**Whole School Policy for Special Education/Learning Support**

**Name of School:**TobaranLéinn

**Roll Number:**16667W

**Mission Statement**

TobaranLéinn strives to achieve the highest possible educational standardsfor all its pupils in a happy, supportive, inclusive and caring environment, with due emphasis given to the individual needs of each pupil. As part of this purpose, the present policy is designed to ensure that those pupils who have special learning needs will be given effective and appropriate support.

**Aims**

**1.** To ensure that the theory and practice of Special Education in the school is in line with current best practice and with the policies and guidelines of the Department of Education and Science. The delivery of the learning support/special education aims and objectives will be subject to facilities and resources being made available to TobaranLéinnby the D.E.S and may change from time to time in accordance with D.E.S. policy changes as may be outlined in D.E.S. circulars and letters.

**2.** To ensure that a service in Special Education is delivered which meets with the guidelines and objectives as set out in: The 1998 Education Act; The Guidelinesfor Students with General Learning Disabilities; The Learning Support Guidelines; The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003); The EPSEN Act (2004).

**3.** Further elaboration of learning support/special education aims can be seen in Appendix 1.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Role of the Board of Management**

**1.** To oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on S.E.N. and special needs.

**2.** To ensure adequate accommodation and resources are provided.

**3.** To provide a secure facility for storage of records.

**Role of the Principal**

**1**. To assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the schools policy on S.E.N.

**2**. To work with teachers and parents on the development, implementation and review of the school plan.

**3.** To monitor the implementation of the plan.

**4**. To monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring focus is on low achievers.

**5.** Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination of learning support and S.E.N. or appoint a teacher to do so.

**6.** Oversee implementation of an assessment and screening programme to identify pupils in need of supplementary teaching.

**7**. To keep teachers informed about the external assessmentservices that are available and the proceduresto be followed in initiating referrals.

**8**. To help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in learning support by, for example, providing guidance and advice with regard to teaching methods and materials and by encouraging teachers to avail of in-career development.

**Role of the Class Teacher**

**1.** Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils, and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.

**2.** Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and in mathematics, by administering and scoring the screening tests and by discussing the outcomes with the S.E.N teacher in the context of each pupil’s general performance in class.

**3.** To collaborate with the S.E.N teacher in the development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.

**4**. For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities on the pupil’s Individual Profile and Learning Programme and maintain a record of pupil’s progress towards achieving those learning targets.

**5.** Differentiate the class curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils within the class.

**6.** To keep parents informed regarding their child’s progress and the interventions, where applicable, which are in effect.

**7**. To inform parents when an intervention is no longer required.

**8**. Approaches and methods recommended for teaching pupils with special learning needs can be found in Appendix 2

**Role of the Special Education Teacher**

**1**. Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole-schoolstrategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.

**2.** Developing an Individual Profile and Learning Programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.

**3.** Maintaining a Weekly Planning and Progress Record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support.

**4.** Delivering intensive early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching in English and/or mathematicsto pupils in the junior section of the school (senior infants to second class).

**5.** Providing supplementary teaching in English and/or mathematicsto pupils in the senior section of the school (third to sixth classes) who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

**6.** Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school proceduresfor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, in line with the selection criteria specified in the school plan and input from the pupils’ class teachers and parents.

**7.** Contributing to the development of policy on learning support at the whole-school level. (S.E.N.)

**8**. Providing advice to class teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approachesto language development, reading, writing and mathematicsfor pupils experiencing learning difficulties.

**9.** Contributing at the school level to decision-making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials.

**10.** Supporting colleaguesin responding to the learning requirements of children with social and emotional needs.

**Role of the Special Education Co-ordinator**

**1.** Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or special educational services.

**2.** Helping to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the support and teachers.

**3.** Supporting the implementation of a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.

**4.** Advising parents on proceduresfor availing of special needs services.

**5.** Liaising with external agencies such as psychologicalservices to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.

**6.** Arranging for classroom accommodation and resources, as appropriate.

**7.** Informing parents about July Provision.

**Prevention Strategies**

1. Development of agreed approachesto language development and to teaching other aspects of English and mathematicsin order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.

The agreed approachesto language development are outlined in the school plans for English and Maths.

