



Inclusion/SET Policy

Of Firhouse Educate Together National School

Address: Ballycullen Drive, Firhouse, Dublin.24.
Telephone: 01 406 1010
Email: firhouseetns@gmail.com
Roll Number: 20411J

Introductory Statement

Following discussion with all staff members, the policy was drafted to respond to the particular needs of our school. This Inclusive / SET Policy will at all times, be closely integrated with policies and procedures in other areas.

Rationale

At Firhouse ETNS we acknowledge the right of children to be educated within their local community and to be given every opportunity to reach their full potential through the education process.

This policy outlines the procedures for the enrolment of children with special educational needs in our school and the inclusion of all children equally to enable them to participate fully in school life. It also describes the manner in which the area of Additional Educational Needs (AEN) / Special Education Teaching (SET) is organised within the school itself, and covers our whole school approach to assessment, teaching and learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Furthermore it refers to our procedures for communicating with parents and professional agencies and individuals that engage with our families.

The policy complies with current professional thinking and legislation in the area of SEN. (Education Act 1998; Equal Status Act 2000; Circulars 07/02, 08/02, 24/03, 09/04, 13/04, 01/05, 02/05) and refers to children with both high and low incidence disabilities.

In particular, the policy aims to help parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment and sustained participation of their child in Firhouse Educate Together N.S. and to ensure that pupils with special educational needs share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is possible.

Regarding inclusion Firhouse Educate Together N.S. echoes the NCSE definitions of inclusion as follows:

Sebba and Sachdev take a the view that inclusive education is
“a process involving changes in the way schools are organised, in the curriculum and in teaching strategies, to accommodate the range of needs and abilities among pupils. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils.”
(Sebba and Sachdev, 1997, p.2).

Block (1999) asserts the importance of ensuring that inclusion as a philosophy goes beyond simply physically placing a child in a general education classroom and favours a definition of inclusion as used by Stainback and Stainback (1990):
“An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs is accepted supports and is supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met”

Previous concepts of educating children with SEN in a mainstream environment were fundamentally concerned with ‘going to school’ (Miles 2000, p1), a view which is reflective of integrated education. Inclusive education on the other hand, is about ‘participating in school’ (Miles 2000, p1).

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit / Ethos of the School

Firhouse Together N.S. is a developing school with a multi-denominational and co-educational ethos. We have a current enrolment of 280 pupils from Junior Infants to 5th Class.

As a staff we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils in our care. We strive to ensure that all children’s experience of school will be positive, supportive and challenging and that it will enable them to reach their full potential so that in turn they may play a fulfilling role in their own community and in society in general.

Firhouse Educate Together N.S. aims to serve all the children in our community without prejudice and we welcome our most challenged children. Their presence in our school enriches our entire school community.

The SET team is made up of the Principal and all teachers working in the area of Additional Educational Needs at our school. They meet weekly and are charged, under the guidance and coordination of the Principal, with overseeing the effective implementation of SET resources within the school. They also make decisions, in consultation with class teachers, regarding the prioritisation of children who will receive SET support.

Following detailed discussion with all staff members, the policy was amended to respond to the particular needs of our school. The policy will be implemented in full from September 2016 and reviewed periodically from that date. The SEN Policy will at all times, be closely integrated with policies and procedures in other areas.

Aims

The principal aim of SET provision is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with AEN to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in all areas of the curriculum and to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is possible.

We aim:

- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To provide supplementary teaching and individual support in English, Maths and where appropriate, other curricular areas.
- To provide support for individual children in managing their behaviour and emotions
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning.
- To guard the self - esteem and self – image of the learner.
- To create a welcoming, secure and caring environment in which children with special educational needs can develop positive relationships with others, work happily and experience success.
- To develop a spirit of care, respect, generosity, forgiveness and equal opportunity, with a patient and positive attitude for all our SEN children.

