**Thornleigh Educate Together National School**

**Special and Inclusive Education Policy**

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*Thornleigh Educate Together is an open, welcoming school. We aim to create a safe space for all pupils where they can play, learn and grow. Thornleigh Educate Together National school caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class. We have an autism class for pupils with a diagnosis of autism.*

 *The school currently has 317 pupils, 18 Class Teachers, Principal, 11.66 Learning Support Teachers (including 2 Reading Recovery teachers), 1 Home School Liaison Officer and 5.59 Special Needs Assistants. In the 2023/24 school year, the Board of Management, through fundraising, have employed 2 SNA’s.*

This policy aims to provide practical guidance for staff, parents and others about our SEN practices and procedures and outline the framework for catering for additional needs in our school.

**Belief Statement**

The school community, board of management, teachers and parents fully committed to the inclusion of all pupils. This policy aims to enable children with SEN and/or EAL to be fully integrated members of our school community. Thornleigh is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all pupils. We believe that where appropriate, children should be educated in their own community with siblings and peers. We strive to support all pupils in reaching their personal potential. We aim to achieve this through effective whole school and individual planning where the needs of each child are considered and learning is modified to allow them to participate. We also place emphasis on parental involvement, early intervention and prevention strategies and directing resources towards pupils in greatest need.

**Aims of the policy**

*The policy aims to outline how we:*

* Support the inclusion of all pupils
* Identify additional needs pupils may have
* Implement the continuum of support in our school
* Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of pupils
* Share the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with SEN
* Track, monitor, review and report the progress of children with additional needs
* Communicate information between parties within the school community

**Aims of SEN support:**

* To support the inclusion of all pupils in the school community
* To support pupils in an appropriate manner using the continuum of support
* To encourage collaboration amongst teachers in regard to SEN/EAL
* To encourage differentiation in teaching and learning
* To involve and support parents in supporting their children
* To enable pupils to participate in the curriculum at an appropriate level
* To ensure pupils achieve an adequate level of proficiency in literacy, numeracy, motor, social and emotional skills before leaving primary school
* To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes towards school and learning
* To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners

**The Continuum of Support**

In Thornleigh ETNS we employ a staged approach to supporting students. The NEPS Continuum of Support provides a structure for this.



*Stage 1: Classroom Support (Support for All)*

In order to proactively support students, a number of interventions are in place to

address additional needs in the areas of numeracy, literacy, social and emotional

learning and development.

Such interventions include:

* Differentiation by product, instruction, resource, support and time given to
* complete tasks.
* Co-teaching within the mainstream classrooms.
* Specific programmes such as Mata sa Rang, Friends for Life, Building
* Bridges of Understanding etc.
* School designed initiatives focusing on areas such as oral language, writing
* genres, problem solving, handwriting etc.

Where specific concerns remain regarding a student’s learning or social development,

following engagement with some of the above interventions, the classroom teacher in

consultation with the SET will arrange to meet with parents/guardians. At this

meeting, a Classroom Support Checklist will be completed. This will be used to

inform the next stage of the process. The Student Support File will be opened at the

Classroom Support stage.

Depending on the need, an individualised Classroom Support Plan may be devised or,

if appropriate, the student will move to Stage II (School Support) of the Continuum of

Support.

*Stage II: School Support (Support for Some)*

If intervention is considered necessary at Stage II, then the student will be referred to

the SET, with parents’ permission, for further assessment and/or diagnostic testing. If

this assessment suggests that support teaching would be beneficial, this will be

arranged. The parents and the classroom teacher will be involved with the SET in

drawing up the School Support Plan (formerly referred to as an Individual Education

Plan), which will include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in

the classroom and during support teaching. After an agreed period of time, the SET

and the classroom teacher, in consultation with parents/guardians, will review the rate

of progress of each student receiving support teaching. If significant concerns remain,

then it may be necessary to provide interventions at Stage III.