The main features of the language curriculum (English) are:

• Pre reading activities

• Big Books

• A shared reading programme involving the pupils’ parents

• A phonetics programme which contains an element of sight word recognition. The Jolly Phonicsprogramme is used from Juniors to 2nd Class.

**2.** Provision of additional support in language development and in relevant early literacy and mathematicalskills to pupils who need it. Additional support at Stage 2, should it be required, Aistear implemented – N.LL.C.

**3.** Sharing books with children, and developing their early mathematical skills.

**4.** Emphasis on developing early Mathematicalskills through play and use of concrete materials.

**5.** Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties. This observation/assessment is informal in the infant classes. It is based on the teachers’ daily interaction with the children and the detailed information acquired in this interaction.

**Early Intervention**

The principles governing early intervention are set out in Appendix 3.

Intervention at stage two (see three stage model below) begins in the second term of senior infants, if it is deemed necessary. Prior to this, children with learning needs who are considered to be in the high incidence range will receive support at classroom level. The support to be provided to children whose learning needs are in the low incidence range is governed by D.E.S. policy and will be provided in accordance with that policy. At the present time, this policy is set out in Circular 02/05, which contains the following guideline: Pupils with identified significant special educational needs arising from low incidence disabilitiesfor whom the school has been given specific individual allocations of resource teaching hours are considered to be at stage III.

**Assessment and Reporting**

The school Special Education Programme is divided into two teaching terms, September to February and February to June. Assessment is ongoing and a full review takes place at the end of each teaching term. Supplementary teaching ceases when in the opinion of the class teacher and the SET teacher the child has made satisfactory progress. Parents are informed of the decision to cease supplementary intervention and a record is kept of the child’s progress and attainments.

**Identification of children needing supplementary teaching**

Identification of learning or other difficulties and appropriate intervention will follow the three stage process outlined in the document Working Together to Make a Difference for Children. The three stages are here briefly summarised. The full document may be accessed at <http://www.into.ie>

**Stage one:** Whole class stage involving class teacher, parents and child. The special education teacher may be involved in an advisory capacity. If the concerns raised can be successfully addressed at this level, no further action will be needed. At this stage additional support is provided within the classroom by the class teacher who will draw up a plan and implement it. The plan should include support activities which can be accomplished at home.

**Stage two:** School support stage. Should the child’s learning needs be such that classroom support is not deemed to be adequate, it will be necessary to move to stage two. Class teacher, support teacher(s) and parents re-assess the child’s needs and a new plan (IPLP/IEP) is drawn up. At this stage, additional support, such as sessions with a special education teacher, may be deemed necessary. The additional intervention may take place within the classroom or the pupil may be withdrawn for classes.

**Stage three:** The consultation/assessment stage. Should serious concerns remain, the school may consult the parents/guardians with a view to obtaining a formal assessment. At this stage, the school’s EP and other professionals may become involved. A new cycle of consultation, assessment and planning, involving all concerned, begins.

1. **Preliminary Screening**

It is the policy of TobaranLéinnto carry out the following screening tests/assessments and to follow through on their results as described below.

**1.** In the case of Senior Infants, identification of pupils with particular needs will be based on teacher made checklists and observations. (Mist Administered)

**2.** For classes 1 to 6, the Micra T and Sigma T tests will be administered and scored by the class teacher in May.

**3.** The learning support teacher in consultation with the class teacher will select pupils for diagnostic assessment. Priority will be given to pupils who score below the 10th percentile. ??

**4**. When concerns arise as a result of screening tests, parents are informed of these concerns and of the procedures and policies within the school as well as the resources and choices that are available.

1. **Diagnostic Assessment**

Once the pupils are identified who are in need of additional support, diagnostic assessment will be administered by the special education teacher, to identify the pupil’s learning strengths and needs and to

decide on the most appropriate form of support for each pupil. This may entail additional support from the class teacher and/or supplementary teaching from the support teacher.

The following diagnostic tests are used in the school: parental permission??

**Reading Mathematics**

The D.P.R.T. Levels 1 to 5 Maths Mastery: Junior Infants to Sixth

The Sigma T can be used as a diagnostic test.