Overall Plan:

1. At the pre-enrolment meeting all parents are interviewed about the possibility of their child having any Special Needs and if there are the Principal works closely with the family starting with the documentation available to date, in order to have the Special Needs requirements for the child in place for his/her first day in school. The Principal works closely with the family in order to begin the process of assembling any further documentation required. All documentation is then sent to the SENO (NCSE) for approval for SNA provision, if required, Resource teaching Hours, if required, or for assistive technology, disability supports etc. The principal will also meet with any agencies to which the child is already in attendance and form a relationship with the child's support agencies and therapists in statutory (NEPS, NCSE, SESS, NEWB, HSE) and non-statutory agencies (HSE, An Cosán, Mater CAMHS etc.)
2. If any child in the new Junior Infant classes, or a newly enrolled child up throughout the school, appears to be presenting with readily-observable Additional Needs, the Principal will make an immediate investigation and take the necessary action to collect required documentation and initiate appropriate referrals. If the family has not begun this process to date, the Principal will work closely with the family facilitating as far as possible with access to the various HSE and NGO services.
3. If over the course of the Junior Infant year it emerges that there may be a possibility of the child having some form of Additional Needs the Principal in conjunction with the JI

teacher(s) begins the Continuum of Support -a formal process of diary-keeping and observation. At the end of Senior Infants the Principal discusses each of these cases with the NEPS psychologist with view to short listing six children (our current allowance) for Educational Psychological Assessment under the NEPS scheme. These assessment reports are then used for access to further referral services should they be required. The same two-year wait. Reduced to one-year if provision allows, also exists for any child who enrolls in the school in classes other than Junior Infant where any Special Needs, but are not readily observable, may exist.

4. Student Support Files are collaboratively drawn up in a process involving the class teacher, the SET teacher, the parents, the advisers from the service-agencies for each child and the Principal. SMART targets are set for pupils and updated regularly with reviews taking place in November and in May each year. Student Support Files are stored on Aladdin and signed reviewed copies are kept in the pupils' files in the Principal's Office. These Student Support Files are consulted constantly in all planning and resourcing situations, and are evaluated on an ongoing basis.
5. We aim to develop multi-sensory provision and occupational-therapy as our school grows along with speech and language support and this will be managed by the Special Education Teacher in collaboration with the Occupational Therapist and Speech & Language Therapist from the Demonstration Project.
6. The professional development of teachers through the comprehensive Post-Graduate Course in Special Education Needs (PGSEN) and through various PDST / SESS / NCSE / NEPS / Middletown Centre for Autism courses

Content

Inclusion

All children have equality of access to every aspect of school life and we aim to support every child in engaging fully with the educational experiences available at our school. Children with SEN are educated within the peer group for most of the school day and class teachers make use of strategies to ensure that SEN pupils are enabled to participate as fully as possible in school and class-work through providing a curriculum that emphasises the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, building supports for children who have difficulty managing their behaviour, valuing oral contributions, using mixed ability groupings, adapting learning materials and encouraging the use of concrete materials.

Pupils with AEN are withdrawn in small groups for support in the areas of English, Mathematics and Social Skills through Buddy or Friendship Groups. Children with low incidence disability spend some of their time working on a one to one basis with a SET teacher. Our SET teachers also provide in-class support.

Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs

Enrolment of pupils with SEN is in line with the school's Enrolment Policy and is dependent on appropriate DES supports being available to meet the needs of the individual child. Following application for enrolment, ongoing contact is maintained between the school and the child's parents and where appropriate, with relevant professional agencies that are engaging with the family so that a fully informed decision may be made. Parents are requested to make all professional reports and assessments available to the school.

Inclusion Strategies

The ethos of Firhouse ETNS makes reference to the fact that we value difference and promote respect for all members of our school community. We adhere to a positive behaviour policy, which emphasises the positive and rewards good behaviour. All children follow a comprehensive programme of SPHE, which aims to equip them with age appropriate skills in the area of personal development, emotion, interpersonal relationships and awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Our Special Education Teachers provide significant support to all classes. All of these strategies aim to reduce the occurrence of behavioural and emotional difficulties among our children.

Furthermore, we place significant emphasis on developing and implementing agreed approaches to language development, phonological awareness, spellings, handwriting and reading as part of our English programme in order to reduce the occurrence of learning difficulties among the children. Similar work has been carried out in the area of mathematical language, approaches and tables. We also place strong emphasis on the development of oral language skills at all levels. Teachers engage in on-going observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

A structured approach to assessment continues in the all classes and a comprehensive policy in the relation to Assessment has been drawn up. However some pupils may present with difficulties, which are of concern with regard to learning, behaviour or emotions.

Pupils with AEN are withdrawn in small groups for support in the areas of English, Mathematics and Social Skills through Buddy or Friendship Groups. Children with low incidence disability spend some of their time working on a one to one basis with a SET teacher. Our SET teachers also provide in-class support.

