



RCS Inclusion and Additional Support Policy

2019

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Rationale
3. Aims of the Policy
4. Definition of Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and Inclusion
5. Roles and Responsibilities
 - 5.1. Board of Management
 - 5.2. Principal
 - 5.3. Mainstream Teachers
 - 5.4. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
 - 5.5. Teachers Involved in the Provision of Support
 - 5.6. Class Tutors
 - 5.7. Guidance Counsellor
 - 5.8. Home School Liaison Co-ordinator
 - 5.9. Inclusion Support Assistants
 - 5.10. Parents
 - 5.11. Students
6. Identification of Students with AEN
7. ASD Class
8. International students with English Language Needs
9. Exceptionally Able Students
10. Students in various groups e.g. LGBTQi+
11. Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources
 - 11.1. Resources
 - 11.2. Allocating Resources
 - 11.3. Continuum of Support
 - 11.4. Strategies to meet the needs of students with AEN
 - 11.5. Tracking, recording and reviewing progress
12. Information Gathering and Assessment
13. Curricular Modifications
14. Irish Exemptions
15. Reasonable Accommodation
16. Curriculum and Extra-Curricular Activities
17. Monitoring and Review

1. Introduction

At Ramsgrange Community School (RCS) we aim to create and sustain a caring, supportive and safe environment in which our staff and students feel valued, motivated and stimulated in their efforts to grow as human beings and to realise their full potential. We believe that our mission statement is best achieved in a safe and secure environment, which supports and recognises individual rights and responsibilities, encourages commitment, and shared responsibility for the achievement of excellence in the interests of the common good.

At Ramsgrange Community School we believe that the interests of all children and young adults should be valued equally and equitably, irrespective of any individual needs or differences we are committed to making effective provision, in partnership with the Department of Education and other agencies, for all students in our school with special educational needs and disabilities. In Ramsgrange Community School we are committed to the highest standards and we strive to ensure that all our students achieve their full potential in an inclusive and accessible environment.

All staff are committed to supporting and nurturing all students, and to supporting our families and those who work with them, where appropriate. Our working practices are based on respect, trust, honesty, integrity and equity.

2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000) ;
- Provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our AEN procedures and practices;
- Outline the framework for addressing additional differences and abilities in our school;
- 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).

3. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- Highlight the various practices in our school that promote and champion Inclusion;
- Identify additional needs and strengths that our pupils may have;
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of students with variable abilities;
- Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs ;
- Track, monitor, review and report on the progress of students with variable abilities;

- Communicate information between the Special Education Team (SET), principal, staff and parents/guardians.

4. Definition of Special Educational Needs & Inclusion

Section 1 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004, defines special educational needs in the following terms:

“Special educational needs means in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition...”

It also defines Inclusive Education : “A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with—

(a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or

(b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.

In the context of this policy the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ (SEN) shall include students with learning support and resource needs. It also includes the Inclusion of students with disabilities but no SEN needs. For the remainder of this policy and its practice in our school SEN will be referred to as Additional Educational Needs (AEN).

In Ramsgrange Community School our Inclusion Policy will also apply to others with particular needs including various groups e.g. LGBTQi+, EAL Students etc.

In the context of this policy Support Teachers shall include Learning Support and Resource Teachers.

In adherence with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (Draft) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities we acknowledge that the broad aims of education for students with additional educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

- Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum;
- Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential;
- Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.

RCS works in line with The Department's policy, "to achieve as much integration as possible, as envisaged in Section 2 of the EPSEN Act. Where placement in an integrated setting is considered to be the appropriate response, provision will normally take the form of resource teaching or special needs assistant support, or both, depending on the pupil's assessed level of need."

"While the DES' policy is to ensure the maximum possible integration of children with additional needs into ordinary mainstream schools, students who have been assessed as having special educational needs have access to a range of special support services. The services range from special schools dedicated to particular disability groups, through special classes/units attached to ordinary schools, to placement on an integrated basis in ordinary schools with supports."

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special educational needs, lies with the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) is responsible:

- To ensure that all students with learning support/additional educational needs are identified and assessed;
 - To ensure that the school has a comprehensive additional educational needs policy in place, which has been developed collaboratively with all stakeholders – parents, students, staff, BOM to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation;
 - To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous, differentiated and accessible curriculum is provided in the school to ensure, as far as is practicable, that students with additional educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society and to live independently in their adult lives;
 - To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with additional educational needs;
 - To ensure that a relevantly qualified special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinators are appointed from among the teaching staff (where possible);
 - To ensure that parents/guardians are informed of the provision that the school will make to try catering for their child's additional educational needs and how those needs are being met?
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- To promote the development of positive partnership with parents/guardians and other relevant agencies/personnel;
 - To ensure that parents/guardians are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their student's education.

- To ensure that this Inclusion and Additional Support Policy forms part of the School Plan;
- To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy as required under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

5.2. Principal

Under current legislation the Principal of the school has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the additional educational needs of the students are met.

The Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with additional educational needs. As outlined in Section 18 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers.

The principal's duties include:

- Appointing a relevantly qualified special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinators from among the teaching staff (where possible) and to work closely with the co-ordinator;
- To inform the Board of Management of issues relevant to additional educational needs;
- To inform Parents of issues relevant to additional education needs, and to encourage parents as active participants in ensuring the best possible model of AEN allocation is being deployed.
- In consultation with the additional educational need's coordinators and other relevant personnel to liaise the Department of Education and other agencies regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodation and exemptions in relation to state examinations, as well as assessments;
- To consult with parents, where relevant, regarding the school and student's needs and provision;
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds. This should include equality and equity of access and opportunity for students with additional educational needs in terms of resources;
- To actively promote a whole school approach to additional educational needs and to make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to organize appropriate staff development in this area.

5.3. Mainstream Teachers

The mainstream teacher has the responsibility for ensuring that all students, including those with additional educational needs, are provided with a learning programme and environment that enables equitable access to the curriculum and to advance their learning. Mainstream teachers should make themselves aware of the additional educational needs of students in their classes. They should have access to all information that is relevant to teaching a student with additional educational needs.

Their duties include:

- To make provision for students with additional educational needs in their classes and subject areas;
- To be part of a whole school approach in relation to additional educational needs as well as literacy/numeracy;
- To develop a positive ethos in the classroom for fostering an inclusive approach to meeting the social and educational needs of all students including students with additional educational needs;
- To identify personal training needs and to secure training where needed. This will be supported by school management subject to the availability of adequate resources;
- To inform the SEN co-ordinators of any concerns about a students' learning through the AEN confidential referral form.

