**NCSE Support Service**

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**Toolkit**

*building on ability*

**New Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model**

**September 2017**

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***Contents***

6 Principles to guide the implementation process …………………………………………p.3

Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports………………p.4

Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support ……….……………p.5

School provision plan for pupils with special education …………………………………p.6-7

Self-Reflective Questionnaire ….…………………………………………………………………p.8-13

Parental Involvement………………………………………………………………………………p.14

Student Support File……………………………………………………………………………….p.15 - 19

This toolkit is currently available in digital format in the resources section of the SESS website

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

***6 Principles to Guide the Implementation Process***

*These principles are further explored in the Guidelines for Schools*

*Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (DES:2017)*

1. Resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs should be used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools.
2. Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs should be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
3. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
4. Special education teaching supports provided to schools should be used solely for the support of pupils with identified special educational needs, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The special education teaching supports cannot be used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither can they be used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.
5. Pupils with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
6. Schools with more than one support teacher should establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

***PLANNING***

***Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs***

|  |  |
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| **Action 1:**  Identification of pupils with special educational needs | Review existing information on pupils’ needs, using school-based data, and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).  Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support. |
| **Action 2:**  Setting targets | Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support. |
| **Action 3:**  Planning teaching methods and approaches | Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed. |
| **Action 4:**  Organising early intervention and prevention programmes | Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required. |
| **Action 5:**  Organising and deploying special education teaching resources | 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. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place.  Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise. |
| **Action 6:**  Tracking, recording and reviewing progress | Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:  • At Whole-school and Classroom Support level by all teachers  • At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers |

***Identification of Needs through the Continuum of Support Process***

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| 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 the Continuum 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 |

\*These checklists are available 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>

***School Provision Plan for pupils with Special Educational Needs***

School: Roll No: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Special Educational Needs Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_\_ hours

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher Name\* | Hours | Brief Description of role and Duties |
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\*Teacher subject specialisms could be added as another column for post-primary teachers

***Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Classroom Support** |  |  |  |  |
| **Pupil Name** | **Class** | **Description of SEN** | **Nature of Supports**  Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills | **Focus of Support**  In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard |
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| **School Support** |  |  |  |  |
| **Pupil Name** | **Class** | **Description of SEN** | **Nature of Support** | **Focus of Support** |
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| **School Support Plus** |  |  |  |  |
| **Pupil Name** | **Class** | **Description of SEN** | **Nature of Support** | **Focus of Support** |
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## School Self-Reflective Questionnaire

This questionnaire is provided as a resource to schools for the revised allocation model. The self-reflective questionnaire is designed to help schools and teachers to address the following questions outlined in the *Guidelines for Schools*:

* How can we **identify** pupils’ needs?
* How can we **meet** these needs?
* How can we **monitor and report** on progress?
* How can a school allocate its resources to effectively meet needs?
* How can our school plan at whole-school level to ensure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs?

The questionnaire is intended for use by the school itself and should be used as a dynamic, developmental document to inform implementation of the revised allocation model in schools. Ideally, the questionnaire should be completed collaboratively within the school and the questionnaire itself should serve as a stimulus for reflection and discussion. The prompt questions in the questionnaire encourage teachers to examine their existing practices and to identify any changes needed to implement the revised allocation model. Schools may also wish to use or modify the questionnaire to review their special educational needs policies or to evaluate their progress in implementing the allocation model. Schools will not be required to submit the questionnaire to the Department or any of its agencies.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How can we ***IDENTIFY*** Pupil’s Needs? | |
| How do we use the Continuum of Support and Student Support Files to provide a documented and staged-approach to identifying pupils’ needs?   * *When do our class teachers decide to initiate Classroom Support Plans?* * *Do we consider individual needs across a broad range, including academic, social, communication, emotional, behavioural?* * *Do we identify environmental and contextual issues which need modification (visual, hearing, physical, sensory)?* * *How often are support plans developed and reviewed and who should be involved in this process?*   How do we gather the information we need to inform our decision making so that we can provide the greatest level of support to those with the greatest needs?   * *What observational records help us with identifying needs?* * *What types of assessment help us with screening and identification of needs?* * *How do we integrate information from pupils, parents, external professionals and early education settings to assist with identification of needs?* | |
| What are our Strengths? | What are our areas for Improvement? |
|  |  |
| How can we Improve? | |
|  | |