Procedures for Early Identification/Screening/Referral of pupils:

Concerns about children arise in a number of ways:

Parents inform the Principal or Class Teacher of a concern they have regarding the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of their child.

School becomes aware of difficulty in relation to a particular child:

1. Communicate this to class teacher and relevant support teacher from SET team.
2. Use Continuum of Support checklists/profiles where appropriate. See Appendix 1 for listing. Examine available scores and test results
3. Devise a Student Support File and arrange for extra help to be implemented in class and at home.
4. Review and adapt this plan approximately every six weeks, over one to two school terms, communicating with parents as deemed appropriate.
5. If difficulties continue, consult with SET team member about the desirability of further intervention / assessment.

Class/ SET teachers act in a consultative/advisory role at this point.

- Teachers may have a concern regarding the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a child in their class.
- Concerns may arise following standardised and other weekly/termly testing at class level. An outline of the assessments and tests carried out at each class level is available in our school's Assessment Policy.

Once a parent or teacher has voiced a concern about a child, it is advisable that the class teacher makes contact with a member of the school's SET team or with the Deputy Principal who has overall responsibility for the organisation of AEN/SET provision in the school so that intervention can begin.

School based intervention programmes for AEN/SET follow the process outlined in Circulars 24/03 and 02/05, which specifically advise that the development of a staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning is appropriate in the area of special education.

Intervention is provided by school's SET team: Person(s) Responsible: Relevant SET teacher in consultation with class teacher and where appropriate the child's parents/guardians

Action to be taken /

1. With parents permission, carry out further diagnostic tests
2. If results indicate that supplementary teaching would be of benefit, arrange this, subject to the overall SET caseload and timetable constraints
3. Draw up a Student Support File which includes appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, classroom and during supplementary teaching. Outline in this plan when and how review will be carried out.
4. Carry out plan and review and adapt it a number of times over a minimum of one school term.

5. If significant concerns remain, consult with the SET team in the school about the desirability of further intervention.

Further Intervention is provided by school's SET team: Person(s) Responsible: Relevant SET teacher in consultation with class teacher and the child's parents/guardians; Deputy Principal and the Principal.

Action to be taken /

Specialist help is sought on behalf of the child

1. Seek advice on the most appropriate professional agency to deal with the difficulty and appropriate forms are made available
2. Request parental permission for consultation and/or referral
3. Complete referral forms and forward to the relevant professional agency
4. Maintain ongoing contact with the agency and communicate information to teachers and parents as it becomes available
5. Make all necessary arrangements for assessments and feedback sessions which are to take place in school
6. Make arrangements if reports indicate that further supports should be put in place e.g. one to one teaching in relation to a diagnosed disability or the employment of an SNA/ISA
7. Draw up a Student Support File, which includes appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, classroom and during supplementary teaching. Outline in this plan when and how reviews will be carried out.
8. Setting targets: Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil on their Support Plan in line with the Continuum of Support and at their appropriate level of Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus.

Timeline: Principal, Deputy Principal, SET Teachers and Classroom Teachers, S.N.A.s and parents meet in September/October and February/March to discuss individual targets based on information gathered from all parties concerned including the children if feasible.

9. Refer for further specialist intervention as necessary

Classroom Support:

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.

A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.

This is informed by:

- Parental consultation
- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures /assessments
- Basic needs checklist *
- Learning environment checklist*
- Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist
- Literacy and numeracy tests
- Screening tests of language skills

A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support:

At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Learning environment checklist
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures
- Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.

A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support Plus:

This level of support is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:

- Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Functional assessment
- Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.

A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

The following categories of pupils will receive SET:

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests in English or Mathematics.
- Pupils with learning difficulties, pupils with mild social or emotional difficulties and pupils with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions.
- Pupils who have special educational needs arising from low/high incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability).

