school visits, liaison with post-primary SENCOs and preparation of pupils for new routines and expectations.

21. Review of Policy

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate. It will be reviewed every four years, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation, Department of Education guidance, school context, pupil needs or available resources.

The Board of Management will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy by monitoring, at an appropriate level:

- The progress and outcomes of pupils receiving support.
- The number of pupils at Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus.
- The balance of in-class, group and individual support.
- The impact of early intervention and prevention programmes.
- Feedback from staff, parents/guardians and pupils.
- Engagement with external professionals and agencies.
- The suitability of resources, accommodation and CPD.

22. References and Guidance Considered

- Department of Education, Circular 0064/2024: The operation, application and deployment of Special Education Teacher resources.
- Department of Education, Guidelines and Indicators of Effective Practice for Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, 2024.
- NEPS, Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers.
- NCSE, SET Model and Indicators of Effective Practice resources for primary schools.
- Department of Education, Circular 0054/2022: Exemptions from the Study of Irish - Primary.
- Department of Education, Circular 0030/2014: The Special Needs Assistant scheme.
- Department of Education, current standardised testing guidance and circulars.

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- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools currently adopted by the school.
- Data Protection Commission, Data Protection Toolkit for Schools.

Policy Review, Ratification & Communication

This policy was updated in Ballinahinch National School in **May 2026** and ratified by the Board of Management on **Thursday 11th June 2026**.

This policy will be reviewed every four years, however it may be reviewed at an earlier time should the need arise. Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

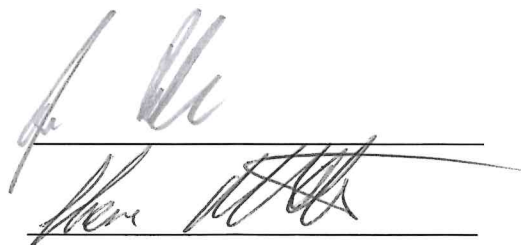
The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Board of Management.

Signed by Chairperson

Signed by Principal



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