5.4. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

The SEN co-ordinators should work closely with the Principal and Deputy Principal, ISA's (formerly SNA'S), Parents and other support teachers to ensure the needs of the students are being met

The strategic duties of the Special Educational Needs Coordinators include:

- To have an overview of the management of the provision that is being provided in the school
- To facilitate effective systems of communication between all staff and colleagues involved in the provision.
- To facilitate effective systems of communication with parents and to encourage parent participation e.g. guest speakers, getting regular feedback from parents etc.
- To ensure all staff and colleagues involved are working within school policy in relation to additional educational needs
- To ensure that all provision in the school has the effect of integrating the student into a safe, secure, supportive learning environment.
- To ensure that all action taken supports a student's progress, well-being and learning.
- To be aware of issues of attendance and child protection as they relate to additional educational needs and refer such issues of concern in relation to child protection to a member of the Care Team in the school as appropriate.

- To supervise the day-to-day operation of the school's additional educational needs policy, and to work closely with and under the overall direction of the school principal.
- To engage in personal professional development.
- To liaise with and advise other teachers.
- To meet regularly with the additional educational needs team, home school community liaison officer, the guidance counsellor and other relevant personnel, as appropriate.
- To manage Inclusion Support Assistants under the direction of the Principal.
- To liaise with parents of students with additional educational needs and include them in the formulation of Student Support Files for their child.
- To ensure the distribution of suitable learning resources and teaching aids, subject to those resources and teaching aids being made available by the Department of Education and Science or other agencies.
- To liaise with external agencies including primary schools, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, Special Education Support Service, Health Boards and Voluntary bodies.
- In consultation with the Principal to ensure that Student Support Files are in place, as required.
- To develop practices to aid the identification of students with additional educational needs.
- To co-ordinate the provision for students with additional educational needs and keep a register of needs and provision.
- Generating the school's Resource & Learning Support timetable.
- Administering standardised literacy and numeracy assessments for screening and/or diagnostic purposes in co-operation with the Guidance Counsellor.
- Sharing relevant information about students' needs with teachers.
- Contributing to the development of learning plans.
- Completing applications for Irish Exemptions.
- Completing applications to the NSCE for additional supports.
- Completing applications to NEPS for educational assessments.
- Completing applications to the Examinations Commission for RACE.

5.5. Teachers involved in the provision of Support, Additional Education Teachers (A.E.T.)

Teachers providing supplementary teaching to students with additional educational needs (AET) are expected to give this work the same status as other work e.g. preparation time, punctuality, recording student attendance, maintaining a record of work covered etc. They should request information from the SEN co-ordinators relating to the needs of their assigned student(s) and are required to participate in the production and review of learning plans with the SEN co-ordinators. They should liaise with the mainstream subject teacher where appropriate.

AET

The work of the AET includes the following

- Assessment and identification of students with additional needs.
 - Recommending and devising appropriate materials for students in terms of concepts, relevance, readability, layout and presentation.
 - Consulting with colleagues on appropriate methodology to help obviate learning barriers.
 - Consulting with colleagues to devise a range of teaching and learning strategies.
 - Contributing to cross-curricular issues concerned with the broader ideas of learning and teaching throughout the school.
 - In-Class Support: In-class support is planned work with a group of children where two or more teachers are working together.
 - Withdrawal- where a student or small group of students are withdrawn under direction of the SEN co-ordinators for resource/learning support.
 - Team-teaching – as deemed appropriate.
 - Support teachers provide diagnostic assessments, monitoring, advice as well as direct teaching to students with special educational needs either on an individual or small group basis.
 - Assessing and recording student needs and progress.
 - Setting specific, time-related targets for each student and agreeing these with the subject teacher, principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinators.
 - Advising subject teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and suitable software and a range of other related matters.
 - Meeting and inviting participation of parents, when necessary, accompanied by the principal, Deputy Principal and/or the Special Needs Coordinators.
 - Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the students' interest – e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers, special school or special class teachers where relevant.
- Support teachers should be involved in the development and delivery, or the organisation of delivery, of Student Support Files, and in the context of a whole school approach to the issue.

5.6. Class Tutors

Class Tutors can facilitate the inclusion of an individual student with additional educational needs by monitoring the student's progress within the class.

5.7. Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor assists students with additional educational needs at the different stages of schooling and in making career decisions. Individualised guidance and support for students with additional educational needs is part of the support structure in the school. The Guidance Counsellor works in partnership with the SEN co-ordinators to administer assessments on incoming students and in the collaboration of results.

5.8. Home School Liaison Co-ordinator

Ramsgrange Community School has a Home School Liaison Co-ordinator available who provides support to parents of students with additional educational needs. The Co-ordinator also works with feeder primary schools collating information on incoming students.

5.9. Inclusion Support Assistants (Inclusion Support Assistants)

This should be read in conjunction with ISA policy (currently in draft form)

Inclusion Support Assistants (ISAs) work closely with and under the direction of the Principal and the special educational needs coordinator and the individual subject teachers in the implementation of the school's policy as it relates to individual students or groups of students. In particular, ISAs play a very important role in the health and safety of the student/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development.

The Principal in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education and Science (circular 0030/2014) assigns the duties of Inclusion Support Assistants. The ISA is privy to confidential information pertaining to SEN pupils and as such confidentiality is of paramount importance.

Where a student allocated access to an ISA is absent, the ISA shall follow the list of students who require ISA access on AEN Noticeboard.

The allocation of an Inclusion Support Assistant to assist a student should be balanced against the student's needs to develop independence and to gain access to education in school alongside and in the same way as other students. Care should be taken, therefore, to ensure that the deployment of an Inclusion Support Assistant does not serve to segregate the student with additional educational needs from their classmates or to make them more dependent on assistance from others.

The duties of Inclusion Support Assistants include tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- Assisting students write, take notes and write down homework etc.
- Assisting students to board and alight from school buses. (Where necessary, travelling as escort on school buses may be required.)
- Special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled students with typing or writing.

- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of students with additional educational needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- Generally assisting the subject teachers, under the direction of the Principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, with duties of a nonteaching nature.
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- In consultation with the SEN co-ordinators, develop Personal Pupil Plans as required by National Council for Special Education.
- Support the implementation of targets from the plan and monitor and review targets as necessary.

5.10. Parents

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We aim to ensure that our Parents are valued as stakeholders in the school. Parents are consulted regularly for feedback. Parent involvement includes the following;

- Parent groups are sked for feedback on new/amended policies.
- Parents feedback is sought after via surveys/questionnaires either online or otherwise.
- Parent volunteers are involved in the JCSP garden.
- WWETB support parent inclusion by funding an Art/Horticulture Programme annually.
- Parent volunteer deliver courses to our 1st year students e.g. Maths for Fun, One Book One Community, French oral work
- Parents help the school during large events e.g. Parking, event management, sponsorship
- Parents are elected nominees to the Board of Management

We aim to ensure that the school and parents to work in close partnership with each other in the identification of need, the setting of educational targets and working with the child.

