

Taney Parish Primary School

Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14.



POLICY DOCUMENT

“The school is above all a happy school, a place where pupils enjoy coming each morning. A caring community of adults and children, where each is valued for her/his own unique contribution and effort, Taney Parish Primary School has a long tradition of providing the widest range of opportunities for children from the arts to sport and crucially and centrally in the academic area.”

School Policy for Learning Support

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Name of School: Taney Parish Primary School

Roll Number: 15284B

General:

1. Taney Parish Primary School, Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Tel: 2985015, is a co-educational national school in the State education system under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin.
2. The school was originally established as a parochial and charitable school for the underprivileged of the parish in 1792. The present school building was built as a six-teacher school and opened in November 1970. It was subsequently extended in 1994 and is currently a 21-teacher school.
3. The school is a double-stream school, with two classes at each standard from Junior Infants to 6th Class. Pupils normally enrol and attend at the school after their 4th birthday and leave after their 12th birthday.

Beliefs:

In our school an effective Learning Support programme is based on the following principles:

1. Inclusion and respect for all, irrespective of ability level.
2. Effective whole-school policy and parental involvement.
3. Provision of intensive early interventions.
4. Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Aims:

1. To optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.
2. To ensure that the theory and practice of Learning Support in the school is in line with current best practice and with the policies and guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills. The delivery of the learning support/special education aims and objectives will be subject to facilities and resources being made available to Taney Parish Primary School by the DES and may change from time to time in accordance with DES policy changes as may be outlined in circulars and letters.
3. To ensure that a service in Learning Support is delivered which meets the guidelines and objectives as set out in: The 1998 Education Act; The Guidelines for Students with General Learning Disabilities' The Learning Support Guidelines; The Education for Persons with disabilities Bill (2003);

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of the Board of Management

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on Learning Support and Special Needs.
- To ensure adequate classroom accommodation, teaching resources and specialist requirements are provided.
- To provide a secure facility for storage of records.

Role of the Principal:

The principal teacher should:

- assume overall responsibility for development and implementation of the school's Learning Support policy.
- monitor the implementation of the school plan on learning support on an ongoing basis.
- monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching,
- oversee the implementation of a school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils requiring learning support so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals.
- Help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support by, for example, providing guidance and advice with regard to teaching methods and materials and by encouraging teachers to avail of relevant in-career development.

Role of the Class Teacher:

The class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils, differentiating for those experiencing difficulty.
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and in Mathematics by administering and scoring appropriate screening measures, and by discussing the outcomes with the Learning Support Teachers in the context of each pupil's general performance in class.

- keep parents informed regarding their child's progress and of the interventions, where applicable, which are in effect.
- inform parents when an intervention is no longer required.

Role of the Learning Support Teacher:

The Learning Support Teachers should

- provide supplementary teaching to pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- support class teacher and parents in providing for children with learning difficulties in Literacy and Numeracy.
- organise screening test orders and co-ordinate screening by class teachers.
- carry out diagnostic testing, as appropriate.
- liaise regularly with the Principal Teacher, parents, class teachers and other professionals (e.g. psychologists, speech/language therapists, etc.).

Children are allocated to teachers in line with the General Allocation Model in accordance with Steps 1 – 6 on Page 43 of Circular SP.ED.02/05.

Role of the Resource Teacher:

The Resource Teacher should:

- provide supplementary teaching to pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties/physical disabilities, sensory impairment, emotional or behavioural difficulties, assessed syndromes, etc. [NOTE: These children are allocated resource hours from the DES after being formally assessed by an educational psychologist (the school cannot allocate resource hours to children)]
- support the class teacher and parents in providing for the individual needs of the child – academic and/or social – mostly in English, Maths, SPHE, ICT and Motor Skills.
- draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as a working programme document for each child.
- liaise with the Principal Teacher, parents, class teachers and other professionals (e.g. psychologists, speech/language therapists, etc.).

Role of the Special Needs Assistant:

The Special Needs Assistant should:

- support the child to enable him/her to become as independent as possible.

Role of the parent:

The parent should:

- keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning.
- let the school know of any learning difficulties they observe in their child at home and inform the school of any interventions the child may have had.
- Attend any required meetings following diagnostic assessment of their child to discuss the results and learning targets.
- Participate in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

Prevention Strategies

The school has adopted the following prevention strategies:

- Development of agreed approaches to language development and Maths in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in classroom for language development, literacy skills and Maths for pupils who need it.
- Implementation of paired reading programme in First to Fifth Classes
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy, social and numeracy skills of pupils in Infant Classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Discussion of above with school psychologist, where appropriate.