In the case of students with emotional or behavioural difficulties it is recognised that,

in certain circumstances, more urgent action may be required. In these cases the

student’s needs will, with parents’ permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS

psychologist and/or the case will be referred to the clinical services of the Health

Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management

programme, to be implemented at home and in class, or to a referral for further

specialist assessment (Stage III)

*Stage III: School Support Plus (Support for a few)*

Some students who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at Stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of students with learning difficulties or with mild and/or moderate behavioural problems who have failed to progress at Stage II. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc. The classroom teacher and the SET, in consultation with the relevant specialist(s), will then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents will be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme will be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

*Student Support File*

When a teacher or parent expresses concern about a student, a Student Support File is opened at Stage I of the Continuum of Support. The Student Support File allows the school to track the student’s pathway through the Continuum of Support – from the start of the support process, and onwards, if necessary, through to School Support (for some) and School Support Plus (for a few).

 **Contents of the Student Support File:**

 a. Student details

 b. Results of standardised and diagnostic tests

 c. Log of actions

 d. Support checklist

 e. School Support Plan (See section 5.1)

 f. Support Review Record 5.1 School Support Plan (SSP)

 At the beginning of a term of support teaching, planning will be based on the individual needs of the student. Once support teaching has begun, the records and evaluations of support teaching sessions are used as a basis for on-going planning, teaching, learning and assessment. The SSP is the responsibility of the class teacher. It is written in consultation with the SET and parents. The SSP is used to record relevant information relating to a student’s learning attainments and his/her learning strengths and needs.

**The SSP includes:**

a. Student details

b. Student’s strengths and interests

c. Priority concerns

d. Possible reasons for concerns/Impact of SEN on educational development

e. Targets for the student

f. Strategies to help student achieve the targets

g. Staff involved and resources needed

h. Signatures of parents/guardians and teachers

i. Care plan (students with SNA access)

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of providing support to pupils is a collaborative responsibility shared by all members of the Thornleigh School Community - the Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, Class teachers, School support and school support plus teachers, SNA’s, parents, pupils and external bodies and agencies.

**The Board of Management**

*The Board of Management will:*

* be informed of changes made to the SEN policy
* ratify the SEN policy
* ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the School Support Team
* ensure a secure facility for the storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of School Support and other SEN services

**The Principal**

The Principal Teacher has overall responsibility for the operation of the school’s SET Team and SEN policies and procedures within the school. The new allocation model states that the principal’s leadership role is central. The principal may delegate certain responsibilities to other staff members.

 *The Principal Teacher will:*

* monitor the selection of pupils for support teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils in most need ( e.g. identified within the continuum of support/under 12th percentile)
* Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals. Services including but not limited to: Assessment of need, CDNT, Speech and Language, Primary Care, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Private organisations identified by the school.
* Inform and facilitate staff to attend CPD which may benefit and enhance learning support teaching in the school
* Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN on an ongoing basis
* Arrange classroom accommodation for learning support
* Arrange the provision of funding/resources for SEN
* Allocate SET teachers and SNA positions

**SEN coordinator/Deputy principal**

*The SEN co-ordinator will:*

* Collaborate with the principal, SET team, class teachers, SNA’s, external agencies and parents in relation to pupils with SEN
* Keep teachers, SNA’s and parents informed about external agencies and assessments that are available
* Maintain a list of pupils receiving support
* Co-ordinate and regularly meet the SET team
* Collaborate with SET team/classroom teachers in identification, screening and referral procedures
* Organise screening materials and standardised testing
* Collaborate with the SET team to create timetables for support
* Select children for external diagnostic assessment where parental permission has been granted

**Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in their class, including those selected for support teaching.

*The class teacher will:*

* provide classroom support through effective, differentiated teaching and learning for pupils (including home learning)
* Communicate with school support/school support staff regularly
* Communicate regularly with parents regarding SSF and progress
* Communicate information given by parents to support teachers when appropriate
* Develop a school support plan in collaboration with SEN teacher, parents and other relevant parties and log ongoing actions taken
* In collaboration with the assigned support teacher and SET team, regularly review timetables to ensure pupils most in need are receiving adequate support

**Role of SEN team:**

*SEN/Support teachers will:*

* Familiarise themselves with teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and needs
* Further develop their understanding of the needs of the pupils they are working with
* Regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs/progress of pupils within the class
* In collaboration with the teacher, implement various in class models of support to meet needs of pupils, e.g. team teaching
* Collaborate with the teacher about possible interventions to meet the needs of pupils
* Support the class teacher to develop, implement and review a support file for each pupil receiving support, setting specific targets for pupils/groups
* When appropriate, meet with parents to discuss student support files and progress
* Communicate with the Special Education team at SET meetings regarding any concerns raised by class teachers
* Keep updated records of pupil progress
* When appropriate, administer and interpret diagnostic tests
* Engage in planning that is responsive and appropriate to the changing needs of pupils

**Role of Special Needs Assistants:**

The SNA will meet the care needs of the pupil(s) to which they have been assigned.