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| --- | --- |
| How can we ***MEET*** these Needs? | |
| What steps are class teachers taking to exercise their primary responsibility for the learning and well-being of all pupils in their classes?   * *Are all teachers using a variety of teaching approaches (including multi-sensory) in response to diverse needs?* * *What strategies are employed at class level to overcome barriers to learning and participation?* * *How is learning broken down into logical and manageable steps to ensure appropriate learning challenges for all?* * *To what extent are lessons co-operative, collaborative and hands-on?* * *Are there any standards or statements of good practice from Looking at Our Schools 2016 which would be useful in providing for better learning experiences and outcomes for our pupils?*   How do our special education teachers and class teachers collaborate to meet the needs of pupils and to ensure their progress?   * *Do we use early-intervention programmes in our mainstream classrooms across the school?* * *How do special education teachers support class teachers with in-class supports, group and individual withdrawal?* * *How do all staff work together to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs?* | |
| What are our Strengths? | What are our areas for Improvement? |
|  |  |
| How can we Improve? | |
|  | |

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| --- | --- |
| How can we ***MONITOR AND REPORT ON PROGRESS***? | |
| Are we using a cyclical problem-solving approach to planning, teaching and review which results in the devising of clear targets relevant to our pupils’ priority learning needs?   * *How do we set targets and devise plans for our pupils which identify needs and which can be monitored and recorded?* * *How do class teachers and special education teachers collaborating around the development and review of support plans?* * *How do we ensure that progress on the targets is incremental for pupils over time?* * *How can we assess the effectiveness of programmes/interventions we use?* * *How do we monitor at group, class and whole-school level?* * *Can we innovate and extend our practices?*   Who do we consult with and what is involved in monitoring the outcomes/progress?   * *How do we involve parents and pupils in monitoring progress?* * *How do we communicate the progress our pupils have made?* | |
| What are our Strengths? | What are our areas for Improvement? |
|  |  |
| How can we Improve? | |
|  | |

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| --- | --- |
| How can our school **ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY MEET NEEDS?** | |
| How do we identify the needs of all pupils with special educational needs in the school and use the Continuum of Support approach to ensure that the greatest level of support is provided to pupils with the greatest needs?   * *Could we quantify and organise our support for pupils with special educational needs through use of the School Provision Plan (Appendix 2)?* * *When devising support plans, how do we use the Continuum to identify priority learning needs at all three levels (Classroom Support, School Support, and School Support Plus)?* * *What kind of approaches and interventions are we using at a whole school level to support early intervention and prevention?*   How can we best decide on roles and responsibilities in providing supports for pupils, monitoring progress and contributing to future plans for the pupils?   * + *How can we merge the existing responsibilities of the resource and learning-support teachers into a special education team approach?*   + *Can we timetable and co-ordinate interventions efficiently with reference to* *available resources (in-class approaches, group work and minimal individual withdrawal)?* * *continuity of support (avoiding a pupil having several different teachers)?* * *the particular needs of pupils?* | |
| What are our Strengths? | What are our areas for Improvement? |
|  |  |
| How can we Improve? | |
|  | |

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| --- | --- |
| How can our school **plan at whole-school level to ensure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs?** | |
| How do we plan at whole-school level to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs?   * *How do we foster an inclusive approach to address the diversity of needs in our school?* * *How do we promote pupils’ sense of connection to their school, peers and teachers?* * *Have we reviewed our ongoing professional development needs, with reference to quality teaching and learning in both the mainstream classroom and special education support settings?* * *How do we consult with parents in relation to the supports and strategies being used in our school?* * *How do we foster pupil engagement and participation in their learning and in the life of the school?* * *Have we established procedures / protocols for liaising with support services?* | |
| What are our Strengths? | What are our areas for Improvement? |
|  |  |
| How can we Improve? | |
|  | |