Early Learning intervention Strategies

All children are assessed diagnostically in Junior Infants using the Jolly Phonics Reading Assessment Test 1A. At risk children are monitored carefully and intervention initiated, as appropriate.

Following screening test in Junior Infants, early intervention begins in September of Senior Infants to monitor all children. DELT-S (Drumcondra Early Literacy Test – Screening) is administered during the Spring Term in Senior Infants DENT-S (Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test – Screening) is administered in the Summer Term of Senior Infants.

Learning Support Teacher and Class Teacher work together on Literacy and Numeracy.

Any child causing concern for any reason is discussed with the Principal Teacher, Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher and a strategy devised with help from the school psychologist, if necessary.

Assessment and Reporting:

Assessment is ongoing. Supplementary teaching ceases when in the opinion of the Class teacher and the Learning Support teacher the child has made satisfactory progress. Parents are informed of the decision to cease supplementary intervention and a record is kept of the child's progress and attainments.

Identification of children needing supplementary teaching:

Identification of learning or other difficulties is done using assessment tools and standardised tests.

Assessment tools used:

- Teacher observation.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests.
- Project work.
- Class/homework copies.

Standardised Tests used (administered by class teacher):

- Senior Infants - DELT-S and DENT-S
- 1st – 6th Class - Drumcondra (Reading and Spelling)
- 1st – 6th Class - Sigma-T (Maths)

In addition, we administer the NNRIT (Young) each year in 2nd Class and 5th Class during October.

We also administer various diagnostic tests as necessary (administered by Learning Support teacher).

Supplementary Teaching:

Supplementary Teaching is provided for all children who fall below the 10th percentile as a priority.

However, we also aim to accommodate children above this score on standardised tests who are markedly below the class average, up to the 20th percentile if possible.

Tuition is normally in a group setting in the Learning Support room with the Learning Support teacher. If necessary, tuition will be on a one-to-one basis.

Supplementary teaching in English and Maths may be once, twice, three times a week or daily, depending on the group needs. In-class support is also provided.

Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

At the end of each instructional term (mid-term February and June), the child's progress is evaluated in consultation with Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Resource Teacher and outside agencies if necessary, and a decision is taken as to the correct course of action for the child. If it is considered that the child has reached a level where he/she can cope in class without intervention, then supplementary teaching is discontinued and the child is monitored by the class teacher.

Monitoring progress:

Test results are kept in a locked filing cabinet by the Learning Support Teacher and a copy is kept by the Principal, as are all psychological reports. The Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher liaise with the class teacher to draw up an IEP as appropriate. Planning and progress records are completed for each group of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching. Each class group has their individual folder containing a tracking form and test results to date.

Liaising with parents:

Liaising with parents is a critically important aspect of the successful implementation of effective special education intervention. The process takes place as follows:

Following screening tests, Class Teacher contacts parent if he/she has a concern about a child. This is usually done by note home or Learning Support Teacher may telephone parent and arrange for further diagnostic testing.

Parents are invited to discuss their child's results and are always informed of a decision to include their child in a Learning Support group.

Parents are encouraged to meet with Learning Support or Class teacher by appointment and also at a formal annual Parent-Teacher Meeting usually in November / December.

Outside agencies:

The Principal or Learning Support Teacher may need to contact outside agencies following discussion with Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher or Resource Teacher. The Principal or Learning Support Teacher or Class Teacher then informs parents of the school's concerns regarding the child and discuss the next steps required. Regular consultation with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) and NEPS Psychologist are undertaken as and when necessary. The school maintains a close liaison with National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), in accordance with the policies and guidelines governing its operation. Pupils who are referred to NEPS for psychological evaluation will be selected according to the following criteria:

- The number of referrals allowed by NEPS.
- The availability of resources from NEPS.

- The urgency of the pupils' needs, priority being given to those pupils who have low incidence disabilities and who are judged by the Principal, the Learning Support teacher who is involved with the pupil and the Class teacher to be most in need of an evaluation.

The school will also arrange as and when necessary for consultation with the National Council of Special Education through their network of Special Education Needs Officers (SENO).

Review of Policy:

This policy was formally adopted for use in the school following approval by the Board of Management on 19th May 2016.

This Learning Support Policy will be reviewed every two years and revised as appropriate.