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Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

The following acronyms are used in this policy:

SEN: Special Educational Needs
SET: Special Education Teacher
SNA: Special Needs Assistant
SENO: Special Educational Needs Organiser
NCSE: National Council for Special Education
NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service
DES: Department of Education and Skills
SSF: Student Support File
SSP: Student Support Plan (learning plan)
PPP: Personal Pupil Plan (care needs plan)
ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Introduction/Rationale

This policy on Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a statement in relation to the provision for special educational needs in our school. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers and parents/guardians and the school community on the provision of effective support to pupils experiencing learning difficulties within the mainstream setting.

The policy was prepared in line with the Guidelines for Primary School Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs (DES 2017), Special Educational Needs: A continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers & Resources Pack for Teachers, Circulars no. 0013/2017 and 02/05, the Learning Support Guidelines (DES 2000) and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equality Status Act (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, Disability Act (2005).

Aims

This policy will help us to:

- Support the inclusion of all pupils and facilitate pupils to participate in and benefit from the full curriculum.
- Ensure that the Staged Approach / Continuum of Support is implemented.
- Ensure that those with the highest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.
'In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning.' (2017 Guidelines: P.19)
- Support positive self-esteem, social and emotional function and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies for pupils with special educational needs.
- Develop early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.

Selection of Pupils for Support Teaching

In the allocation of places for support teaching we are guided by the 2017 Guidelines that state 'pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support'

In identifying pupils for support, we will consider the following:

- Pupils with significant Special Additional Educational Needs including pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical, and sensory needs. This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. We will also consider needs set out in professional reports, where available.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social, emotional or behaviour difficulties, coordination difficulties and attention control difficulties.
- Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties including ASD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit- hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.
- Pupils performing below the 10th percentile on standardised tests will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils presenting with difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy e.g. difficulties that present a barrier to learning and full access to the curriculum.

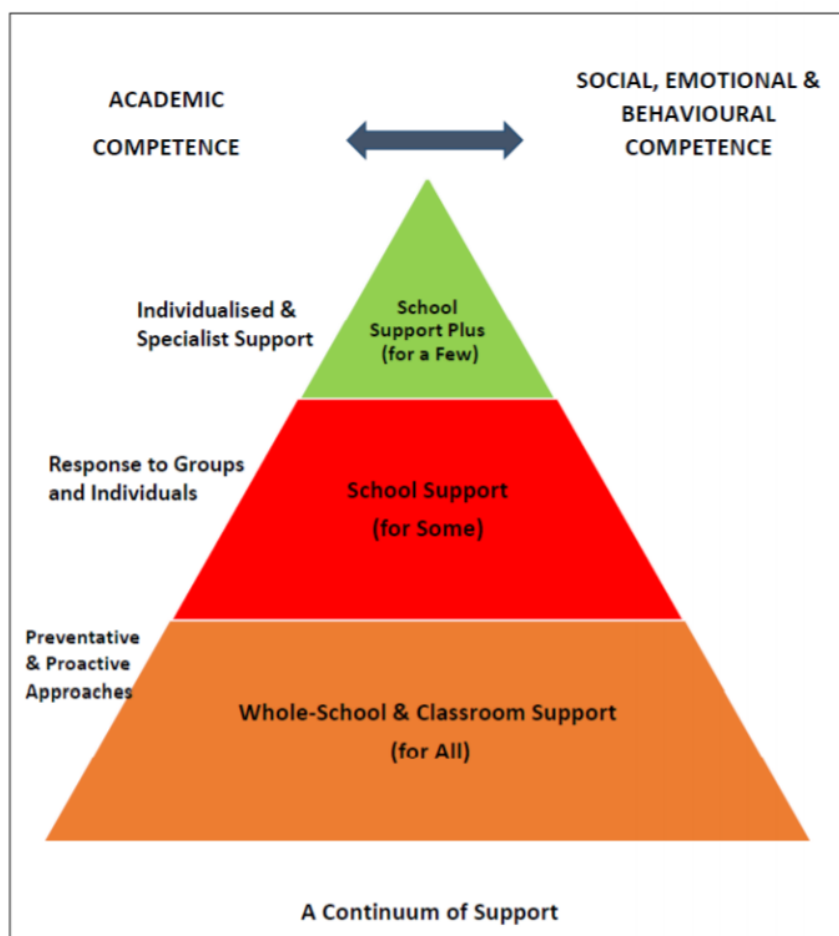
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need English Additional Language Support.
- Gifted Pupils (those scoring above the 95th%ile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments and/ or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a "superior IQ"). Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all its pupils.

