

## **Policy on Specific Educational Needs (SEN) & Inclusive Practice**

This policy on SEN in LETS was originally formulated in 2013 and updated in 2019 taking cognisance of new guidelines since the development of the original policy and changes to SEN in our school and throughout Ireland.

The policy was reviewed and further developed by staff of LETS in October to February of the 2023-2024 school year.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Assessment policy
- Exceptionally able policy
- SNA policy
- EAL policy
- Administration of meds policy
- intimate care/toileting policy

See Appendix A for a glossary of terms related to our setting and consulted on with families and students with specific educational needs.

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## 1. School Context/Introduction

Limerick East Educate Together School (LETS) is a mixed primary school with an enrolment of up to 400 children, having 16 mainstream classes, two classes for children with autism and an early Intervention class for children with autism. We have a high incidence of children who have English as an additional language and our student body contains many different nationalities. Specific education provision is delivered in accordance with the *Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs (DES 2017)*, *Special Educational Needs: a Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers and Resource 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 of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004*, *Disability Act (2005)*, *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*.

## 2. Aims

This policy will help us to:

- Support the inclusion of all children and facilitate children 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 specific teaching supports, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of children. 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 children will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning.”*

- Support our students to know that they have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals and to feel that they are a valued part of our school community.
- Use the resources provided to support children with specific educational needs (SEN), to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school in line with the school's ethos and that of our patron.
- Provide support to children with SEN based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and children) as outlined in the *Continuum of Support Guidelines*.

- Minimise, as far as possible, the difficulties that children may experience in accessing the primary school curriculum.
- Enable children with SEN and children whose first language is not English to access the curriculum and to become fully integrated members of our school community.
- Support positive self-esteem, social and emotional function and positive attitudes about school and learning in children.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies for children with specific educational needs.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Enable children to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.

### **3. The Continuum of Support and the selection of children for support teaching**

#### **3.1 Selection of children for support teaching**

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

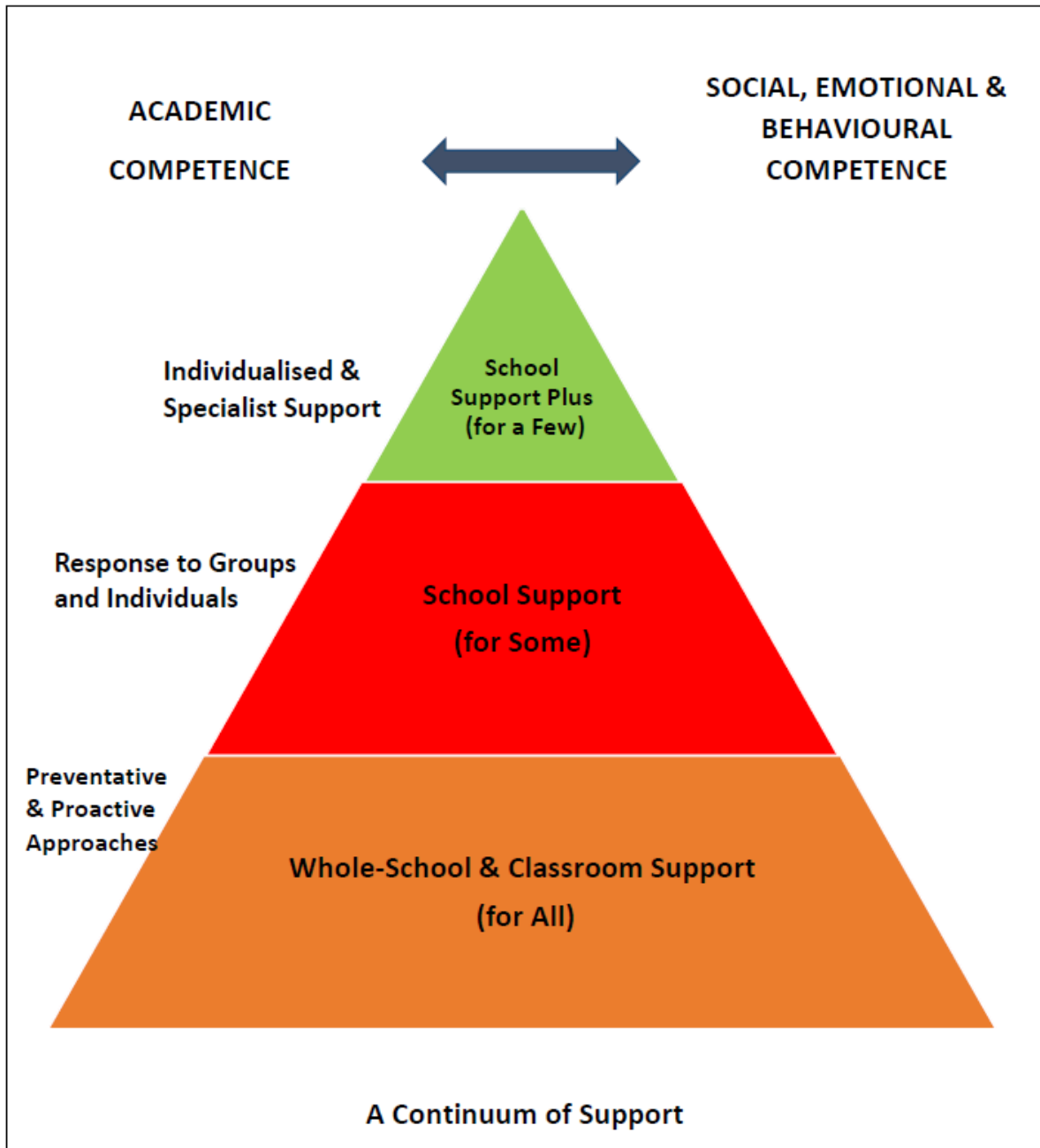
In identifying children for support, LETS considers the following:

- children with significant Specific Educational Needs including children 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. LETS also considers needs set out in professional reports, where available.
- children 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.
- children with Specific Learning Difficulties including but not limited to autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit- hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia and dysgraphia.
- children performing below the 10th percentile on standardised tests will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy
- children presenting with difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy e.g. difficulties that present a barrier to learning and full access to the curriculum.
- children who have specific literacy or language learning needs including those children who need English specific Language support.
- Gifted children (those scoring above the 95th%ile in both English and Mathematics on Standardised Assessments. Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. Parents will also be directed to the courses at Centre for Talented Youth (CTY).
- Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school and all its children.

### 3.2 Levels of Support:

Support may be provided to children at Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels of the NEPS Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010).

The 2017 Guidelines (P.8) present the NEPS Continuum of Support as follows:



### 3.3 Provision of Support Teaching

A 3 step process is recommended to support children with specific Educational Needs:

#### Step 1: Identify needs

- Using the Continuum of Support Framework, LETS identifies children' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

**Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process**

<b>Classroom Support</b>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all children in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those children who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parental consultation</li><li>• Teacher observation records</li><li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li><li>• Basic needs checklist</li><li>• Learning environment checklist</li><li>• Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist</li><li>• Literacy and numeracy tests where appropriate</li><li>• Screening tests of language skills</li></ul> <p>In LETS, we use the NEPS <i>Classroom support plan</i> template to plan for each pupil on this level of support. Plans are recorded under a pupil's Documents on Aladdin and they run for an agreed period of time after which they are reviewed.</p>
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<b>School Support</b>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation records</li> <li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Parent and child consultation</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures</li> <li>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</li> </ul> <p>In LETS, we use an agreed plan developed by the SET team as our planning template for children on this level. A support plan at this level details suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review. Traditionally we have reviewed such plans twice yearly, during the second term (with parental involvement) and June (in the context of handover to new teacher/support teacher).</p>
<b>School Support Plus</b>	<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 where possible) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures</li> <li>• Parent and child conferencing</li> <li>• Recommendations from the reports of outside agencies if available</li> <li>• Functional assessments</li> <li>• Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p>



	A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.
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### **Planning:**

A **Student Support File** template has been developed by LETS 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 children, in line with their level of need over time.

Within the Student Support File will be the **Yearly Support Plan & Review:**

**The Yearly Support Plan & Review** addresses a pupil's full range of needs and is devised between the class teacher, support teacher, Parents/Guardians and SNA (if applicable). Teachers may meet parents, psychologists and other health professionals, and SNAs to discuss the child's progress throughout the school year.

The Yearly Support Plans set out the agreed priority 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 team, 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. See Aladdin documents section for all school templates.

### **Personal Pupil Plans (PPPs)**

All students in receipt of support from an SNA have a Personal Pupil Plan which outlines any care needs and how these can be supported. This is updated when necessary throughout the year.

### **SEN Register**

A list of children who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework is maintained by the SET Team and collated by SET Co-ordinator using standard template.