Firhouse Educate Together N.S. currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Additional Education Needs:

- Three Special Education Teachers (SET) for children with Additional Educational Needs
- 7 Special Needs Assistants / Inclusion Support Assistants for mainstream classes
- 2 Teachers for Special Classes for Children with Autism
- 5 Special Needs Assistants / Inclusion Support Assistants for special classes

Guiding Principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole-school policies
- Whole school involvement
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Direction of resources towards pupils with greatest need.
- Prevention Strategies
- As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:
 - The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development e.g. phonological awareness
 - The development and implementation of an agreed whole school approach to the Maths programme e.g. Maths language
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents of incoming Junior Infants
- Formal and informal Parent/Teacher meetings
- School newsletters, website etc.
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in provision of additional support
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by Class Teacher
- Selection of Pupils for Learning Support
- Previous to any pupil being referred to the Learning Support Teacher the classroom teacher draws up a programme suitable to the pupil's needs based on his/her observations.
- The principle of Early Intervention applies; therefore pupils in Junior classes are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support
- Junior Infant pupils are screened using teacher observation and the Belfield Infant Assessment Profiles (BIAPs).
- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests. MIST, Sigma-T and Drumcondra Tests are administered by the class teacher in collaboration with the SET teachers.

- Priority for learning support teaching is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 10th Percentile, excluding in the main, pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 10th percentile, the screening process is followed by a meeting between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance and supplementary teaching is offered
- Parents are consulted and their consent is sought for the provision of learning support and accompanying diagnostic assessments. These may include DST and PEP-3.

In the allocation of places for Special Education Teaching, the following are prioritised:

1. Children in Junior Infants who score below critical level(s) on the BIAP and as a result of ongoing classroom and individual assessment and teacher observations.
2. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, as a result of the MIST and Teacher observation.
3. Children in 1st and 2nd classes at or below the 10th percentile in literacy.
4. Children in 1st and 2nd classes at or below the 10th percentile in numeracy.
5. Children in 3rd class and 4th class at or below the 10th percentile in literacy.
6. Children in 3rd and 4th classes at or below the 10th percentile in numeracy depending on overall caseload.
7. Support for children presenting with difficulties in literacy and numeracy in all classes.

Provision of Special Education Teaching:

- The primary work of the Special Education Teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.
- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The Special Education Teacher in consultation with the Class Teacher decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual needs of pupils and the overall needs of the school.
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and case load permits.
- The Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher meet to devise Student Support Files and/or Group Education Learning Programmes in consultation with the Principal and parents; the pupils involved may also contribute to setting their own short-term targets.

Student Support Files:

Student Support Files will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from Class Teacher / parents/guardians
- Teacher Observations
- Basic Needs Checklist
- Continuum of Support Checklists
- Pupil interviews
- Assessment results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Areas of weakness
- Priority learning needs
- Learning targets
- Class-based learning activities

- Supplementary support activities to include IT
- Home support activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback. A detailed review will take place at the end of the term. The Learning Support Teacher and Class Teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

The Special Education Teacher will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:

1. Student Support File
2. Short term planning and programme record
3. Other records, e.g. recordings of oral work / video clips
4. Samples of written work
5. Reading analysis records

Time-tabling:

- Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend learning support.
- The provision of SET may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition. In-class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher. Where children are withdrawn for learning support, the provision of learning support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

- In general children should not stay for more than two years in SET unless they are still at or below the 10th percentile.
- Following the end of instructional term, review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue /discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.

The criteria on which this decision is made include:

- Has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?
- Will the pupil be able to cope in the classroom learning context?

A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the Student's Support File. The decision-making process will involve consultation between the Class Teacher, SET Teacher and parents/guardians. Account will also be taken of the overall learning support demands in the school.

Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is essential.

The various strands of this system include:

- Meeting parents/guardians of Junior Infant children to explain school policies and how parents and teachers can work together for the benefit of pupils.
- Informing parents/guardians/SET of concerns regarding progress in school.
- Outlining the school's practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures.
- Consultation between Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher following low score on a screening test
- Consultation between Principal and/or Special Education Teacher (SET) and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval for diagnostic assessment and provision of supplementary teaching
- Ongoing communication between the SET and the Class Teacher
- Regular communication between the SET and parents

- Regular SEN/SET team meetings

Referral to Out-of-school Agencies

- The SET in collaboration with the Class Teacher and Principal, co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist.
- The Principal and/or SET and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.
- The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, Principal, Class Teacher and the SET as appropriate and assessment is conducted.
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
- Where concern arises regarding the manner or speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out-of- school agency.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Deputy Principal / SEN Co-ordinator to co-ordinate SET and Special Needs services.