Ramsgrange Community School affirms that parents of students with special educational needs will be informed of how they are being met. They will also be, where

necessary, participate and work with the school in order to ensure that their child's needs are being met. In addition, parents must be involved in all significant decisions relating to their child's education. Wherever possible, parents and students will be included in discussion and decision-making regarding identification, target setting and progress.

Parents can support the work of the school by providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy, and mathematical activities and where school and school work are positively encouraged.

Parents are asked to supply information on their child's additional educational needs at the time of enrolment and are required to give consent to the school to administer assessments on their child during their time at the school. Parents of students with educational assessments are requested to allow the school share relevant information from these reports with mainstream teachers for appropriate programme planning.

5.11. Students

We aim to ensure that our Students are valued as stakeholders in the school. This is done in the following ways:

- The promotion of student voice is part of the Senior Management Team Strategic Plan.
- Students feedback is sought after in terms of new/amended policies. Students are now being invited to participate in relevant working groups at school management level e.g. 2018/2019 – Behaviour Review Group.
- A democratically elected student council from all year's groups. Principal meets regularly and addresses the student council.
- Student Voice Liaison Teacher forms part of the post structure within the school.
- Students are consulted with via focus groups for various aspects of school life.

Students should, as appropriate contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment. They should develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these to improve their own learning. Students at senior cycle who are withdrawn from a subject are expected to use their time appropriately to complete briefs for practical subjects, complete LCVP assignments and study towards their examinations.

6. Identification of students with AEN

The identification process will usually involve the following:

- Liaison with Primary Schools
- Specific section on the admissions/enrolment form
- Liaison with parents
- Observations by the subject teachers, tutors, support teachers, Chaplain and guidance counsellor as appropriate.
- Formal assessments/testing.
- Referral form on SEN Noticeboard in staffroom for any staff member to fill out if they feel a student in Ramsgrange Community School may have a learning difficulty/special educational need.

If a student has not been identified as having special educational needs until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought, to have the student assessed if deemed necessary by the assigned NEPS Psychologist. The number of referrals for assessment is limited to those granted by NEPS and thus referrals are made on a need only basis.

7. ASD Class

The aim of the ASD Class is to provide a caring learning environment, which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. The Principal, Teachers, Support staff and Parents are partners in their children's education with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same purpose – the care and well-being of the students in our care. A great emphasis is placed on the areas of communication, daily living skills, social skills and literacy.

The ASD class strives to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil. With a team of dedicated teachers and support staff, the school provides individual attention catering for the uniqueness of each pupil's personality. The aim is to enable the children to attain their educational potential and fulfil their role in society.

Break-time Procedures

Students are permitted to access the room 9 at break time and lunch time. Supervision is provided for a specified list of students during this time and social skills are practised.

However, students are also encouraged to be independent and avail of the facilities of the school during break times.

Integration and Inclusion of pupils from the ASD Class into Mainstream Classes

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 states 'A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
- The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.

The amount of integration/reverse integration that each child receives in Ramsgrange Community School is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. teachers (both special education teachers and mainstream), the Principal and support staff. The views of parents and other interested parties such as Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists will be taken into account. However, the school's decision is final.

Enrolment into ASD Class

Enrolment and application for a place in our ASD class is in accordance with our Admissions Policy, 2018.

ASD Class notification of vacancies

- The Principal will notify the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) of the number of vacancies in the existing classes for the following year. The SENO will also be informed of the names of students on the application list.
- When the places for the following school year have been filled, the Principal will inform the SENO of the names of the students who remain on the waiting list without places.
- The SENO will also be informed if vacancies arise during the school year following recommendation from the admissions committee.

ASD Class Transition Programme

- The SEN Co-ordinator and/or ASD Class Co-ordinator will endeavour to visit schools and observe incoming students in their existing placements. This will happen during the second or third term of the school year.
- Transitional Programmes will be arranged on an individual basis with successful applicants in consultation with parents, educational staff and other relevant personnel.

Staff Roles

Principal/ Deputy Principal

With reference to the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, the role of the principal entails:

1. Direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole school approach to integration
2. Responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resourcing
3. Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustment following consultation
4. Working with parents and out-of-school agencies.

Special Class Teachers

1. Will identify the appropriate curriculum area the child in the Autism Unit should experience
2. Ensure ISA support is available during any period of integration
3. Collaborate and consult with mainstream teachers in setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant short-term and long-term targets
4. Assume responsibility for an ongoing student support file in consultation with the relevant support services, parents and the Principal.

Class Teachers

1. Will differentiate teaching programmes to meet the needs of the child from the ASD class
2. Provide a suitable seating arrangement in a mainstream setting
3. Collaborate with the Special Class Teacher and the ISA
4. Provide feedback on progress.

8. International students with English Language Needs

Ramsgrange Community School will carefully plan how students from minority ethnic backgrounds with low levels of English are to be taught and integrated.

Ramsgrange Community School must introduce initiatives to encourage students from minority ethnic backgrounds to mix with Irish students in and out of class.

Ramsgrange Community School welcomes foreign students to study with us annually from a minimum of 6 weeks to the full year.

The school through its normal operating procedures shall ensure that adequate additional teaching support is applied for and allocated as per the regulations of the Department of Education.

9. Exceptionally Able Students

EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE STUDENTS

Students who score in the top five percentile of norm referenced ability tests, administered by the school, will be termed gifted for the purpose of this policy. The school will enhance the educational development of gifted students by the provision of a suitable curricular programme, by employing appropriate educational strategies, and by fostering an ethos conducive to high achievement.

Ramsgrange Community School recognises that exceptionally able students have particular needs.

Identification of students with high ability comes from a successful amalgamation of evidence from a variety of sources including assessments and diagnostic tests, observations and class work.

Exceptionally able students have special educational needs. Because regular schoolwork may not provide sufficient challenge, they may experience boredom, which can lead to frustration at school. In addition, many may feel isolated and uncomfortable with their ability. This can lead to them under-achieving in school in an effort to conform. There are several approaches Ramsgrange Community School takes that can be of help and sometimes a combination of all of these may be needed

- a) Differentiation
- b) Open ended project work
- c) Special classes: Have special classes available for a group of high ability students, perhaps on a weekly basis.
- d) Enrichment Activities: Providing access to activities such as lunchtime clubs e.g. chess, astronomy, quizzes, debates, music groups, drama. Particularly try to facilitate students meeting others with similar interests even if they are in different year groups.