## 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 children in their classes. Accordingly, teachers may need to adapt their teaching approaches for some children with specific learning needs. All class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of children 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

Effective target-setting is essential in planning for children with SEN. Targets are informed by priority learning needs, are SMART and linked to suitable interventions. (Appendix E)

## Step 3 - Monitor and Record Progress

- **Monitor Progress:** Children's 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 children to demonstrate their progress. This progress review may include measures of communication, independence, social inclusion and well-being as appropriate.
- **Record Progress:** Results of such monitoring are recorded in the student support file/plan and inform planning and next steps.

## 3.4 Screening and Diagnostic Assessment:

- Class teachers carry out initial screening tests and standardised assessments. The Specific Educational Needs Teacher (SET) discusses each class's recorded results with the Class Teacher and carries out further screening tests and / or diagnostic

assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests may inform the process of deciding on support needs.

- Parental permissions for school-based tests / individual assessments are sought when the child enrolls in LETS.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Board of Management**

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on specific Educational Needs/Inclusion. The Board of Management:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
- Ensures that adequate class accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the SEN team.
- Ensures a secure facility for storage of records relating to children.

### **4.2 Principal**

The Principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school's SEN programme and for the provision of services for children with Specific Educational Needs. The Principal teacher:

- Helps teachers/SNAs to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of specific Educational Needs teaching by encouraging them and providing opportunities for them to avail of relevant professional development.
- Meets regularly with the SEN Coordinator to collaborate on SEN policy.
- In conjunction with the SEN Coordinator, the Principal may liaise with outside agencies on SEN related matters.
- Reviews/monitors and applies for specific teaching and learning resources for SEN children, e.g., Assistive Technology.
- Reviews applications to outside Agencies for Specific Educational Needs support.
- Oversees the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify children with low achievement/social challenges so that such children can be provided with the support that they need.
- Oversees SEN related policies and procedures.
- Is responsible for the allocation of SET/SNA positions and class allocation within the SET team.

### **4.3 SEN Co-ordinator**

The SEN Co-ordinator has responsibility for the overall day to day running of all SEN matters in LETS. S/he

- Works on the development of the school plan for Specific Educational Needs.

- Oversees the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening program to identify children with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties so that these children can be provided with the support they need. (See Assessment Policy).
- Collaborates with Principal, SET Team, Class Teachers, SNAs, External Agencies and parents/guardians of children with additional needs..
- Keeps SEN Teachers/Class Teachers/SNAs and parents informed about relevant external assessment and specific needs services that are available.
- Maintains a register of children who are receiving SEN support.
- Coordinates the caseloads / work schedules of the SET Team.
- Liaises with external agencies such as Psychologists/Family Doctors/Speech and Language therapists/NEPS/SENO to arrange assessments and specific provisions for children with additional/extra/specific needs.
- Collaborates with SET Team/Class teachers in the identification, screening and referral procedures.
- Maintains records and disseminates information to relevant school personnel.
- Orders, purchases, distributes, and informs staff on class screening materials, resources for interventions and up to date procedures. (See Assessment policy)
- Ensures that all documentation relating to children who receive specific Education Teaching is properly maintained, filed and secured.

#### **4.4 Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all the children in their class including those receiving Specific 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 Team.
- Liaises initially with parents to make them aware of the difficulties their child may be experiencing.
- In conjunction with the SET Team, uses class observations, standardised and diagnostic test results to highlight children's specific required level of support.
- Collaborates with the SET Team/teacher/SNA on a Student Support File for children with access to SET support.
- In conjunction with the SET Teachers/SNA/parents creates and updates Student Support File and attends Student Support File Meetings.
- Meets with the SET Team/Teacher on a regular basis to monitor progress and adapt the learning programme as necessary.

- Collaborates with the SET Teachers/ SNA/ Parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with specific Educational Needs.
- Liaises with outside agencies (NEPS, CAMHS, Primary Care Centres) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with specific Educational Needs.
- Team teaches with the SET team, rotating learning stations to ensure a knowledge of all progress of all children.