Running record RAIN test

**Supplementary Teaching**

Following from the diagnostic test(s), learning targets will be identified and an Individual Profile and Learning Programme will be drawn up for each pupil to whom learning support is to be provided, in consultation with the pupil’s class teacher and parents and, where appropriate, with the pupil himself/herself. Insofar as it is practicable, intervention should take place within the classroom. Where this is unfeasible or where it is not appropriate to the child’s learning needs, the pupil will be withdrawn for supplementary lessons.

**Procedures Adapted when Withdrawing Children from Class**

**!.** Whenever it is feasible, the class teacher and the SET will engage in team teaching, in preference to withdrawing pupils from class. In these instances, written permission from parents/guardians will not be necessary. Written permission from parent/guardian must be received if children are to be withdrawn from class.

**2.** Children should be withdrawn in groups of two or more.

**3.** Children should be collected from and returned to the classroom by the S.E.T.

4. Children who have a Special Needs Assistant should have the S.N.A. present unless other arrangements have been agreed.

**5.** At no time should children be unsupervised.

**Continuing/discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

There will be a review of each pupil’s progress at the end of an instructional term. There are two instructional terms per year. This will entail:

•Assessment of the pupil's progress,

•Evaluation of the learning programme which has been implemented,

•Evaluation of the level of learning support the pupil may require in the future

•Revision of learning targets and associated activities, if appropriate, in the pupil’s Individual Profile and Learning Programme.

•In the case of a child for whom supplementary teaching outside the classroom is no longer deemed necessary, parents will receive written notification of the decision and will be invited to meet with the SET to discuss the reasons for ending supplementary teaching and ways of continuing to meet the child’s educational needs.

**Time-tabling**

Class time-tables must be flexible and based around the time-tabling needs of children receiving support from special education teachers. It is the policy of the school that intervention/supplementary classes should take place within the classroom setting. Pupils should only be withdrawn when the specific needs of the children warrant withdrawal and cannot be adequately addressed in the classroom setting.

**The Special Education Teacher’s Schedule**

The work of the support teacher entails providing as many supplementary teaching lessons as possible. However, in addition to providing supplementary teaching, the support teacher must also allocate time to non-teaching activities.

These activities could include:

•Overseeing the early intervention and prevention programmes

•Conducting diagnostic assessments

•Maintaining and reviewing pupil records

•Co-ordinating special needs services and

•Consulting with teachers and parents

**Liaising with parents**

Liaising with parents is a critically important aspect of the successful implementation of effective special education intervention. The procedures for liaising with parents, from the initial stages of intervention to the point at which an education plan is drawn up, are set out elsewhere in the policy. Parents should be encouraged to contact the support teacher if any difficulties arise during an instructional term and to attend a meeting at the end of each instructional term to review their child’s progress in achieving the learning targets set out on his/her Individual Profile and Learning Programme. If a decision is taken to continue to provide supplementary teaching, parents can be invited to discuss revised learning targets and activities.

**Outside agencies**

In cases where a pupil’s learning needs necessitate the involvement of an agency outside the school, the teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating special needs/learning-supportservices in the school should oversee initial contact with parents, liaise with assessmentservices, and, where appropriate, make arrangementsfor additional educational provision for children with diagnosed special needs.

The school maintains a close liaison with NEPs, in accordance with the policies and guidelines governing its operation. Pupils who are referred to NEPs for psychological evaluation will be selected according to the following criteria:

**1**. The number of referrals allowed by NEPs. (2)

**2**. The availability of resourcesfrom NEPs.

**3.** The urgency of the pupils’ needs, priority being given to those pupils who have low incidence disabilities and who are judged by the principal, the SET who is involved with the pupil and the class teacher to be most in need of an evaluation.

**Record Keeping**

Results of screening tests are kept in the support room in a secure cabinet. Each class teacher will have a copy of the results for his/her own class. The results of all tests conducted by special education teachers will be kept in the pupil’s file along with psychological assessments(where applicable) and education plans. These materials will be normally left in a locked filing cabinet. The SET teachers will keep a weekly planning and progress record.

**Resources**

Resource material is available in the school for use in special education. This includes tests, teaching materials and resources containing information for teachers (for example, on Dyslexia).