Students are also encouraged:

- to take extra subjects
- take part in extra-curricular e.g. Coding
- join the CTYI
- attend summer schools
- apply for scholarship programmes

10. Students in various groups e.g. LGBTQi+

Rationale:

Sexual orientation is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human and it is during the post-primary school years that most young people go through puberty and begin the process of maturation. It is also a time when young people come to an awareness and understanding of their sexuality. For the majority this can be a challenging and exciting period. However, for many LGBTQ+ young people it can be a very difficult time in their lives, particularly when 'gay' prevails as a common term of abuse and many are exposed to homophobic bullying.

Studies in Ireland show that many LGBTQ+ students have had a negative experience in school and so, do not reach their full potential because of homophobic bullying and/or harassment. Many are in danger of leaving school early, experiencing mental health problems and becoming involved in self-harming behaviours that often go hand in hand with poor self-esteem (Department of education and Skills: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students in Post-Primary Schools: Guidance for Principals and School Leaders)

There are clear benefits for the whole school community in addressing issues related to sexual orientation. Students will receive the message that everyone is a valued member of the school community, no matter what their difference may be, and that diversity is a valued part of the school culture.

According to the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 there are nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited:

- gender
- marital status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age

- disability
- race and
- membership of the Traveller community.

The School's Role

Ramsgrange Community School strives to be supportive of all students and ensures that they feel happy and safe. Unlike other aspects of identity, sexual orientation is not necessarily visible or apparent. It is for the person herself to come to an understanding of their identity. Therefore, it is important that pupils are not asked about their sexual orientation unless they volunteer such information themselves. As this can be a very challenging time for young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students, it is important that if they do speak to someone about their concerns, that this person will have their best interests at heart. Equally it should not be assumed that a young person who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is necessarily troubled by their sexual orientation.

The Teacher's Role

If a student chooses to “come out” to one of their teachers, the teacher will communicate a message to the young person that they are valued equally, will be treated equally to other students and that the school leadership will ensure their safety and support. It is critical that the young LGBTQ+ student discovering their sexual orientation feels supported and valued regardless of whether or not they disclose their sexual orientation.

When a young person “comes out” as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender they are disclosing their sexual orientation and identity. This will not be interpreted as a statement of engagement in sexual behaviour. However, the advice given in the Child Protection Guidelines relating to sexual activity applies to all students regardless of their sexual orientation. (Note: The legal age of consent in Ireland is 17 years for boys and girls irrespective of sexual orientation).

Only if a teacher has legitimate cause for concern for the student's safety should engagement with the student's parents be made. Often a young person experiences intense fear of rejection by his/her family and consequently finds it easier to “come out” to others first. The teacher should strive to ensure a positive experience of coming out where the student is met with acceptance. This is critical in order to safeguard the student's mental health and well-being. It is hoped that it can also lessen the fear of the student eventually disclosing to his/her family and friends.

Ramsgrange Community School will endeavour to:

- Identify relevant resources and supports such as information leaflets and organisations (local and national) that could be of assistance to the young person
- Consult with the young person on how they would like the school to deal with their “coming out” if, at all
- Advise staff members on what they should do if a student tells them that she is questioning their sexual orientation and might be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes willingness to listen to the student, offering support relative to her needs and avoiding assumptions that a student is going through a phase or is too young to make such a discovery.

Young learners who may be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender have the following needs from those who work in the educational sector:

- Support and reassurance for those who are in the process of “coming out”.
- Support and reassurance for those who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Support and reassurance around disclosing LGBTQ+ identity to peers, friends, family, teaching staff, youth workers and others.
- Support in accessing information and contact with other young LGBTQ+ people.
- Protection from prejudice and stereotyping.
- Protection from anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and harassment.
- To have their LGBTQ+ identity recognised, validated and normalised in educational establishments and learning activities.

A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In seeking to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students including LGBTQ+ students, Ramsgrange Community School will act in a number of ways. Reasonably practicable steps to help meet its obligations under the Equal Status Acts could include the following:

- Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment Policy and Code of Behaviour: The Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment Policy is explicit in addressing all forms of homophobic bullying and harassment. The code of behaviour refers to LGBTQ+ students and sets out procedures and initiatives in relation to homophobic bullying and harassment.

- Admissions: Ramsgrange Community School Admissions policy is welcoming and inclusive of all students, including LGBT students.
- School Development Plan: Our school plan is developed within a framework of equality and inclusion for LGBTQ+ students, including equality objectives for these students.
- Staff training: staff training is encouraged empowering teachers with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to raise their awareness of equality issues and LGBTQ+ students and to address homophobic harassment and bullying in our school. All promotional literature for the school is inclusive in its language and message.
- Guidance Counsellor: The Guidance Counsellor has sufficient training and understanding on the area of sexual identity and will identify the supports our school will make available to a young person who 'comes out' or begins to question their sexual identity. Student-to-student supports may also be developed.
- RSE: In RCS, we ensure that sexual orientation is addressed in a positive and open way when talking about human sexuality. SPHE teachers are supported in attending in-service training on sexuality and sexual orientation.
- CSPE: LGBTQ+ experiences should be included in areas of the curriculum such as Human Rights, Human Dignity, Discrimination, Legal Rights, Political Campaigning and Advocacy.
- School Environment: positive images and messages are displayed in our school celebrating diversity and showing images of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. An environment where diversity is affirmed and supported is a healthier environment for all students.
- Student Council: The student council is a fair and democratic election process.

LGBT Teachers in School

Schools that are inclusive and supportive of LGBTQ+ students are also supportive and inclusive of all LGBTQ+ people, including teachers and other staff members. School culture and ethos determine how open staff can be about their personal lives in the staff room. Research with LGBTQ+ teachers have shown that they often feel limited in their ability to be open about their personal lives in the staff room . The support of school management can make a significant difference to LGBTQ+ teachers and to the whole school culture and ethos. Such support can be demonstrated by explicit reference to LGBTQ+ people in all policy and staffing issues.

References

- Department of Education and Science (2004). Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools.
- Department of Education and Science (1996). Relationships and Sexuality Education: An Aspect of Social, Personal and Health Education Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools.
- Department of Education and Skills. Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students in Post-Primary Schools Guidance for Principals and School Leaders
- GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) (2016). Being LGBT in School
- NDP, Department of Education and Skills and The Equality Authority. Schools and the Equal Status Acts
- The Equality Authority. Making Your School Safe for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students.
- www.workplacerelations.ie – www.belongto.org

11. Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

11.1. Resources

Application for Additional Resources:

The SEN co-ordinators will make applications to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) for additional resources on behalf of individual students on receipt of the following:

- a) Duly completed forms as specified by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- b) Current psychological reports, as appropriate.
- c) Other relevant support documentation, as appropriate.

