
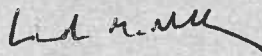




# Westport Educate Together National School

## Additional Educational Needs Policy

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Created By	Niall Quinn (Principal)
Signed by Principal	
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Approved by Chairperson name	Linda McNulty
Approved by Chairperson signature	
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## 1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

Westport Educate Together National School is an equality-based, equal-opportunity school where each child is cared for, honoured and believed in. Each child's talents are recognised and celebrated. We aim to provide a holistic approach to education taking account of individual needs, abilities, interests and social and cultural backgrounds. We strive to create a positive and caring, inclusive environment conducive to learning, enabling each child to reach his/her full potential with confidence and enthusiasm. We promote an atmosphere where staff and pupils respect themselves and others and where each person takes responsibility for his/her actions. This policy was formulated by the staff of Westport Educate Together National School in 2025. It will be reviewed and revised in 2030. This policy reflects DES circulars 0030/2014, 0013/2017 and 0058/2019 as well as the document Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. The EPSEN Act defines a special education need as “a restriction in the capacity of the person to benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition, which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.”

For the purposes of this policy and in keeping with the core principles defining an Educate Together ethos including child-centred and equality-based, we define inclusion as the process by which our school community will endeavour to respond to all pupils as individuals by considering and adapting curricula, organisation and provision. The goal of inclusion is not to erase differences but to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality. In keeping with the inclusion perspective described previously, the policy will adopt the term “additional education needs” rather than the term “special education needs” even though the latter term is ordinarily used by other agencies and the Department of Education. Westport Educate Together NS caters for children from Junior Infants to 6th Class. The school has a Support teaching principal, 3 mainstream class teachers. The school has one Additional Needs Assistant (ANA). The allocation of both support teaching hours and ANA is subject to review.

### **Glossary**

**AEN** Additional Educational Needs

**CAMHS** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**EAL** English as an Additional Language

**IEP** Individual Education Plan or **Support Plans**

**\*Note Westport Educate Together uses the Term Support Plan**

**Additional Needs Assistants** (commonly referred to as SNAs by other organisations)

**NCSE** National Council for Special Education

**NEPS** National Educational Psychological Service

**PPP** Personal Pupil Profile



child may have. If a pupil has an identified additional need and is already receiving support from another organisation, it is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school. The class teacher and support teacher team will read all current reports on the child prior to receiving the child in school.

Having gathered the relevant information, the Board of Management will ensure to the best of the school's ability (noting that decisions on support teaching and ANA allocation as these are made by the National Council Special Education within the parameters set by the Department of Education) that a child with additional education needs will be educated in an inclusive environment, unless the degree or nature of those needs means this is not in the best interests of the child and significantly interrupts the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.

### **Pupils with additional education needs transferring from another school**

Parents of a pupil with additional needs transferring from another school are required to provide the school with copies of all reports regarding the needs of the child. Under the new model of support allocation, it may not be possible for the school to match the level and type of support available in a child's previous school. The principal will discuss this prior to enrolment and provide some indication of the level of support available. Of note, supports, including access to an ANA, cannot be assumed when enrolling in the school.

### **Inclusion**

A variety of interventions will be designed by the class teacher to facilitate inclusion for pupils with additional education needs in all aspects of the curriculum at their ability and competence levels. This could include oral and group work, practical learning experiences, a buddy system, circle time, computer skills, etc. School personnel will be made aware of the additional educational and medical needs of the pupils and the strategies necessary to integrate them in all aspects of school life.

### **Communication**

In Westport Educate Together NS we encourage and welcome open communication between principal, teachers, parents, visiting teachers and outside professionals who engage with our children. In addition to the regular communication with all parents, there are additional arrangements in place for communication with parents of children with additional education needs, as follows:

- Formal meetings take place in October with parents of children receiving supplementary teaching at the School Support Plus level.
- Parents are encouraged to make regular contact with the class teacher and learning support teacher.
- Formal parent-teacher meetings may be convened at the request of the parent or teachers at any time.



of each academic informed by a meeting between staff and parents. This plan will be formally reviewed in February. An end-of-year report (see Appendix D) will be written and given to parents at the end of the academic year.

Note: The 'Log of Actions' in the Support Plan will be added to as appropriate. These additions will be made by the class teacher or the support teacher.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community including the Board of Management, the principal, parents, class teachers, learning support teachers, ISAs, children and external bodies and agencies. Key tasks and dates for completion of them can be found in Appendix E.

#### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management will:

- review the AEN policy and any updates to it;
- ratify the policy;
- ensure to the best of its ability and within the confines of the allocations provided, remembering that support teaching and ANA allocation as these are made by the National Council Special Education within the parameters set by the Department of Education, that satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available; and
- provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of AENs support.

#### **Principal Teacher**

The principal will have overall responsibility for the school's provision for children with AENs. The principal keeps a record of referrals made to NEPS and other outside services. At the beginning of each school year, the principal will meet with the NEPS psychologist to formulate a plan for the year, including assessments of pupils and professional supports for teachers.

#### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. The class teacher will:

- Provide effective teaching and learning opportunities.
- Support the identification of learning difficulties.
- Log actions in the Support Plan at all levels.
- Communicate with parents/guardians.
- Draw up Classroom Support Plans at Stage 1 of the Continuum of Support and



- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Contributing to the development of this policy.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested).
- Meeting with parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc., and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
- Implementing school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening children for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.

### **Role of the ANA**

The role of an Additional Needs Assistant will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature (see Circular 0030/2014). The primary care support tasks may include:

- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks.
- Preparing and tidying a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another.

#### 4. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics to ensure progression and continuity from class to class, including the Aistear programme and Ready Set Go Maths in the infant classes and literacy/numeracy Power Hour (stations teaching) for children in Junior Infants to 2nd Class.
- Careful development of phonological awareness, rhyming skills and oral language skills, before formal reading of words and books.
- Building sight vocabulary using Jolly Phonics tricky words and infant readers.
- The use of concrete materials as much as possible.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher focusing on the provision of additional individualised support, as and when required.
- Provision of additional support in language development/early literacy/early mathematical skills to children who need it.
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration.
- Provision of assistive technology as appropriate.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings.

##### **Early Intervention Strategies**

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or the support teachers. Collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and support teachers should identify children who may need early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes. Early intervention programmes will include:

- The implementation of an English language programme for Junior and Senior Infant children who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary as well as an intensive language programme for such children in more senior classes with an emphasis on basic vocabulary and the language of Maths. This acknowledges the literacy skills already acquired in a child's mother tongue.



- At the end of each instructional block (January and June) the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and, where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding the continued level of support, and revised targets will be set in the child's Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made, and targets have been met.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

## **6. Monitoring Progress**

- The Support Review Record will be completed by the Support Teacher in collaboration with the class teacher. This will be carried out at the end of each instructional period. The completed review will be saved in Aladdin.
- Self-reflection (by the child) as part of the Continuum of Support Review Record.
- Weekly tests, if applicable (e.g. Spellings/Tables).
- Termly assessments (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Standardised tests at the end of each academic year (1st – 6th) in English, maths and spelling.
- Senior Infants (MIST) – usually administered at the end of Term 2
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

### **Record Keeping**

Records are kept in accordance with the school's Data Management and Record Keeping Policy.

- Class teachers will keep a record of teacher-designed tests, end-of-term tests and checklists, work samples etc. in an assessment folder for their class.
- A general file for each child in the class, containing any relevant correspondence relating to the child is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office.
- Diagnostic assessments and other checklists administered by the support teacher for children at the School Support and School Support levels will be put in a separate file and stored in the support room.
- Continuum of Support documents are kept on Aladdin.
- Personal Pupil Plans for children with ANA access will also be stored with their Support Plans.
- Psychological reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked cabinet in the office



- Liaising with parents and other relevant professionals may be done during pupils' supplementary teaching time.
- The support teacher will review the timetable at the end of each instructional term/block or as required.
- An attendance record of children who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching will be kept by the support teacher.

### **9. Success Criteria**

The success of this policy will be demonstrated by:

- an increase in positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils by addressing their academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs
- improved standards of academic performance and achievement
- enhanced parental involvement in supporting pupil learning
- increased collaboration between school personnel

### **10. Monitoring the Implementation of Policy:**

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the principal and the Board of Management. A review of the policy by the Board of Management to confirm that the actions/measures set down under the policy are being implemented will take place no later than 2026.

### **11. Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy:**

The policy should be reviewed and evaluated at least every three years and as necessary, not later than 2028. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.





## Appendix B: Permission Letter Template for School Support/School Support Plus



{{Date}}

Dear Parent(s),

Welcome back to another school year. I hope you all had a nice summer and are looking forward to a fruitful year ahead. We feel that {{Child's name}} would benefit from extra support with literacy and mathematics. I will work in conjunction with the class teacher and the lessons may take place in or outside the classroom. At times throughout the year we may carry out some diagnostic testing to monitor your child's progress and ensure that the programme meets their needs. The school requires your permission to withdraw your child from class and for assessment. Please sign the letter below and return it to school tomorrow. I will be in touch with you later in the term to discuss progress. In the meantime, feel free to contact me if you have any concerns.

Yours sincerely,

{{Special education needs teacher}}

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I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to attend support classes and to complete assessments.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D - End-of-Year Report – Support Teaching

End-of-Year Report – Support Teaching	
Student's name	
Year/Class	
Learning targets	
Nature of support teaching	
What progress has been evident regarding the learning targets over the course of this academic year?	
Which learning targets remain unmet or which new learning targets have emerged?	
Recommended future actions?	
Signature of support teacher	
Signature of class teacher	
Signature of principal	

Recommendation for next academic year (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	