*Special needs assistants will:*

Primary Care Needs

* Assist with feeding and administration of medicine where appropriate
* Assist with toileting and personal hygiene where appropriate (See intimate care needs section)
* Assist with mobility and orientation where appropriate
* Assist the class teacher with supervision of pupils to which they are assigned
* Assist with communication when appropriate

Secondary Care Needs/Other:

* Prepare and tidy work spaces for pupils they are assigned to if pupils cannot do this for themselves
* Assist with pupil support files when appropriate
* Support pupils to engage with teaching and learning
* Accompany pupils to lessons with a support teacher if required
* Maintain a record of support of pupils they are assigned to
* Assist with transitions and movement breaks
* Assist with out of school activities when required
* Communicate regularly with the class teacher of the pupil(s) they are assigned to

**Role of Parents/Guardians:**

*Parents/Guardians will:*

* Share any information or reports/pending reports regarding the pupils development and provide the school with a copy of the report as early as possible
* Attend and participate in SSF meetings and parent-teacher meetings
* Collaborate with class and/or SEN teacher(s) to establish specific goals and targets for pupils and implement the SSP
* Communicate with the school regarding their child’s development, progress or difficulties they have observed
* Support the targets outlined in their child’s SSF and engage in suggested home activities

**Role of the pupil:**

In recognition of the child-centred nature of the schools ethos we recognise the importance of the child’s own role in the provision of SEN support.

*A child centered approach will enable pupils to:*

* Understand and take an active role in their learning
* Take ownership of their learning
* Recognise their own needs, strengths, interests and aspirations
* Experience a sense of achievement through clear, manageable goals/targets
* Contribute to their Student Support Plan (when possible)
* Contribute to the evaluation of their progress, when possible, through self assessment

**Role of external bodies and agencies:**

*External bodies/agencies will:*

* Liase with teachers to optimise the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN
* Make relevant recommendations in developing a support plan at each level of the continuum of support

**Identifying pupils with additional needs:**

All children in Junior Infants and Senior Infants are screened in order to identify children who present with additional needs (academic and/or social/emotional/behavioural).

*The following screening measures are used:*

* Enrolment Form
* Input from Parents
* Teacher Observation (bank of checklists in school)
* Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
* Bury Infant Check
* MIST

The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T.) is administered in Senior Infants in order to identify children in need of Early Intervention and/or supplementary teaching. A classroom/school support plan will then be devised for these pupils by the SET teacher(s), class teacher and in consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s).

**Direction of resources towards pupils with additional needs**

Priority will be given to:

* Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on a standardised test in English.
* Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on a standardised test in Maths.
* Pupils with SLD, language, behavioural difficulties and high ability are also prioritised for School Support and supplementary teaching.

**Assessment and Information Gathering:**

*1. Preliminary Screening:*

Administration and interpretation of screening measure(s) by the class/SET teacher.

Screening measures used:

* Junior Infants: Jolly Phonics/Bury Infant Check
* Senior Infants: Middle Infants screening Test / Jolly and checklists.
* First – Sixth: Sigma T and Micra T
* Second and Fourth: NVRT

*2. Selection for Diagnostic Assessment:*

* Priority is given to children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised tests.
* Consultation between the class teacher and parents.
* Consultation between the class teacher and the School Support Team.
* The results of the standardised test will also be used diagnostically to inform future classroom practice (to be discussed with staff).