#### **4.5 Specific Education Teacher**

The role of the SET Teacher includes:

- Maintaining a file for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate: psychological reports, reports by other agencies, diagnostic tests and work samples.
- Developing a Student Support File with the class teacher to address the needs of children with specific 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.
- Withdrawing children individually or in small groups, for intensive support.
- 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.
- Collaborating with the Class Teacher/ SNA/ Parents in the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with specific Educational Needs.
- Liaising with outside agencies (psychologists/occupational therapists/speech and language therapists) on providing support and input on the teaching of children with specific Educational Needs.
- Setting specific targets for specific children and/or groups of children and agreeing these with the class teacher and parents.

#### **4.6 Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is to provide support in assisting children who have specific and significant care needs (Circular 07/02, Circular 0030/2014). Special Educational Needs Officers (SENO) are responsible for SNA allocations.

The role of the SNA includes;

- Preserving the safety of the pupil and others with whom the pupil is in contact by assisting to ensure the prevention of self injurious or destructive behaviour.
- Supporting students to self regulate or co regulating with them in order to develop readiness for learning.
- Assisting with recording data in relation to pupil regulation and regulation development.
- Assisting with care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Preparation and tidying up of classrooms in which the children with SEN are being taught.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school transport.
- Assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled children with typing/writing, including assistance with assistive technology where applicable.
- Assistance with clothing, eating, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of children with SEN during assembly/recreational, dispersal periods and transitions.
- Attend meetings (where appropriate) and provide input into Student Support Files regarding specific children with whom they work.
- Assist with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with SEN, 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/SET teachers who teach the specific children with whom they work.
- Giving medicine to a student who is unable to self-administer medications owing to age or learning or other need, according to the student care plan and school policy.
- Administer emergency medication if required, according to the student care plan and school policy.
- Give assistance with inhalers or nebulizer or other medicinal intervention where the student is unable to do so on account of age, learning or other need.

#### **4.7 Parents/Guardians**

The role of the parent/guardian of a child with SEN 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 and social/emotional regulation can thrive.
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Attending Parent Teacher Meetings and providing input/feedback to Class Teacher/SEN Teacher.
- Collaborating with SEN/Class Teacher in implementing a Student Support File 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 enrolment form information and consultation with parents.
- Collaborating in the generating of pupil profiles if necessary.
- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on reading aloud.
- Engaging in home support activities as suggested by teachers.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which may be loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

#### **4.8 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 support. A child-centred approach will enable the SEN team to work with the child to:



- Be aware of the four pillars of the Educate Together ethos (child-centred, democratically run, inclusive, equality-based) and rely on them for moral guidance.
- Help the child to understand their own learning.
- Take ownership of their own learning – making it real and memorable.
- Take ownership of their own need to regulate - self regulating at times or seeking/receiving support at others.
- Recognise their own needs and strengths.
- Take on 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.

#### **4.9 External Agencies and Bodies**

Support and guidance may be sought from external professionals such as NEPS (National Educational Support Service), Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the NCSE (National Council for Special Education), the Inspectorate, and allied health professionals.

The Principal, SEN Co-ordinator and SET teachers are usually the school representatives who liaise with external bodies.

The needs of some children span both health and education services. Health services (HSE and HSE-funded services) can play an important role in early identification, assessment and diagnosis, intervention, and review for children with SEN. The school is familiar with the range of health services in our locality, including referral pathways (See Appendix G). The school endeavours to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

## 5. Enrolment

In accordance with our enrolment policy, the school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. *The Ed. For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004* states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's specific needs in advance of enrolment through the enrolment form. The Board of Management will request a copy of children's medical or psychological reports where applicable. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has specific educational needs.

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/specific needs staff
- contacting the SENO, NEPS psychologist or other therapists or agencies where applicable.

In determining whether the pupil should receive support at the classroom support, school support or school support plus level the above information as well as further testing by class teacher and SEN teachers will inform the decision of what level of the support continuum to place a newly enrolled child at.

To ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school, parental visit/s and pupil visits as well as liaison with SENO to arrange specific resources may be necessary.

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.

## **6. The Garden Classes - Autism Specific Classes**

Our approach is neurodivergent affirming. We are responsive to the needs of the children in the room and diversify our approach as necessary. We affirm that as the regulated adults in the room, it is the role of the teacher and SNAs to understand the child. It is not the child's responsibility to make themselves understood. We endeavour to keep abreast of changes in educational progression and the latest information on best practice from the neurodivergent community. To this effect, we move away from any practices that do not promote child agency and bodily autonomy such as hand-over-hand prompting, the use of PECs, etc. and towards practices such as high-tech AAC and multi-modal communication that assume competence in our children and promote their autonomy.