Deputy Principal / SEN Co-ordinator / SET Teachers:

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties:
- Development of Student Support Files and learning programmes for pupils who are selected for SET in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents/guardians
- Maintaining fortnightly planning for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of SET
- Delivering intensive in-class early intervention programmes to pupils in Junior Classes
- Regular meetings with parents/guardians to discuss pupil's progress
- Providing teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement
- Contributing to the development of policy at the whole school level and at the cluster level where applicable
- Liaising with class teacher on individual pupil's needs and progress
- Liaising with external agencies
- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving SET
- Conducting diagnostic assessment
- Maintaining and reviewing Student Support Files
- Liaising with Principal, teachers and parents/guardians.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the pupils' learning needs within his / her class.

Their responsibilities include:

- Making parents/guardians aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress
- Outlining the schools practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures
- Where possible attending meetings between Special Education Teacher and pupil's parents/guardians
- Consult and co-operate with Special Education Teacher on Student's Support File
- Be alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty and bring it to the attention of the Special Education Teacher
- Modify class programmes to suit the needs of pupils

- Utilise Continuum of Support Checklists to assess pupils' strengths, weaknesses and behaviours
- Where there is a Special Needs Assistant / Inclusion Support Assistant: outline their duties clearly for the instructional term

Parent / Guardian

- Support for and participation in their child's learning
- Support for and participation in Student Support File development
- Attendance at meetings with class teacher and/ or SET team
- Supporting child in homework and in working towards at-home targets as agreed in the Student Support File
- Supporting the work of the class teacher and SET team in the best interests of their child's learning

Pupil

It is important for the students to have an input, if possible, into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can:

- become more independent as learners
- become aware of different learning styles and how they learn best
- become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs
- enjoy success and evaluate their progress
- develop the skills and strategies that will support their engagement with the curriculum in their own classes

Board of Management

- Oversee implementation and review of the SEN/SET policy
- Provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage.
- Resources for the provision of SET include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials.
- A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic screening, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- SET resources will primarily be used by the SET team. The resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with SET team.

Success Criteria

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of SET based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' progress.

Where parents are not agreeable to a diagnostic assessment at Stage 2 or a referral for professional consultation/assessment at Stage 3, a note is made of this, which the parents are asked to sign. The class teacher continues to monitor the child's progress over a period of time and if the issues continue to be of concern will make the same request again. If it is deemed appropriate advice will be sought from the NCSE.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs are, with parents'/guardians' permission, discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case is referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, the highest level of intervention will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant SET teacher.

Final decisions in relation to the selection of children for SET support are made by the SET team in consultation with class teachers and parents/guardians. Priority is always given to those children with greatest need and decisions are made in light of the overall SET caseload within the school at that particular time.

Timetabling

Each full time SET teacher works closely with particular class levels, although overlap occurs when unavoidable. It is envisaged that children would only attend one SET teacher during a school year, in so far as is possible.

Priority for SET is given to those pupils, who perform at or below the 10th – 12th percentile, as outlined in Circular 02/05, and the Learning Support Guidelines, as well as those children who have a diagnosed low incidence disability. Children scoring above the 12th percentile on standardised tests will only be considered for support at Stage 2 following consultation between the class teacher and the relevant SET teacher, implementation of in class support programme, observation and further testing. All decisions made must take account of the current level of SET support available in the school and the existing caseload. The SET team decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual learning needs of pupils and the overall caseload. According to recommendations and best practice groups will never exceed 4/5 pupils. Group work on a withdrawal basis is balanced with the provision of in-class support. One-to-one teaching is provided where necessary, generally to children with a diagnosed low incidence disability. SET teachers engage in ongoing planning, consultation and review both in school and out of school hours. Consultation with class teachers generally takes place by agreement outside of teaching time.

Monitoring & Recording Progress

The SET Teacher maintains the following documentation in individualised files:

- Student Support File
- Short-term planning and programme record
- Other records e.g. Tape recordings of oral work

- Samples of written work
- Reading records

Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

Each plan is monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the keeping of individualised files containing samples of children's work and reading records. Each IPLP/GLP/IEP contains a section outlining how and when review will be carried out. Following each review, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching. The criteria on which this decision is based may include:

- Whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning, behavioural or emotional targets set
- Whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom/school context
- Results of retesting using the same diagnostic test(s) used at initial screening stage

The decision-making process involves consultation between the class teacher, the SET Teacher and the pupil's parents and account is also taken of the overall SET demands in the school. A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's Student Support File.