Parental permission to avail of support from the SET is given on enrolment (Registration Form-Form 3)

The Continuum of Support

Support may be provided to pupils at Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus level of the NEPS' Continuum of Support Process.

Guidelines for Primary Schools, Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017) presents the Continuum of Support as follows:



These guidelines outline a three-step process to support pupils with special educational needs

Step 1: Identify Needs

Using the Continuum of Support Framework, Kilgariffe National School identifies pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

Table 1 from the 2017 Guidelines:

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.</p> <p>A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>

School Support Plus	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. <p>Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>

*These checklists are available in the *Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers*

Planning

A **Student Support File** has been developed to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support over the pupil's time in the school. It facilitates teachers to document progress and needs over time and assists teachers in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need over time. Within the Student Support File will be the **Student Support Plan**:

A **Student Support Plan** will address a pupil's full range of needs and will be devised between the class teacher, SET, Parents/Guardians and SNA (if applicable). Teachers may meet parents, psychologists and SNAs to discuss the child's progress throughout the school year. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time – frame for review. The class teacher has the responsibility of ensuring the pupil's learning needs are met. This is achieved through collaboration with the SET, through in-class support as well as out of class support. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

Many different types of support plans can be included in the Support File. A support plan can take the form of a general plan for support, a behavioural plan, an individual profile and learning programme, an individual educational plan or a personalised pupil plan (See Appendices for templates.)

SEN Register: A list of pupils who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework is maintained. (See Appendices)

Step 2: Meeting Needs

This step focuses on the importance of **effective teaching and learning strategies** and the benefits of early- intervention and prevention programmes.

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, teachers may need to adapt their teaching approaches for some pupils with additional learning needs. All class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with SEN. These include cooperative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms, collaborative problem-solving activities, heterogeneous group work, differentiation, interventions to promote social and emotional competence, embedding ICT in teaching, learning and assessment.

SET teachers are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies, and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early interventions and small group or individual support. Interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary.

Target Setting: Good target setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with SEN. Targets are informed by priority learning needs and linked to suitable interventions. See appendices for guidance on target setting.

Step 3: Monitor and Record Progress

Pupils' progress is regularly monitored. Progress is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion- referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This progress review may include measures of communication, independence, social inclusion and well-being as appropriate.

Results of such monitoring will be recorded in the student support file/plan and will inform planning and next steps.

Screening and Diagnostic Assessment: Class teachers will carry out initial screening tests and standardised assessments. The SET will discuss each class's recorded results with the class teacher and carry out further screening tests and/or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests will inform the selection process.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on special educational needs. The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.

- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, teaching resources are provided for the SEN team.
- Ensure a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils.

Principal

The Principal teacher has overall responsibility for the schools SEN program and for the provision of services for children with special Educational needs.

The Principal will:

- Help teachers/SNAs to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of special educational needs teaching by encouraging them and providing opportunities for them to avail of relevant professional development.
- Meet with SET teachers regularly.
- In conjunction with SET, the principal will liaise with outside agencies on SEN related matters.
- Review/monitor and apply for additional teaching and learning resources for SEN children, e.g., assistive technology.
- Review applications to outside agencies for special educational needs support.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with low achievement so that such pupils can be provided with the support that they need.
- Oversee SEN related policies and procedures.
- Be responsible for the allocation of SET teaching hours and SNA support.

The Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the pupils in their class including those receiving Special Education Teaching.

The class teacher:

- Liaises regularly with parents on children's progress.
- Facilitates the implementation of various models of support provided by the SET teachers.
- Liaises initially with parents to make them aware of the difficulties their child may be experiencing.
- In conjunction with the SET teacher, uses class observations, standardised and diagnostic test results to highlight children's specific required level of support.
- Collaborates with the SET teacher and SNA on a Student Support File for children with access to SET support.
- In conjunction with the SET teacher/SNA/parents creates and updates Student Support File and attends Student Support File meetings.
- Meets with the SET teacher on a regular basis to monitor progress and adapt the learning program as necessary.
- Collaborates with the SET teachers/SNA/parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

- Liaises with outside agencies (Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with special educational needs.
- Team teaches with the SET teachers, rotating groups to ensure a knowledge of all progress of all pupils.