Once the Department of Education makes a decision in relation to resources, the school will notify the student and parents. Should a student in receipt of resource (SEN) support leave the school for whatever reason, the school should notify the SENO, through the relevant form issued by the NCSE each February.

Physical Resources allocated to a student shall remain the property of Ramsgrange Community School at all times.

We endeavour to deploy resources in a way that best promotes the students' learning and development, with full accountability for all resources allocated. This includes the deployment of resources for the specific purpose for which they are intended.

11.2. Allocating Resources

Once pupils' needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between team teaching, in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

Twice yearly, in September and in January the SENCOs and SETs formally meet to review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. The SENCOs then bring this information to the end of term SET team planning meetings. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term / year.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

Stage 3 School Support Plus

Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a,

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Assessed Syndrome
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment Individual Education Plans

Types of Support

In-Class Support

Team-Teaching

Group Withdrawal

Individual Withdrawal

Personnel

SET teacher

Mainstream Teachers

SNA

Outside Agencies

Stage 2 School Support

- Students for whom English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland.
- Children on or under a mean Percentile (as determined by SET Team on an annual basis, dependent on needs of year group) in Literacy Standardised Tests
- Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below a mean Percentile (as determined by SET Team on an annual basis, dependent on needs of year group) in Literacy and/or Numeracy such as
 1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability
 2. Mild General Learning Disability
 3. Specific Learning Disability
 4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1 of continuum

Stage 1 Classroom Support

Types of Support

In-Class Support

Team-Teaching

Personnel

SET teacher

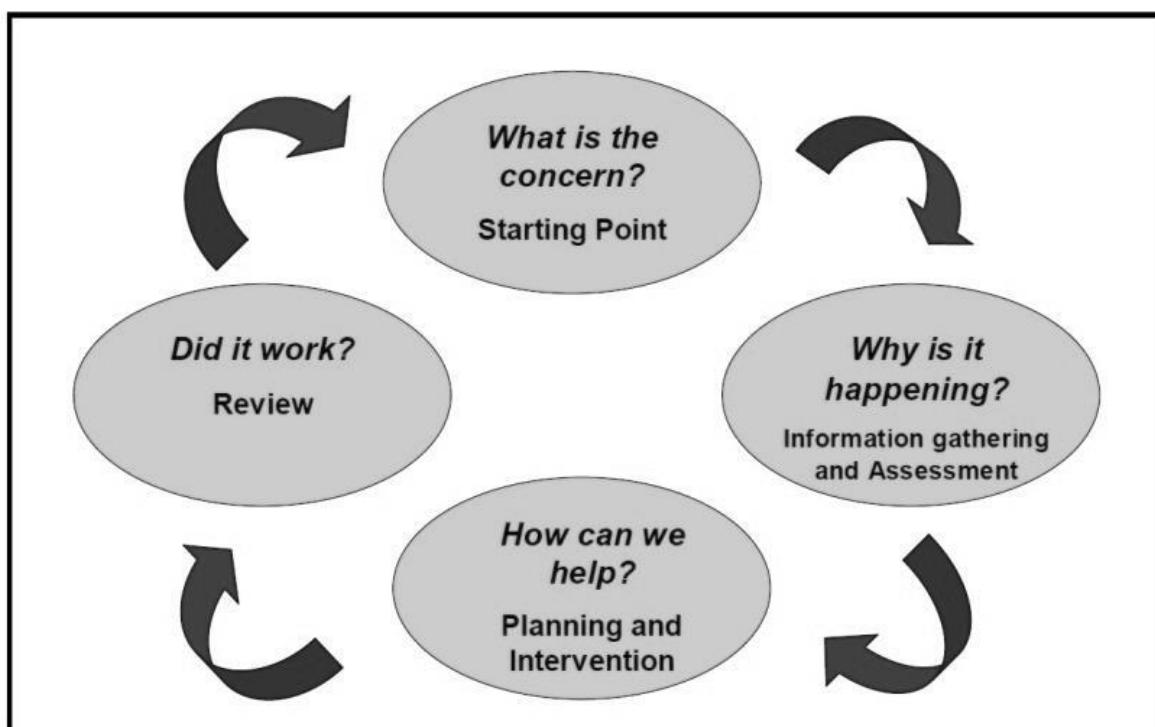
Class Teacher

11.3. Continuum of Support

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. In conjunction with this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

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

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



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

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, Class Co-ordinator and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

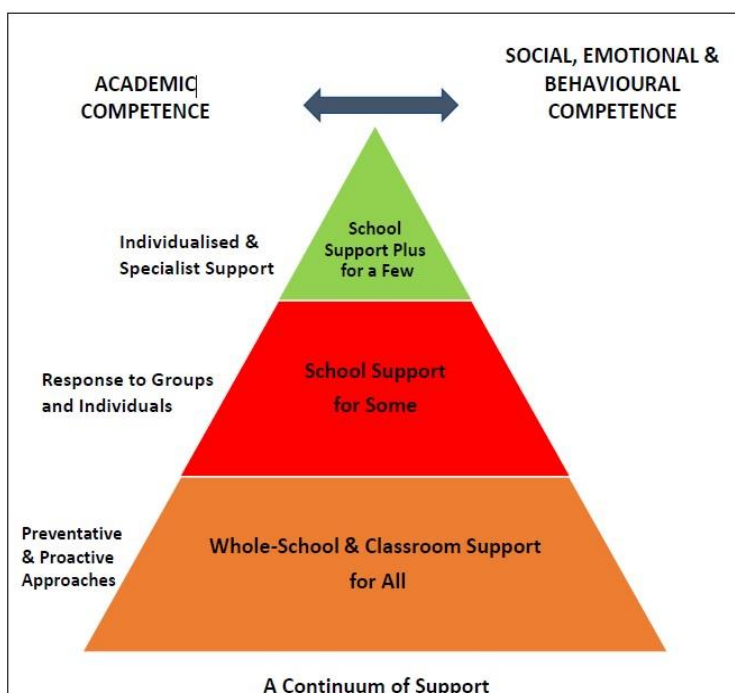
STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