*3. Diagnostic Assessment*

Interpretation of the outcomes of the assessment in consultation with the class teacher. Diagnostic Tests Used:

* NVRT
* Toe by Toe
* Ballard Westwood Test

**Prevention Strategies:**

*Literacy and language:*

* Explicit teaching and assessment of phonics in Junior and Senior infants.
* A strong focus on the development of oral language skills on a whole school basis.
* Oral language activities every day on a whole school basis e.g. morning meeting.
* Use of library; in school, mobile library and library visits.
* Library membership will be encouraged for all pupils.
* Children will have access to a wide-variety of texts.
* Use of varied strategies in the classroom- station teaching, team teaching etc.
* Exposure to high interest, age appropriate texts being read to students on a daily basis.
* Use of ICT to support and enhance literacy and language learning.
* Opportunities for children to speak and access resources in their primary language when practicable.
* Explicit teaching of handwriting skills.
* Highlighting and emphasing links between all languages.
* Specific focus on supporting children with english as a second language.
* Use of First Steps.

*Numeracy:*

* A strong focus on mathematical language as a whole school approach.
* The whole school approaches teaching RUCSAC as a problem solving approach in mathematics.
* The availability of concrete resources - supporting children to move from the concrete to abstract thinking.
* Use of ICT to support mathematical learning- e.g. IWB, Beebots, Chromebooks etc.
* Math games available and used in each classroom.
* Effective differentiation strategies used in each classroom.
* All children will experience co-operative teaching and learning within the classroom.
* Collaborative problem-solving will be modelled and taught.

*Wellbeing:*

* The Irish curriculum will be followed throughout the school- ensuring all students access the PE and the SPHE curriculum.
* As the school is part of the DEIS programme; lunch is provided to all students. Some students can avail of a breakfast club.
* The school has a Home School Liason Officer to foster and develop links between home and school and as an additional source of parental support.
* The Stay safe programme is taught at all class levels.
* The use of positive behaviour management techniques will be used throughout the school e.g. Incredible Years and SALT.
* As a democratic school- student and parent voice will be heard e.g. the parent council and the student council.
* Pupils will access outside areas as often as is practicable- including yard time, outdoor learning and trips out of school.
* Learning through play will be incorporated throughout the school.
* The sensory room and quiet areas at the back of classrooms will be available on an as needed basis.
* A morning meeting will be held every morning.
* Access to the Nurture room to support emotional and social development will be provided on an as needed basis with parental permission.
* Access to additional academic support in school will be provided on an as needed basis- using a graded model e.g. in class support, school support and school support plus.
* Pupils will avail of many learning opportunities to enhance their wellbeing in school e.g. drama activities; music lessons; yoga; GAA; digital learning etc.
* Some students will be offered additional supports on an as needed basis e.g. small social groups from a support teacher, accessing the nurture programme, art therapy.

**Specific Early Intervention Programmes include:**

* Reading Recovery Power hour in Junior Infants, Senior infants and 1st class.
* Aistear in Junior infants and Senior infants.
* Jolly Phonics
* Morning meeting
* Storytime every day
* Maths Recovery
* Mata Sa Rang
* Learning support for those identified- in class support; school support; school support plus.

**Some of the ways in which children who require additional support are identified include:**

* Enrolment Form
* Input from Parents
* Teacher Observation (bank of checklists in school)
* Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
* Bury Infant Check
* The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T.) is administered in Senior Infants in order to identify children in need of Early Intervention.
* Dyslexia screener tests.
* Standardised test results- including Micra T; Sigma T; WIAT-T-III and CTOP.

Teacher observation, parental concerns and the professional opinion of others will be given due consideration and respect in the selection of pupils for early intervention.

**Meeting the needs of pupils and allocating resources**

*Circular 0013/2017 states that additional teaching supports are allocated according to identified needs rather than being based on a diagnosis. The level and type of support reflects the specific targets of individual students as set out in their School Support Plan and is informed by careful monitoring and regular review of progress. Following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive support.*

*The class teacher, SET team, and principal, in consultation with parents, will identify students in the following groups who require support teaching:*

* Students with complex special educational and additional needs ( ASD, Downs syndrome, dyspraxia etc.) where such support is deemed necessary.
* Students with a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia etc.) where such support is deemed necessary.
* Students with a physical impairment (visual, auditory, etc.).
* Students with social, emotional or behavioural needs, where such support is deemed necessary.
* Students identified as requiring support in literacy and numeracy, informed by standardised test results (below the 12th percentile), teacher observations and diagnostic tests, where appropriate.
* Students identified as exceptionally able, informed by standardised test results and teacher observations, where there are sufficient resources available to cater for this group.