Special Education Teacher

The role of the SET teacher includes:

- Developing a Student Support File with the class teacher to address the needs of children with additional needs.
- Maintaining relevant progress reports on children/groups of children in receipt of support teaching.
- In conjunction with the class teacher, implementing various in-class models of support.
- Withdraw children individually or in small groups for support teaching.
- In collaboration with the class teacher, gathering information/data on children to create a profile of children experiencing difficulties. (See Continuum of Support)
- In consultation with the class teacher, administering relevant diagnostic tests to children who have been identified by the class teacher as experiencing difficulties.
- Collaborates with the class teacher/SNA/parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs.
- Liaising with outside agencies (Psychologists/Occupational Therapists/Speech and Language Therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with special educational needs.
- Setting specific targets for specific children and/or groups of children and agreeing these with the class teacher and parents.
- Oversees the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening program to identify pupil with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Orders, purchases, distributes and informs staff on class screening materials and procedures e.g. standardised tests.
- Maintains a list of pupils who are receiving SEN support (SEN Register).
- Ensures that all documentation relating to children who receive special education teaching is properly filed and secured.

Special Needs Assistant

The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is to provide schools with additional support in assisting children with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs (Circular 07/02, Circular 0030/2014). The Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) is responsible for the school's SNA allocation based on the level of care needs.

The role of the SNA includes:

- Preparation and tidying up of classrooms in which the pupils with special educational needs is/are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school transport.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing/writing, including assistance with assistive technology where applicable.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special educational needs during assembly/recreational, dispersal periods and transitions.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- Attend and provide input into Student Support File meetings regarding specific child/children with whom they are assigned to.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Liaise regularly with the class teacher/s who teach the specific children with whom they are assigned to.

Parents/Guardians

The role of the parent/guardian of a child with special educational needs is important to their education. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the class teacher and SEN teacher.
- Creating a home environment where literacy/numeracy can thrive.
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Attending Student Support File and parent teacher meetings and providing input/feedback to the class teacher/SET teacher/SNA.
- Collaborating with SET/class teacher and SNA in implementing a Student Support Plan and helping to establish specific goals and targets for their child at home and school.
- Sharing insights and feedback on their child's development and learning difficulties. This information is obtained through school registration form and consultation with parents.
- Collaborating in the generating of pupil profiles.

The Role of the Pupil

In recognition of the child-centred nature of the school's ethos, we recognise the importance of the child's own role in the provision of special education support.

A child-centred approach will enable us to work with the child to:

- Help the child to understand their own learning.
- Take ownership of their own learning – making it real and memorable.
- Recognise their own needs and strengths.

- Take on a responsibility for their achievements and work hard to succeed.
- Work together from a shared understanding of the difficulties the child is experiencing.
- Set clear realistic and achievable goals so that the child experiences a sense of achievement.

The Role of External Agencies and Bodies

Support and guidance is available to teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals.

The school has established procedures for liaising with these services and bodies to optimise the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs at the individual, group or whole-school level.

‘The needs of many pupils’ span both health and education services. Health services (HSE and HSE-funded services) will continue to play an important role in early identification, assessment and diagnosis, intervention, and review for pupils with special educational needs. The school is familiar with the range of health services in our locality, including referral pathways. The school will endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.’

(2017 Guidelines: p. 25).

Enrolment of Children with Identified SEN

In keeping with Section 2 of the EPSEN Act (2004), a child with SEN is welcomed to the school and educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have SEN where this serves the best interests of all children involved.

Prior to a child’s enrolment, relevant staff in the school will familiarise themselves with the child’s particular needs as required, by:

- obtaining copies of reports, assessments, etc. from parents
- meeting with parents/principal/class teacher/special needs staff
- contacting the SENO, NEPS psychologist or other therapists or agencies where applicable

This will help to determine the level and type of support the child will require and which stage of the Continuum of Support the newly enrolled child should be placed at. Further testing carried out by the class teacher and SET teacher may also inform this decision.

To ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school the following steps will be taken as appropriate:

- Parental visit/s to the school
- Pupil visits to school
- Staff visits to special schools/special classes

- Liaison with SENO to arrange additional resources
- Where health and safety issues may arise in relation to mobility, care or other needs, these will be identified, and strategies developed to address them.

Prevention Strategies and Models of Support

Throughout the school we implement various initiatives and programmes in order to assist in the prevention of learning difficulties. These include:

- Aistear
- Sensory/Calm Corner
- Quiet work spaces
- Reading buddies (6th class with junior pupils)
- Paired reading with parents
- Show and tell
- Movement breaks
- Early intervention
- Structured phonics programme- Jolly Phonics
- Individualised spelling programme – Spellings for Me
- DEAR time
- Friends for Life
- Station teaching
- Differentiation
- In class support from SET teacher for literacy/numeracy
- Withdrawal to work with SET teacher when needed