From time to time this bank of resources will need to be supplemented, updated or replaced in part due to damage, loss, wear and tear etc. The Special Education Co-ordinator will be responsible for the maintenance of resources.

Insofar as it is feasible, the special education resource should be available to the class teachers, particularly in cases where the teacher is undertaking intervention at stage one. (see above

**Health and Safety**

Pupils who attend supplementary classes outside their regular classroom should be supervised at all times. Contact between teachers and pupils is governed by the policy on child protection.

**Review of Policy**

A comprehensive review of the special education plan will take place every three years and will take into account the views of all the partners. The principal teacher will initiate this review and the plan will be revised and practices changed or modified as appropriate.

**Appendix 1**

**Aims of Special Education**

To establish prevention and early intervention programmes.

To provide supplementary teaching for pupils with special learning needs in English and / or Maths.

To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies and systems to support the needs of pupils who have special educational needs.

To develop positive attitudes in pupils who have learning difficulties/special educational needs.

To enable pupils with learning difficulties to participate in the full curriculum with appropriate modifications. To optimise the teaching and learning process so that pupils with learning difficulties/special needs will achieve levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy appropriate to their potential, before leaving school.

To enable pupils with learning difficulties/special needs to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.

**Appendix 2**

**Approaches and methods recommended for teaching pupils with special learning needs:**

•Group teaching;

•Modifying presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with special learning needs in class activities;

•Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum;

•Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy;

•Setting learning targets at an appropriate level;

•Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress;

•Carrying out error analyses of a pupil’s work in order to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty for particular attention in subsequent lessons;

•Arranging for more able pupils to work collaboratively with other pupils in peer tutoring programmes and paired reading programmes. Reading Buddies – November (6 weeks)

**Appendix 3**

**Principles of Early Intervention**

The principle of early intervention should underpin school policy on learning support and the provision of supplementary teaching programmes in English and mathematics. Research evidence indicates that the implementation of an intensive early intervention programme in the early primary classes (i.e. senior infants to second) is an effective response to meeting the needs of children who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties. Programmes with the following characteristics have proved most successful in improving pupils ’achievements:

**1.** They are set within a specific time frame, such as an instructional term of 13 to 20weeks. (Therefore, it is suggested that, for the purposes of organising learning support, the school year should be divided into two or three instructional terms, each between 13 and 20 weeks.).

**2.** They are based on a shared expectation of success by everybody involved.

**3.** They involve small-group teaching or one to-one teaching when small-group teaching has not been effective.

**4.** They are intensive in terms of the frequency of lessons (daily where possible) and the pace of instruction.

**5.** They include a strong focus on the development of oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills

**6.** They emphasise the development of phonemic awareness and a range of other word identification skills.

**7.** They engage pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty, and monitor their comprehension of these texts.

**8.** They stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**9.** In mathematics, they focus on language development and the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

**Appendix 4**

**Monitoring Progress**

In order to monitor the effectiveness and smooth operation of the special education/learning support process, regular meetings will be scheduled between the principal teacher, the special education teachers and the teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating special needs and learning-support services. As part of the monitoring process, the principal teacher should also consult with class teachers and parents on these issues. The outcomes of any review of school policy should be shared with the Board of Management and the teaching staff in the school. The meetings referred to in paragraph one, should occur at least once each school term, and should address the following issues, as appropriate:

• Development and implementation of the school’s prevention and early intervention programmes

• Implementation of the school’s screening programme for the selection of pupils for diagnostic assessment

• Implementation of the various procedures that necessitate the involvement of the class teacher and the parents, for example, diagnostic assessment, the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching and programme planning

• Implementation of appropriate criteria for continuing/reducing support levels for pupils at the end of a term of supplementary teaching

• Allocation of the learning-support teacher’s time across various teaching and consultative activities

• Progress of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching, with reference to the learning targets in their Individual Profiles and Learning Programmes

• Implementation of parental involvement programmes

• Involvement of class teachers and parents in implementing suggested activities in pupils’ learning programmes

• Alignment of pupils’ class and supplementary teaching programmes

• Referral of pupils for additional assessment and support

• Co-ordination of the learning-support service and other support services for pupils with special needs

• Time-tabling of pupils for supplementary teaching

• Adequacy of resources for supplementary teaching

**Appendix 5**

**Principles Governing Time-Tabling**

• As a general principle the supplementary teaching that pupils receive should be in addition to their regular class programme in English and/or mathematics.

