

Support Teaching Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up by the Principal, Staff and Support Teachers of Our Lady of Lourdes NS at a series of consultative meetings which took place during May and June 2003. Policy will be reviewed on a biannual basis.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective support teaching to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties and to pupils with varying social & emotional needs. This policy fulfils our obligations under the Education Act, 1998, the Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), Disability Bill (2002), and the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004).

Principles

Our Support Programme is based on the following principles:

- Effective whole-school policies and parental involvement
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
- Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

In our school we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of Support Teaching is integral to this commitment.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
- develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- enable pupils to monitor their own learning at a basic level and become independent learners within their own ability.
- involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- promote collaboration among teachers
- establish early intervention programmes to enhance learning
- optimise the teaching and learning processes

Guidelines

The following procedures are being implemented as a means of responding effectively to pupils' individual learning needs.

1. Intervention Strategies

- Complete In-Class Support at Infant Level with a variety of Teaching/Support Models used, for example; Station Teaching, Team Teaching with target pupils working at differentiated level, Individualized Support, Small Group Teaching within Class with inclusion in Class level work as appropriate etc.,
- A variety of In Class & Withdrawal Teaching Models used at Levels 1st-6th (see above) with particular emphasis on the use of differentiated In Class Support. Our Lady of Lourdes is aware of research findings which promote the benefits of support within class setting and uses this support model where appropriate.
- Withdrawal Teaching where necessary for pupils with resource hours, assessments and/or pupils with very specific needs. For example, there are a number of pupils with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, ODD, Specific Speech and Language Disorder and Autism. In addition to pupils with a specific diagnosed

need, pupils with very basic level literacy/numeracy or language are withdrawn to provide intensive support to allow them to access the curriculum.

- Reading Recovery.
- Additional teaching resources as they are sanctioned are for now allocated to Infant & 1st Class Levels to provide for early intervention.

2. Selection of Pupils for Supplementary Teaching

- Pupils with Resource hours are allocated support firstly, the needs of those with assessments and those at or below the 12th percentile on Standardized Tests are then considered. The staged approach to support provision is used.
- Class and Resource Teachers decide on target pupils for support, results of standardized & diagnostic testing and support & class teacher reports from previous years are considered.
- Reports from outside agencies are also used when deciding on allocation of support.
- Junior Infant/new pupil enrolment forms are read in June to ensure correct provision is in place for any incoming pupils needing immediate support.
- Information on new pupils who are school going is also requested from previous schools.
- Pupils are not rigidly assigned to support but may be given differentiated work depending on topic, difficulty of material etc.,
- Additional pupils may be targeted as year progresses with pupils whose performance improves asked to participate to a greater extent in Class level work. A mixture of In class & withdrawal support models allows for a fluid approach to support provision.

3. Provision of Supplementary Teaching

Overall Teaching Arrangements: The primary work of the Support Teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified in section 2.

There will be two instructional terms in the year. As a general rule, term one will be from the beginning of September to the end of the third school week in January, with term two from the beginning of the second week in February to the end of the first week in June. Intervening weeks will be used for diagnostic testing.

Planning: The Support Teacher in consultation with the class teacher and parents/guardians devises Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLPs) or Classroom Support Plan, whichever is applicable. Pupils where this is practicable and appropriate contribute to setting their own learning targets.

Plans consider the pupils' full range of needs and include:

- details from the pupils' class teachers
- assessment results
- relevant information e.g. reports from other agencies
- learning strengths and attainments
- priority learning needs;

- learning targets;
- class-based learning activities
- supplementary support activities
- home support activities
- practices to raise the pupil's self-esteem
- In case of Classroom Support Plan, a stated duration is set for achievement/review of learning targets.

Each plan is monitored through teacher observation and the keeping of planning and progress records. The results of standardised and diagnostic assessments are also considered. A review takes place at the end of each instructional term/stated duration. The support teacher and/or the class teacher meet the parents/guardians to discuss their child's progress in the light of the review.

Documentation/files: The Support Teacher maintains the following documentation in individualised files: IPLP/In Class Programme and work samples. IPLP/In Class Programme is also scanned to school files. School policy with regard to confidentiality and data protection will be followed.

Timetabling: Support teachers are available to work with classes at Numeracy & Literacy times to facilitate in class work. Where pupils attend withdrawal efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time.

Allocation of Resource Teacher Time: As a general rule one Support Teacher is allocated per two Class Teachers with additional support at Infant & 1st Class Level.