Inclusive Practice

- All children get the chance to participate in all curricular areas. Learning experiences will be differentiated as needed, by task, questioning, outcome or extension.
- All children take part in whole school activities as suits their needs.
- Where the curriculum is adapted to suit individual needs, this is not highlighted, and all children are still challenged and given the opportunity to experience perseverance, progression and success.
- Children sit in mixed ability groups.
- A buddy system may be operated according to needs arising. We hope to encourage a welcoming and tolerant attitude towards difference within the school community.
- We recognise that the Social, Personal and Health education programme supports inclusive practice, raising awareness and understanding around areas such as friendship, assertiveness and bullying.
- All pupils are entitled to their breaks and playtimes. Pupils with additional needs are supported in the playground. SNAs and teachers on yard duty supervise diligently,

dealing with, recording and reporting any incidents that occur. Staff will be aware of different behaviour plans and targets that are relevant to a child's yard time if necessary.

Positive Handling

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school, such as high fiving a child in affirmation, administering first aid and meeting intimate care needs (see Intimate Care Policy). Our duty of care to others means that it may on occasion also be necessary to use physical contact to restrain a child who is putting themselves or another person at risk. Staff will endeavour to reduce the need for physical intervention by using de-escalation strategies in the first instance. The following examples, which are not exhaustive, outline the circumstances where physical contact may be used in the school:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back

The following principles are followed by staff who find themselves in a situation where they feel a restrictive physical intervention is necessary. Action by staff will:

- be in best interests of the child
- use maximum care, minimum force
- be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary
- be for reasons of safety

Transfer to Post Primary School

The school uses the NCCA developed suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of Education Passport and include:

- 6th Class Report Card
- My Profile Sheet (for children)
- My Child's Profile (for parents)

Collaboration and Communication

We have devised the following timetable to facilitate collaboration between all those involved in a child's education.

Overview of the Year	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and updating of SEN Register at staff meeting • SET teacher devises timetables • SET teacher carries out diagnostic testing • Principal and SET teacher meet with NEPS psychologist
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support Plans devised by SET teacher and class teachers in conjunction with parents/guardians, children and outside agencies if relevant. • PPPs drawn up and reviewed for pupils accessing SNA support
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support Plans finalised and signed by teachers and parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Support Plus – Meetings arranged with parents/guardians ○ School Support and Classroom Support – Phone calls to parents and Support Plans sent home for parents' approval and signature
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) assessment with Senior Infants • NRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Test) assessment with 2nd class and as needed (EAL children will be assessed at a later stage) • Student Support Plan reviews • Annual Parent Teacher meetings – parents consulted in review process
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardised tests in English reading and maths administered (English reading SI – 6th class, Maths 1st – 6th class) • Liaise with secondary schools regarding transfer of pupils with Special Educational Needs
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardised test scores discussed at staff meeting • Student Support Plan reviews and updating of SEN Register • Communicate with parents before end of year reports if necessary (especially School Support Plus) • Education Passports sent to secondary schools • Meeting with pupils/parents of any incoming Junior Infants with additional needs ahead of the next academic year
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN pupils progress (including running records), SET and SNA timetabling discussed regularly at staff meetings.

Record Keeping

Student Support Files for each child with SEN, psychological reports and reports from other professionals (e.g. SLT, OT) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office. Results of standardised and diagnostic tests will also be stored securely by the SET teacher. These records will be made available to relevant parties: class teachers, SENO, NEPS psychologist, inspector and parents on a need to know basis. Records for each child are retained in the school according to the school's record retention schedule.

Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

The Principal and SET teacher have responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this policy. It is an ongoing and developmental process.

- It is the policy of the Board of Management that machinery, kitchen equipment and electrical appliances are to be used only by competent and authorised persons. Such appliances and equipment will be subject to regular maintenance checks. Children are supervised when plugging or unplugging electrical appliances, or when using the photocopier or appliances in the kitchen. Kettles or boiling water in classrooms must be kept away from pupil access, except for scientific/academic purposes and then under constant supervision. Children should be supervised when carrying furniture, P.E., electrical equipment etc... unless supervised. Grass cutting, repairs and other works involving machinery take place outside school hours or during school holidays, insofar as possible.

Date ratified by the Board of Management: 18/11/24

Chairperson's Signature: _____ (Trevor Sweetnam)

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Student Support File – initial pages
- Appendix 2: Classroom Support Plan
- Appendix 3: School Support Plan
- Appendix 4: School Support Plus Plan
- Appendix 5: Support Review Record
- Appendix 6: SEN Register template
- Appendix 7: PPP template
- Appendix 8: Behaviour Plan template
- Appendix 9: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving framework, from Guidelines for Primary Schools, Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017)