**Parental Involvement**

In reflecting on and reviewing a school’s existing practice in encouraging parental involvement the following points could be taken into consideration, both in terms of existing and future actions:

* How are parents consulted and informed about the nature of special education needs provision and policy in school?
* How are parents consulted when special education supports (for example, Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus) are being proposed for their child?
* Do we involve parents at each level of the Continuum of Support process?
* To what extent is regular communication facilitated with parents who have a child with a special educational need?
* What barriers might prevent parents from being fully involved in supporting their child in school? What may be helpful in overcoming these barriers?
* Do we provide opportunities for parents to learn more about special education issues through contact with other agencies and services?
* How can we support staff members in engaging effectively with parents?

***Parental Booklet***

***Available to download at ………..***

**Insert school logo here**

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Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

**Guidelines on the Student Support Plan are available at:**

<http://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/Student-Support-File-Guidelines.pdf>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STUDENT SUPPORT FILE** | |
| **Name of Student** |  |
| **Date of Birth** |  |
| **School** |  |
| **Date File Opened** |  |
| **Date File Closed** |  |

**A Continuum of Support**

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**Student Support File, Log of Actions**

Date Actions

|  |  |
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| **Support Checklist** | | |
| **Name:** | **Age:** | **Class:** |
| **General Information** | **Date Checked** | **Comments** |
| 1. Parents/ Guardians Consulted |  |  |
| 1. Information from previous school/preschool gathered |  |  |
| 1. Hearing |  |  |
| 1. Vision |  |  |
| 1. Medical Needs |  |  |
| 1. Basic Needs Checklist completed |  |  |
| 1. Assessment of learning- screening |  |  |
| 1. Observation of learning style/approach to learning |  |  |
| 1. Observation of behaviour |  |  |
| 1. Interview with pupil |  |  |
| 1. Classroom work differentiated? |  |  |
| 1. Learning environment adapted? |  |  |
| 1. Yard/school environments adapted? |  |  |
| 1. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals? |  |  |
| 1. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff? |  |  |
| 1. Other interventions put in place in school? |  |  |
| **Action needed** |  |  |
| *Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20* | | |

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| **SUPPORT PLAN\*** *Classroom Support   School Support (Support for Some)   School Support Plus (Support for A Few)* |

**To be completed by the teacher(s).**   
For help, see *SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers: BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74*; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers,* pp. 51, 53, 54, 57*.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student’s name |  | | Age |  |
| Lead teacher |  | | Class/year |  |
| Start date of plan |  | |  |  |
| Review date of plan |  | |  |  |
| Student’s strengths and interests | | | | |
| Priority concerns | | | | |
| Possible reasons for concerns | | | | |
| Targets for the student | | | | |
| Strategies to help the student achieve the targets | | | | |
| Staff involved and resources needed | | | | |
| Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s) | |  | | |
| Signature of teacher | |  | | |

\*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

|  |
| --- |
| **SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD\***   *Classroom Support  School Support (Support for Some)   School Support Plus (Support for A Few)* |

**To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.**For help, see *SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers; BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student’s name | | Class/ Year |  |
| Names of those present at review | | Date of Review | |
| What areas of the plan have been most successful and why? | | | |
| Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them? | | | |
| Have the student’s needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how? | | | |
| Recommended future actions – *what, how, who, when?* | | | |
| Any comments from the student? | | | |
| Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s comment? | | | |
| Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s) |  | | |
| Signature of teacher(s) |  | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)** | | | |
|  | Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support |  | Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus |
|  | Continue at Current Level of Support |  | Request consultation with other professionals |

\*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review.