Our classes innovatively differentiate the curriculum and are responsive to the strengths and interests of the children in each room. We are cognisant of the three pillars of preparation for teaching and learning (*Guidelines for Teaching and Learning 2022*); we have knowledge of relevant curricula based on both the age and development of the children, we have a deep knowledge of the children and their prior learning and we have an understanding of pedagogy that is specific and beneficial to the children in our classes.

Over the past number of years, the majority of students in the garden classes have been identified as Gestalt Language Processors (see Appendix B). This means that their language development is different to Analytical Language Processors and we need to be open to listening to the various ways that they communicate including but not limited to spoken gestalts, visual cues, the use of AAC and gestures.

Our curricula are designed to follow the interests of our children to ensure maximum motivation for learning. We are committed to child centred learning. This includes their preferred interests, their development and their communication style.

Trial and error, being flexible to trying new approaches and being willing to make accommodations in the child's best interest are the hallmarks of our work.

We are both proactive and responsive in relation to the sensory needs of the children in our classes and endeavour to reduce any anxieties that arise for the children. Our work is at all times trauma informed, since many autistic adults have spoken of underlying traumas arising from the neurodivergent experience. We are constantly mindful of any identified risks to the children in our classes and try to manage or mitigate these, insofar as possible.

## 7. Intervention Strategies/Models of Support

Within the school there are a number of successful intervention strategies/models of support in operation. The school implements a variety of strategies in order to assist in supporting students with various learning difficulties. The table below outlines the models of support prioritised in our school. Appropriate interventions are based on need.

Class	Models of support
Little Acorns Pre School - early intervention class	Speech Therapist Jenny Lang Gestalt Language Processing - Natural Language Acquisition High tech AAC devices Low tech AAC - core boards
Junior Garden Class	Highly motivating themes to elicit motivation and connection Daily circle time Daily Group Work Weekly life skills and cookery Fortnightly Speech Therapy with Jenny Lang provided for by parents Gestalt Language Processing - Natural Language Acquisition by all staff in all contexts High tech AAC devices updated weekly with new vocab and <b>ALWAYS available to child</b> Low tech AAC - core boards Music therapy through UL community music groups Equine therapy with SJF Liskennett Big cat readers High interest reading materials Story and songs with language mitigations Sensory Circuits Access to sensory room Access to secure play areas Visual schedules Integration with mainstream classes LEA writing models Precision teaching of new weekly vocabulary
Senior Garden Class	Differentiate curriculum incorporating specific interests to elicit motivation and connection Interactive display board with date, visual roll call, things to look forward to, class mantra and fact of the week. Individualised Visual schedules. Time allocated to self-regulation each morning. <b>Daily circle time:</b> mindfulness, checking in on emotions and energy levels. Use of task boxes with the "Made for Me Literacy" Curriculum with comprehensive specific education reading units spanning various subject areas. Oral language games.

	<p>Scheduled access to shared sensory room and ball pit.</p> <p>Reward systems to elicit motivation.</p> <p>The same language is used by all class staff so that there is a mutual understanding and continuity in instructions.</p> <p>Weekly life skills: Trip to the Milk Thistle, cookery, library trips to loan books for the class library, saving money for trips to the Crescent Shopping Centre.</p> <p>Weekly music therapy through UL community music group.</p> <p>Access to the class sensory room and swing – always available to children.</p> <p>Monthly equine therapy with SJF Liskennett.</p> <p>Integration to mainstream classes.</p> <p>Facilitate daily reverse integration from mainstream classes to specific classes.</p> <p>Friday video game afternoon to promote communication and problem solving.</p>	
Junior and Senior Infants	<p>Wordless books</p> <p>Decodable readers</p> <p>Levelled readers</p> <p>Heggerty Programme - phonemic awareness</p> <p>UFLI Programme - phonemic awareness</p> <p>Maths Stations - Ready, Steady, Go</p> <p>Differentiation</p> <p>Universal Design for Learning</p> <p>Station Teaching</p> <p>Sensory circuits</p> <p>Language games - phonics</p> <p>Tricky word checking</p>	<p>Handwriting &amp; fine motor stations</p> <p>Aistear</p> <p>Reading buddies</p> <p>Print rich environment</p> <p>Storytime</p> <p>Book week</p> <p>Drama productions</p> <p>Literacy Stations</p> <p>Maths Stations</p> <p>Zippy's Friends Programme</p> <p>Visuals - phonics charts on tables</p> <p>Highlight words that are a struggle - individualised</p> <p>Intensive letter/sound drilling -</p> <p>Blending drills</p>
1st and 2nd classes	<p>PMs</p> <p>Heggerty Programme</p> <p>UFLI Programme</p> <p>Heggerty</p> <p>Maths stations</p> <p>Literacy stations</p> <p>REGULATION</p> <p>Sensory circuits</p> <p>Decodables</p> <p>SNIP</p> <p>Maths group - number - 1-10 - concrete materials</p> <p>REGULATION</p> <p>Sensory circuits</p>	
3rd and 4th	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Universal Design for Learning</p>	