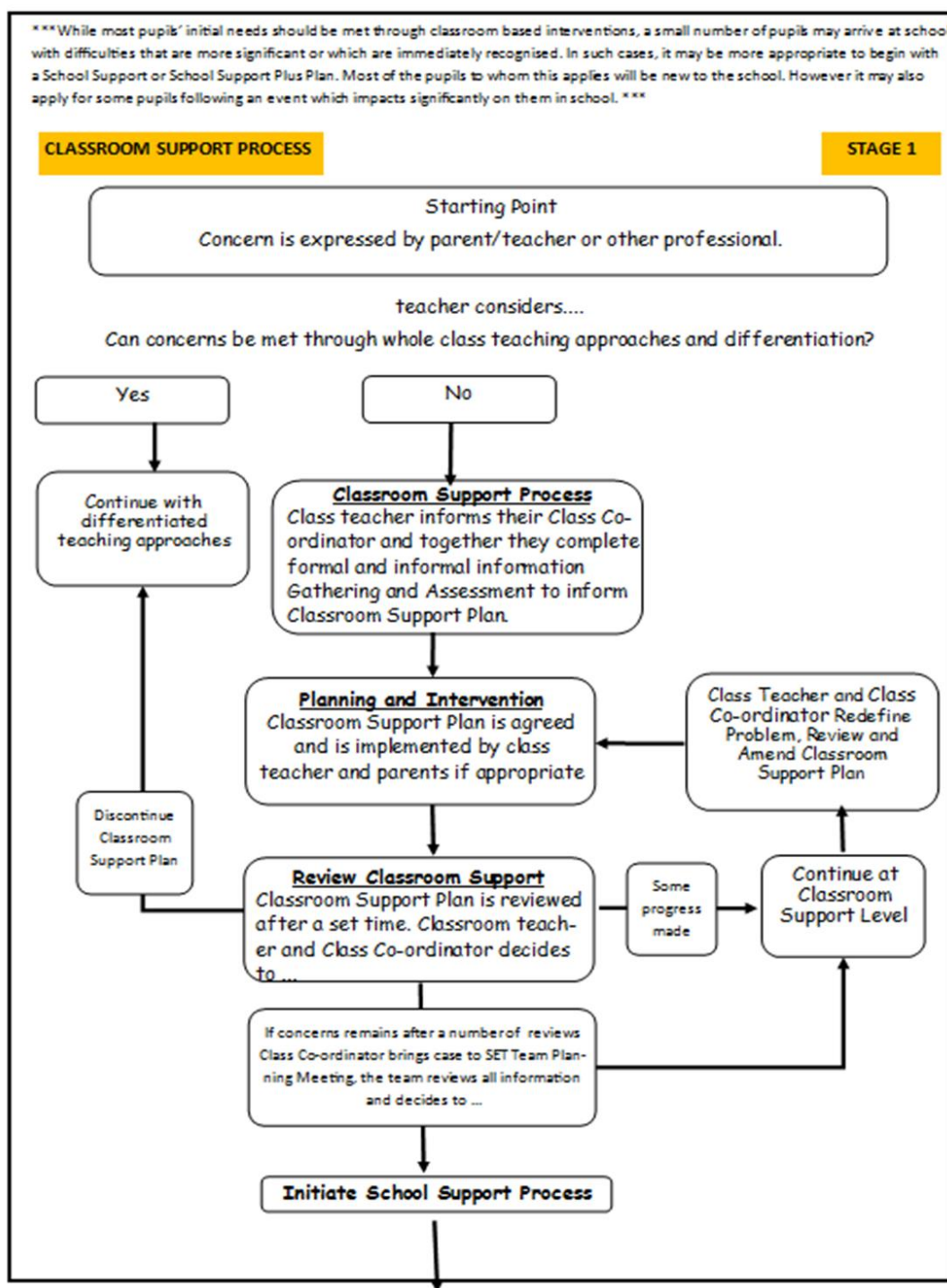
If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside

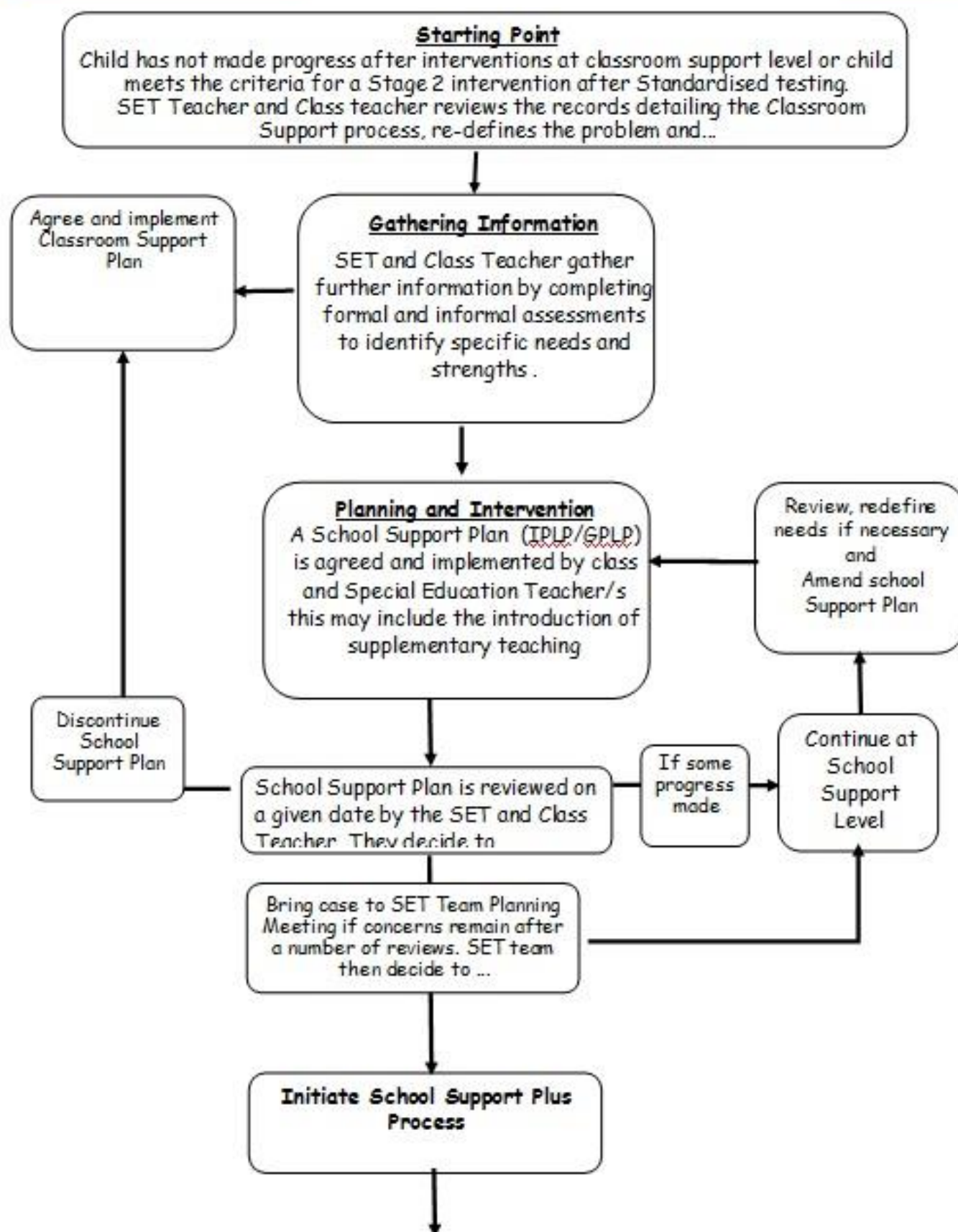
the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.