The school may also suggest to parents/guardians referral to outside services for additional support if appropriate.

**Timetabling:**

When devising timetables, the classroom teacher and SET team will ensure that all students who are withdrawn for support, sufficiently experience all areas of the curriculum, in so far as is practicable.

**Tracking, recording and reviewing progress**

DES Guidelines (2017) state that monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn should lead to adjustments in School Support Plans.

 Each student’s progress is monitored using the Support Review Record (contained in the Student Support File) so that class teaching and support teaching continue to be responsive to the student’s needs at all times.

Records are maintained by the SET team and classroom teachers in respect of each student who is in receipt of support teaching. These include a Student Support File and a monthly record (i.e. Cúntas Míosúil) of work completed.

Other records that provide evidence of the student’s progress towards agreed learning targets include checklists, running records, samples of written work, etc.

**Health and safety**

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. Staff members will be informed of potential risks and where necessary individual plans will be drawn up and implemented to ensure the safety of pupils.

**Supervision and child protection**

* Where pupils receive one to one support, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring both themselves and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door
* Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room must remain open
* Where pupils are withdrawn from class for support, the SET teacher must ensure the safe collection and return of pupils to their classroom or relevant area
* Where a child has access to an SNA, the SNA may withdraw the child from class if a plan is in place with the class teacher

**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. 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. 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
* in extreme cases using more restrictive holds.

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

Positive handling may be part of an agreed plan with parents and the pupil where appropriate. If this is the case plans will be reviewed regularly with a view to reducing the need for intervention.

**AS class**

In Thornleigh Educate Together, we have an autism class which caters for 6 pupils who have a diagnosis of autism. Pupils who begin here in Junior Infants have a place in the class for 8 years. The autism class will open in a purpose built modular building which will then move to a permanent building in the future. (to be opened January 2024).

**Intimate care needs**

* When teachers and SNAs are assisting children with intimate/personal care and/or toileting, the safety and comfort of the child will be paramount.
* If a child requires assistance with intimate/personal care and/or toileting, his/her needs will be met by two staff members at any one time.
* When assistance is required, the child will be taken to a designated disability toilet. One of these toilets is located across from the staff room and another is upstairs. The other will be located adjacent to the Autism Spectrum classroom building.
* If it is not possible for the child to be taken to a designated disability toilet, care and assistance will be given to him or her in the classroom toilet. The door will be kept ajar whilst the classroom teacher stands beside it. An SNA or another teacher will directly assist the child.
* Reasonable resources to assist with intimate/personal care and/or toileting, such as spare clothes will be kept on the school premises. If a child is likely to require such assistance, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be requested to provide relevant products and/or clothes with which the child is familiar and for the use of which they will give permission. These may include (but are not limited to) wipes, soap and clothing.
* It is acknowledged that some children may only require a minimal amount of personal care assistance. Teachers and SNAs will only assist where it is apparent that the child cannot perform their own care by themselves. All children will be encouraged to develop their independence in relation to personal care, where at all practicable.

**Ratification and communication**

This Special and Inclusive Education policy has been ratified and adopted by the Board of Management of Thornleigh ETNS on the 23rd of November 2023.

This Special and Inclusive Education policy has been communicated to the staff of Thornleigh ETNS via email and display in the staff room.

This Special and Inclusive Education policy has been communicated to the parents and guardians of Thornleigh ETNS via email and via public display on the Thornleigh ETNS website (www.thornleighetns.com).

This Special and Inclusive Education policy has been communicated to the wider community via public display on the Thornleigh ETNS website (www.thornleighetns.com).

A copy of this Special and Inclusive Education policy is readily available to students, parents, guardians of children attending Thornleigh ETNS, upon request.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the patron and to the Department of Education upon request.

Signed: \_\_\_Elaine Grange\_\_\_\_ Date: 23rd November 2023

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Elaine Grange

Thornleigh ETNS

Signed: Paula Carolan Date: 23rd November 2023

Ms. Paula Carolan

Principal

Thornleigh ETNS