Resources & Materials

There are three SET rooms in the school with a good range of appropriate resources and equipment and this will be added to on an ongoing basis.

Professional Development

Professional development needs are identified through review and discussion at regular staff meetings. When needs are identified, an action plan is devised to ensure that such needs are adequately addressed. Responses may include the organisation of a staff development day/session, engagement of external expertise, attendance by a representative of the staff at specific in-service and/or the provision of required resource materials. Notices of upcoming courses are circulated to each staff member. Staff members who have attended courses are given opportunities to report back to other staff during time allocated at staff meetings or a staff development day.

Members of our SET team attend all relevant DES in-service training and are supported in attending further training out of school hours. Regular contact is also maintained with the SET cluster group in the area.

Communication

At Firhouse E.T.N.S., we encourage and welcome open communication between principal, teachers, parents, visiting teachers and outside professionals who engage with our children.

Such open communication is exemplified through:

- Regular informal contacts between Principal and all teachers on a one to one or class level basis
- Regular Staff Meetings, meetings of the Middle Management and SET team
- The teaming of each class with a SET teacher for consultation, advice and support as well as in relation to programme implementation
- Shared planning sessions at each class level
- Class meetings at which the school's approach to various aspects of the curriculum is outlined
- Annual Parent / Teacher meetings allow for a discussion of individual children's progress.
- Informal Parent /Teacher meetings convened at the request of the parent or teachers.
- Informal contact with parents in mornings and afternoons
- Other written communications e.g. notes and newsletters
- Regular invitations to school based celebrations
- Opportunities for parents to share their talents and expertise with us e.g. local writers, poets, artists, historians etc.
- Organisation and facilitation of meetings between school staff and professional agencies and individuals engaging with our children
- Ongoing formal and informal contacts between SET teachers and parents of children they are working with

Code of Positive Behaviour

We have in place a Code of Positive Behaviour, which emphasises the positive and rewards good behaviour. Two of the underlying principles of this code are that:

- We recognise the uniqueness of each child, with different needs, experiences, abilities and capacities. We seek to support children in all aspects of their development, including their behaviour.
- Furthermore all staff members adopt a common-sense approach in dealing with children's behaviour using their knowledge of the individual child as their starting point.

Equality of Access and Participation

- All members of the school community are encouraged to provide a welcoming, secure and caring environment in which children with special educational needs can develop positive relationships with others, work happily and experience success.

- Through our school ethos, SPHE and Learn Together programmes we promote the development of a spirit of care, respect, generosity, forgiveness and equal opportunity, with a patient and positive attitude for all our SET children.
- All children take part in the full school curriculum in accordance with their ability and level of maturity. If necessary, appropriate adaptations to the content of the programme and arrangements for implementation are made, in consultation with the Principal, SET teacher and parents.
- The school fully accesses all resources made available to schools by the DES in relation to SET pupils
- The school has developed close contacts with support agencies in the community who work with children in our care
- Principal and teachers communicate openly and on a regular basis with parents

Transfer to Post Primary

We will embark on a policy of communication with the local secondary school and every effort will be made to assist a child with special educational needs in his/her transfer to Secondary School. In due course we will draw up a transfer policy in this regard.

S.P.H.E

In planning the SPHE/RSE programme for their class, teachers take full cognisance of the individual class members in relation to their maturity, level of understanding and ability. Appropriate adaptations to the content of the programme and arrangements for implementation are made, in consultation with the Principal, SET teacher and parents.

Success Criteria

The successful implementation of this policy will be seen in our school through:

- Inclusion of SET pupils in our school
- Evidence of progress of these pupils in all areas of their development and education
- Positive feedback from parents, staff, pupils, psychologist, inspector etc.

Implementation Date & Timetable for Review

Monitoring and evaluation of the SET policy is an ongoing and developmental process. This policy has been implemented from September 2020 and an overall review will take place by the SET team in consultation with all staff members at the end of every school year.

Ratification and Review

The BoM reserves the right to alter this policy, subject to its statutory obligations, including its obligations to its Patron.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management as required.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management: September 2020 and updated 10th May 2021

Date of next review: May 2022

Signed:

_____ Date: _____

Francis Fullen: Chairperson: Board of Management

Collette Dunne: Principal:_____ Date:_____