The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf



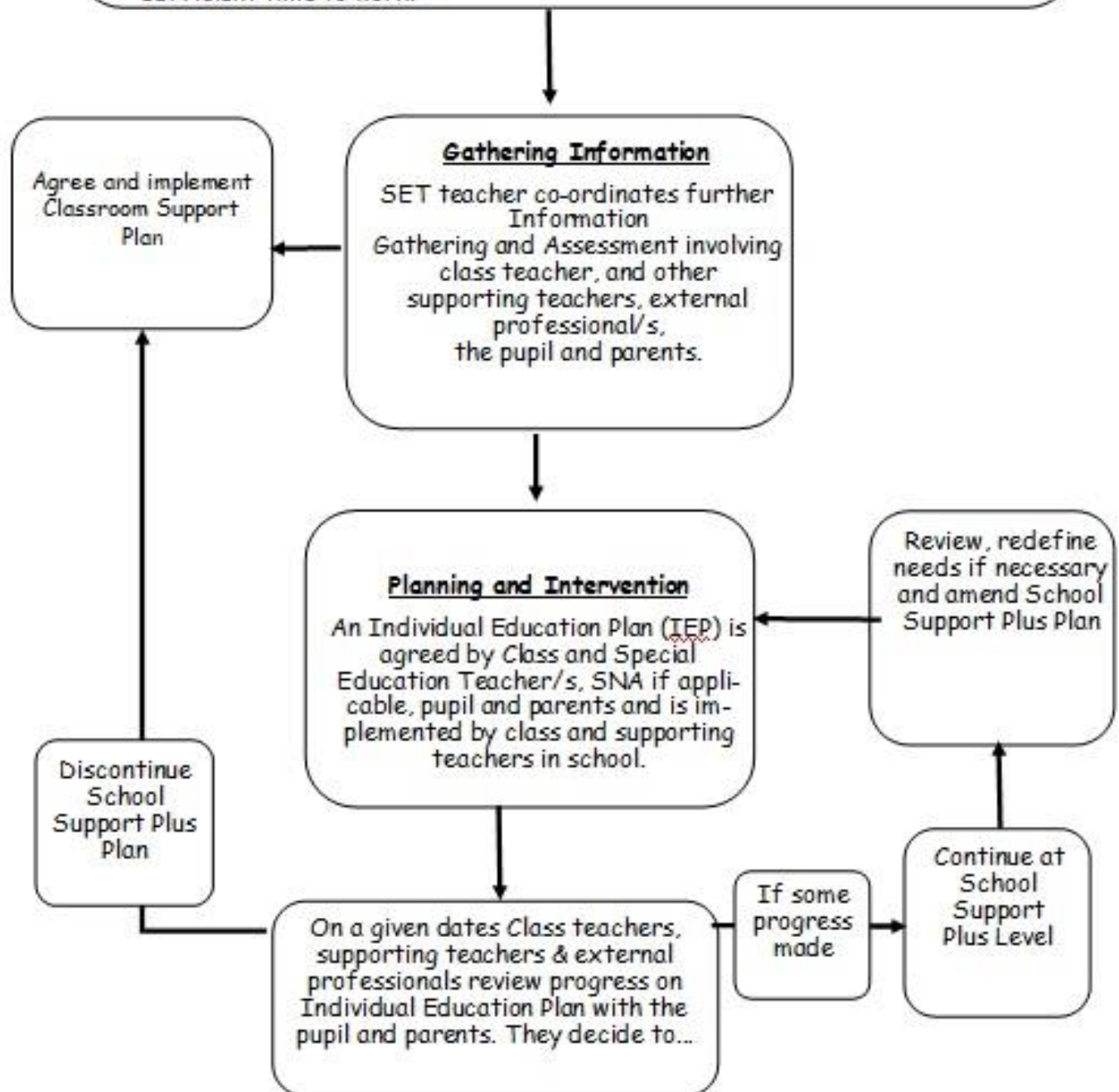


Starting Point

Child has not made progress after interventions at school support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 3 intervention after a diagnosis from an outside agency.

SET and Classroom teacher considers...

- Are the pupils needs causing significant barriers to learning or impeding development of social relationships?
- Is progress inadequate despite support provided?
- Were interventions; based on evidence from assessment; well planned and given sufficient time to work?



11.4. Strategies to meet the needs of students with SEN

At Ramsgrange Community School we acknowledge that subject teachers and teachers providing learning support can meet most of the needs of students with special educational needs through careful planning, using differentiated teaching methods, identifying appropriate learning outcomes, adapting teaching materials and using assessment to build on student's strengths. The assistance of SNA's and in-class support staff can further facilitate this differentiated learning environment. All staff are encouraged to update their professional knowledge and skills in the area of special needs through attendance at appropriate in-service.

11.5. Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

The school introduced an Assessment and Tracking Sheet in 2015. This tracking enables the school to look at the various results, assessments, interventions and supports that have been put in place for any student in the school.

This sheet will be developed annually as the schools sees fit; it will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team.

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

Student Support File

The Student Support File is a special programme written by the school for named students so that each child can work at improving their skills and knowledge at their own pace. The Student Support File is a collaborative process involving the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and other relevant personnel and agencies.

The Principal in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators shall be responsible for the development of a Student Support File.

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

- Cover sheet with pupil's details
- A timeline of actions
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores

- Support plans (See below)
- Checklists

A class teacher or class coordinator should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 –Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored digitally on the MIS in Pupil Records and a paper copy is stored in the class teacher's assessment folder and SEN filing cabinet stored in SENCO's room. At the end of the year, a copy of the information gathered is moved to the Child's SEN file in the SENCO's filing cabinet.

If, after a number of reviews, the child's case is moved to School Support, this information is then transferred to an orange folder and into the child's SEN file in the SENCO's room. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and the allocated SET to access and update the information in the Student Support File. The same system is in place for children on School Support Plus.

Support Plans

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

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

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

Stage 2 – School Support

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

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

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

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

IEP meetings are coordinated by an appointed IEP coordinator. This is usually one of the child's Special Education Teachers. Parents will be invited to at least two out of three meetings depending on the needs of the child.