	<p>Station Teaching  In class support (Literacy/Numeracy)  Spellings for Me programme  Big Cat readers and use of decodable books when necessary  Alpha to Omega - Reading, writing and spelling programme  TTRS - typing/spelling  Rapid typing programme  Toe by Toe  SNIP  Small group work intervention for literacy  Chess  Peace Proms  Access to use of laptops and ipads  Access to sensory circuits  Withdrawal if necessary  The Comprehension Box  Mata sa Rang Daily  The Literacy Box  Incredible 5-Point Scale Resource - emotional regulation  zones of regulation - emotional regulation  Power of two - numeracy support  Friends for Life - emotional resilience and regulation development  Novel literacy circles - reading fluency development  Literacy circles - Liaison with classroom teachers to arrange resources and skills development for each station. Generally a station to develop Grammar, writing, comprehension and spellings.</p> <p>Reading and think 3 &amp; 4 - reading comprehension skills development</p>
5th and 6th	<p>Differentiation  Universal Design for Learning  Station Teaching</p> <p>In class support (Literacy/Numeracy)  Alpha to Omega - spelling programme  TTRS - typing/spelling  Transition to Post Primary  Access to sensory circuits  Withdrawal if necessary  Social groups  Pre-teaching  Review teaching  Parallel teaching  Everyday Speech  Fast Forward Readers  Totem, Talisman, Titan Series - hi lo readers</p>
General strategies	<p>Reward Charts  Numicon  Cubes  Toe by Toe  Auditory Skills Activities  The Power of Two</p>

	Everyday Speech TTRS Alpha to Omega The Comprehension Box Mata sa Rang The Literacy Box Letter sounds checks Heart words checks Decodable readers Magnetic letters Precision teaching SNIP
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### **Nurture spaces**

In the academic year 2023-2024, in recognition of the needs of students across the school in relation to social/emotional regulation and well being (and in conjunction with the school Well Being Team), some 'nurture spaces' were created and resourced across the school. Nurture spaces are available to 6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd classes (in SET rooms) in order to allow for time out of busy class/school day.

### **Sensory circuits**

A sensory circuit is a form of sensory integration intervention that we use in our school. It involves a **sequence** of physical activities that are designed to **alert, organise and calm** the child. The sensory circuit facilitates sensory processing to help children regulate and organise their senses in order to achieve the optimum level of alertness required for effective learning.

The circuits are an active, physical and fun activity that the children enjoy doing. Sensory circuits are designed **to start with alerting activities** (provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation), **move to an organising phase** (these activities require motor sensory processing, balance and timing) and **then finally to a calming phase** (breathing exercises and proprioceptive and deep pressure activities).

It is recommended to do these activities in this order, however, it is also important to note that each child's needs and tolerance levels are different. This means some children may need more time in the alerting or calming sections to enable them to be more organised and prepared for the day's learning.

For most effective outcomes, sensory circuits are completed on a regular basis. The circuit takes no more than 15-20 minutes and the children spend up to 5 minutes in each section performing the different activities. Effective use of the sensory circuit results in a well-regulated and happy child.

Sensory Circuits were developed and facilitated via QR scanner Project in the Academic Year 23-24. We are grateful to Maria O'Reilly, SET teacher, for this innovation.

### **8. Inclusive Practice**

All children get the chance to participate in all curricular areas, differentiating by task, questioning, outcome, extension. All staff facilitate the inclusion of children from our classes for children with autism, into age – appropriate mainstream where possible. We value meaningful inclusion. We endeavour to include all children where possible and where mutually beneficial. Such inclusion is a graduated process. Time spent included in the mainstream class increases as appropriate. This process requires regular consultation between the Garden Class Teacher, SET teacher, mainstream class teacher, student and parents/guardians.