4. Procedures for Continuing/Discontinuing Pupils/Altering support Model provided

Following the end of instructional term, a decision is made to continue/discontinue/alter the model of supplementary teaching. The criteria on which this decision is based include:

- has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?
- will the pupil be able to work independently/semi-independently in the classroom learning context for some/all of Numeracy/Literacy work?

The decision-making process involves consultation between the class teacher, the Support Teacher and the pupil's parents/guardians. A decision to continue/discontinue/alter model of support will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP/In Class Programme.

5. Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The following practical arrangements facilitate this:

- meetings with parents/guardians as outlined in Parental/Guardian Involvement in section 6 below.
- termly meeting of support teachers to review of support arrangements. Review is sent via internal email to support team teachers, relevant class teachers and Principal & HSCL.
- termly meeting of support teachers to review 'Pupil of Concern' list. On an overall school basis Class Teachers are formally asked to give details re pupils of concern

once per term. Issues from Care Team if any are considered and pupil record is then updated. Review is also sent via internal email to support team teachers, relevant class teachers and Principal & HSCL.

- time is set aside on Friday afternoon when needed (12.45pm – 2.30pm) for on-going contact between support & class teachers. It is the responsibility of the Support Teacher to ensure that this communication is maintained.
- time allocated for contact with outside professionals; psychologists, speech therapists, SENO etc, as required.
- communication of information from outside agencies/professionals to relevant parties only.
- all communication to parents/guardians about Support Teaching and the results of screening and diagnostic testing to be done on headed notepaper and posted. (Children will not be given notes nor will homework journals be used).
- IPLPs when completed in November & February will be posted directly to parents/guardians. For children new to support teaching, IPLPs as a general rule will be completed and posted to parents by the end of September/as soon as possible after pupil has commenced receiving support.
- support Teachers to ensure that all relevant information re support pupils (assessments, copies of IPLP's etc) has been passed onto next year's support & class teachers and has been filed in school records before the summer holidays.

6. Parental Involvement

- an initial meeting for pupils new to support will be arranged. Parents/Guardians will be asked to give consent for support teaching where there is a withdrawal element.
- parents/guardians and Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet at Parent/Teacher meeting held after Halloween and at the end of first instructional term to review pupil's progress.
- Parents/guardians are included in preparation of school support programme and home support programme.
- parents/guardians sign IPLP/In Class Programme prepared with them at these meetings.
- depending on individual pupil needs additional parental involvement may be necessary.
- parents/guardians will be advised of any changes to pupil support arrangements as they occur.

7. Referral to Out-of-School Agencies

The Support Teacher and Class Teacher in co-operation with the principal co-ordinate the referral of pupils to any out of school agencies or professionals. The Support Teacher and/or class teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent. IPLP/ In Class Programmes reflect guidance given in reports/assessments conducted. Parents/Guardians may need to meet again with Professional/agency concerned and/or Support/Class Teacher to discuss outcome of referral.

Assessments/Reports are scanned to school files with request not to print copies as these are confidential documents & are available to teaching personnel only.

8. Provision of Resources

A wide variety of programme & test materials are required for resource work. Support/Class Teachers may request funding to purchase additional materials from Principal/Board of Management as required. There may also be requests for the funding of appropriate professional development courses.

9. Support Teacher's Work Schedule

The work schedule of the Support Teacher, in addition to providing supplementary teaching, may include the overseeing of intervention programmes, the conducting of screening/ diagnostic assessment, the maintenance and review of pupil records, the co-ordination of special needs services, consultation with teachers/parents/outside professionals or bodies, purchase etc of requisite resources, review of school policy and additional duties pertaining to support work as they arise.

Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be considered under the following headings:

- overall school academic standard as measured by standardized testing having regard to different pupil cohorts within school population.
- progress either academically or socially of pupils, in receipt of resource teaching hours will be assessed with reference to IPLP targets.
- effectiveness of particular Intervention Programmes used.
- overall effectiveness of organization of school support resources; teacher allocation/timetabling etc.
- effectiveness of communication strategies/ transfer of information to relevant parties both internally & externally.
- effective use of material resources and value for money.
- appraisal of contact with out of school agencies/professionals.
- effectiveness of parental involvement in individual support programmes.
- overall contribution of support work to school ethos of maintaining a caring and considerate environment for all school pupils.

Implementation and Review

The policy commenced in 2003 and was reviewed biannually thereafter. This current policy is the result of a review in January 2017.

Ratification and Communication

Policy was initially ratified in 2003 by the Board of Management. Copy of the policy may be viewed on the school's website.