• A second general principle is that pupils should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.

These two principles suggest that a flexible approach to time-tabling should be adopted by the class teacher taking into account the needs of pupils with regard to learning support, their right of access to the full curriculum and the schedule of the learning-support teacher. Similarly, the learning support teacher should organise his/her work with a view to minimising disruption to class work.

**Appendix 6:**

**The following resources are available:**

**Screening Tests:**

Quest Screening Test

Dyslexia Screening Test

Non-Reading Intelligence Tests (NRIT), Levels 1-3

Non-Verbal Reasoning Tests (Ages 8-9, 10-11, 12-14)

Daniel and Diack Graded Spelling Test

Aston Index

Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)

MICRA-T (Levels 1-4)

SIGMA-T (Levels 1-5)

**Diagnostic Tests:**

Jackson Phonics

Quest Diagnostic Test

Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA)

Aston Index

**Progress Tests:**

Dolch Wordlists

Phonological Awareness Training (PAT)

**Teaching Materials (Literacy):**

PM+ Readers

O’Brien Flyers

fuzzbuzz Reading Scheme

P.A.T. (Phonological Awareness Training)

Alpha to Omega

Toe by Toe

Wasp / Hornett

Up and Away English Language Support

Usborne Phonic Readers

Superphonics

Songbirds Phonics

Newell Spelling Programme

Wellington Square Reading Scheme

Improving Comprehension for ages 10-11 (A. Brodie)

Sounds at Work A-D (Folens)

Look, Listen and Learn! Junior and Senior Infants; First Class (C.J. Fallon)

Variety of reading materials in the Special Education Room

**Prim-Ed Books:**

Phonics in Context A

Differentiated Cloze (Lower, Middle, Upper)

Cloze in on Language (Middle)

Comprehending Informational Text D

High Interest Activities for enrichment and extension in Vocabulary

**L.D.A. Resources:**

Finding Cause and Effect

Making Inferences

Building Receptive and Expressive Language Skills

Understanding Sentences

Predicting Outcomes

**CD-ROMs and Websites:**

Wordshark 3

Sounds to Words

<http://www.starfall.com/>

<http://www.senteacher.org/>

<http://www.sightwords.com/>

<http://www.theschoolhub.ie/flash/math_game.swf>

**Numeracy Resources:**

Numicon

Number Facts – Addition and Subtraction; Multiplication; Division (F. Gavin)

Table Toppers

Pegs and pegboards, dice, Unifix cubes, playing cards, tangrams, 25cm rulers, 100 squares

**Other Resources:**

Conflict Resolution Series (Prim-Ed)

Cool Kids

Thinking Start-Ups (M. Suid)

A to Z Thinking Warm-ups (S. Wayne)

Creative Thinking

Thinking Skills

Board games

**Appendix 7**

**Letter to parents re Team Teaching & Supplementary Teaching**

***Dear Parent,***

In line with recent Department of Education & Science guidelines, supplementary educational interventions in TobaranLéinn, will take place within the classroom to the extent that this is feasible. It is school policy, that the class teacher and the special education teacher will conduct team teaching in the classroom, and that this will be the preferred option. When a special education teacher is supporting the class teacher (team teaching) in his/her classroom no individual correspondence will be sent to parents, but we do advise parents to stay in ongoing contact with the class teacher and the special education teacher in relation to their child’s progress. Children will continue to be withdrawn from class for supplementary lessons, whenever this best serves their learning requirements, or when the needs of the situation are better met by withdrawal rather than team teaching. Written permission of parents/guardians will be sought if pupils are to be withdrawn from class on a continuous basis to receive supplementary teaching. If you have any question in relation to team teaching , you should contact your child’s class teacher immediately to discuss his/her educational needs going forward. Should you wish to discuss any of these issues, feel free to contact the school and arrange to see the class teacher or the relevant special education teacher.

**Le gachdeághuí,**

**Niamh Campion**

**(PríomhOide)**