SEN Records

Individual SEN Files

All pupils' SEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCO's room. It is the responsibility of SETs to update and manage the files of the children on school support and school support plus that they support. The following should be stored

- Student Support File (orange folder)
- Psychological Report (blue folder)
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff

Year Group SEN Files

Whole year group SEN records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCO's room. It is the responsibility of the SEN Class Coordinators to manage and update these. The following should be stored in these black, whole class SEN folders:

- CAT IV Results
- NGRT Results
- WRAT IV Results
- DATS Results

Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers

SENCO timetables have been organised so that each Wednesday is our designated co-ordination time. This allows all staff the opportunity to attend pupils support planning meetings, care team meetings, Team Teaching Planning Meetings, SEN consultation/planning/review meetings, when necessary. This facilitates regular SET team planning meetings with the principal. In order to make effective use of this time, a SEN calendar is drawn up at the beginning of the year and cover buddies are assigned.

12. Information Gathering and Assessment

Please read this section in conjunction with Ramsgrange Community School Assessment and Change of Level Policy, 2015.

Students in our school will be assessed as follows:

- Standardised diagnostic testing on entry to the school
- Assessment for learning (AFL) and assessment of learning (AOL) through teaching in general subject areas. Examples of these types of assessment include, self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work, student presentations, classroom-based assessments and teacher designed tasks and tests
- Informal in-house assessment
- Follow up assessment and testing
- Referral to the National Educational Psychological Service as appropriate, please see criteria listed below. (Parental consent must be sought for psychological assessments as per the NEPS model of service.)
- Original records of such assessments shall be maintained in the school as the property of Ramsgrange Community School.

Criteria for referral into the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS).

The following criteria are used by the Student Support Team to refer students into NEPS. This list is in no particular order of importance, neither is it exhaustive.

- Teacher referrals
- Referrals from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Referrals in relation to Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)
- Referrals in relation to Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
- Previous Psychological reports which may need review.
- Behavioural referrals not already dealt with through BFL teacher.
- Underachievement in school tests/exams
- Students who are flagged due to results in entrance assessments
- Parent concerns

Assessment Procedures in Ramsgrange Community School

Current schedule for assessment (refers also to RCS Assessment Policy):

Incoming 1st years

Incoming 1st years undertake Entrance Exams in February prior to starting secondary school. They complete CAT IV and NGRT. Results entered into Assessment and Tracking spreadsheet. Results analysed by SEN team. Correlate results with any information already received i.e. Psychological reports etc. Liaison with Primary Schools in relation to students with standard scores below 85 and / or reading ages in excess of 2 years deficit. These students prioritised for additional teaching support on entry to secondary school.

1st years

All of 1st year cohort are tested in September of 1st year. The WRAT IV Spelling and Maths tests are administered (Green version of test). Results entered into Assessment and Tracking spreadsheet. Results analysed by SEN team. Anyone with standard score below 85 in either test (who hasn't already been identified through entrance assessment results) is offered additional teaching support. These students might also be highlighted for support in classes where team teaching occurs. Results will be shared with relevant staff and it may be necessary to differentiate work.

2nd years

As part of the 2nd year Christmas Exam timetable the entire cohort undertake a sample of dictation. This is then analysed for the purpose of calculating a spelling and grammar error rate. Samples can then be used if relevant to apply for Reasonable Accommodations.

In March of 2nd year the entire cohort are tested in Spelling and Maths again using the alternate version of the WRAT IV (Blue version). Results are entered into the Assessment and tracking spreadsheet and progress is compared to results obtained on entry to the school.

3rd years

In October / November of 3rd year relevant individual testing is undertaken with students for the purpose of applying for Reasonable Accommodations in the State Exams. Students will have been identified through recommendations from Psychological Reports, scores from in-house assessments and by referrals from teachers.

In January /February the DATS for Guidance are administered to all 3rd years. The Differential Aptitude Test is an aptitude test used to determine and measure an individual's ability to acquire, through future training, some specific set of skills. This test covers several areas including, Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Ability, Abstract reasoning, Perceptual Speed and Accuracy, Mechanical Reasoning, Space Relations, Spelling, and Language Use. The tests are performed under exam conditions and are strictly timed. The test is also age related.

These tests can be used to help an individual:

1. Choose among educational and career options based on strengths and weakness.
2. Help an individual understand why they do well or poorly in certain subjects.
3. Can suggest new career options not previously considered.
4. Change or raise educational and career aspirations.

5th & 6th year

Tests for RACE may need to be done in 5th year if a student has not been identified before this point, this would be highly unusual but does occasionally happen, particularly if the student transferred from another school.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests which we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate supports. Therefore, some deviation may occur from the following lists.

Tests which we have in school and use regularly:

- CAT IV
- NGRT
- WRAT IV
- Dyslexia Screener
- DATS
- Maths Competency Test

Tests which we have in school but do not use regularly:

- Neale Analysis
- DRA
- Vernon Maths Test

13. Curricular Modifications

Curricular modifications include:

- Reduced Curriculum
- Reduced Timetable
- These are considered for individual students where deemed absolutely necessary. The individual students will be considered in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal, parents/guardians and student.

14. Irish Exemptions

Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate and in accordance with Circular 0053/2019.

15. Reasonable Accommodation

Applications are made for all students deemed in need of Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations. The procedures set down by the Department of Education and Science and the Examinations Commission will be strictly adhered to. Provision will also be made, where appropriate and feasible, to assist students in formal school exams in keeping with State Examination provisions.

16. Curriculum and Extra-Curricular Activities

In RCS we strive to provide an inclusive curriculum for our students. This is done in a number of ways:

Team teaching ensures less withdrawal from class and amore inclusive approach to teaching those with different abilities and needs.

Inclusion in the Arts is very important and, in that vein, all first-year students study Drama and Creative Life skills. This ensures access for all.

All subjects in RCS are available to all students.

Subject Option bands are based on student preferences.

There is a myriad of extra-curricular activities available to all students in RCS. These activities include sports, non-sporting activities, social groups and various clubs. All students are encouraged to get involved in community life in RCS.

17. Monitoring and Reviewing

Monitoring of the Special Educational needs & Learning Support Policy is an ongoing and developmental process. This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently on the legislative changes which are ongoing in this area. The effectiveness of this policy relies on:

- Whole school policies
- Committed SEN team
- Parental involvement
- The direction of resources towards students in greatest need
- The development of a team approach involving parents, teachers and relevant support personnel e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists etc.
- Effective communication between all parties involved
- The provision of appropriate time allocation and support services by the Department of Education. Resource hours are critical here. Additional support services (National Educational Psychological Service, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Inclusion Support Assistants) are of vital importance to provide a professional, holistic service.

This Policy will be reviewed as per the RCS Policy Review Plan.