- 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 are in mixed ability groups where possible.
- There is a positive attitude towards difference within the school community.
- We recognise that the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum along with our Learn Together Programme (Educate Together) supports inclusive practice, raising awareness and understanding around areas such as friendship, assertiveness and bullying.
- Whole class drama and Circle Time are used to develop social skills and encourage integration and inclusion of all children.
- Yard Breaks - All children are entitled to breaks and playtimes. Children with specific needs are supported in the following ways: 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.

### **Integration**

Integration into mainstream from garden classes is practised across the school in the best interests of students and their inclusion in school life.

- Publication *Inclusive Education Framework: "A Guide for Schools on the Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs"*
- *Publication Autism Good Practice Guidance, 2022.*



Children may also integrate from Tiny Acorns (pre-school) if appropriate. Where this occurs, the following are key points agreed between relevant class staff and management in academic year '23-'24:

- the needs of the mainstream class and teacher are a priority (if it cannot happen on any day, that is respected and understood).
- the student(s) from Tiny Acorns would come for a specific period with a staff member with them.
- The student(s) from Tiny Acorns would come for a specific purpose (play/social interaction/verbal interaction).
- This time/purpose would not be extended or changed without discussion with SEN Co, class teacher, etc.
- Paperwork is created and shared describing the specifics of the above.
- Reverse integration is a possibility (i.e. if there is a child in JI who would benefit from time in garden classes - reduced staff:student ratio, access to regulation support, etc. etc.)

## **9. Crisis Prevention**

There are 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.

As of academic year 2023-2024, 12 staff are trained in Crisis Prevention methodologies in order to reduce crisis situations and create a safer school environment. This training needs to be renewed each year in the case of the trainer and every two years in the case of staff.

See [www.crisisprevention.com](http://www.crisisprevention.com)

### **10. Transfers (to post primary)**

The school uses the NCCA developed suite of materials to support the 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)
- A Specific Educational Needs Summary Form is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.

Where possible, assessments from NEPS are prioritised for those students in senior garden classes and 6th/5th in order to support transitions to secondary school.

## 11. 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
<b>September</b>	<p><b>-Handover - begun in June is revisited and key items of information as passed from class teams to class teams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SEN team update SEN Register</li> <li>-Devise timetables</li> <li>-SEN Teachers meetings with relevant class teachers/SNAs</li> <li>-SEN Co meets with NEPS psychologist</li> <li>-Garden Class teachers liaise with relevant mainstream class teachers re inclusion plans</li> <li>-Diagnostic testing, informal testing</li> <li>-1st two weeks of term are ring-fenced for this work - data collection, meet students, arrange SSP meetings with parents, teachers, SNAs</li> <li>-SEN Co liaises with Principal re classes, staff, students</li> <li>SEN Co presents SEN priorities to staff</li> <li>Liaise with teachers a plan for 'in class' support/team teaching opportunities for their students and plan their duration.</li> <li>-Check NCSE Support Service calendar of CPD events and prioritise CPD needs and identify staff.(All online) <a href="https://ncse.ie/teacher-professional-learning">https://ncse.ie/teacher-professional-learning</a></li> <li>-Update PPP/SSP/Assessment Folder</li> <li>- Contact NEPS to arrange school visit</li> <li>- Create and update list of children at class support/school support, school support plus level - Create a continuum of support grid outlining how many at each stage</li> <li>-Ensure all SEN reports/therapy reports/ assessments/Irish exemptions are in order</li> <li>- Create a grid showing what support each class is receiving and its team teaching model <a href="https://ncse.ie/for-schools-quick-link-to-ncse-forms/">https://ncse.ie/for-schools-</a> quick link to NCSE forms/ applications for resources</li> </ul>
<b>Sept - Oct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-School Support Plans devised (Staff, Parents/Guardians)</li> <li>-Liaison with outside agencies if relevant.</li> <li>- SEN Co to liaise with Principal</li> <li>- Liaise with NEPS</li> <li>- Meeting with SEN Team re:SSP meetings</li> <li>-Monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs</li> <li>- Audit SEN Resources</li> <li>-Record Keeping</li> <li>-SEN meeting</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Parent Teacher Meetings with Class Teachers (relevant SET team members may join some of these meetings where deemed useful).</li> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with Principal and Deputies.</li> <li>-SETs to monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs &amp; Assessment Folder</li> <li>-Parent Teacher Meeting- Timetable</li> <li>-SEN Meeting</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> </ul>
<b>December</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with Principal and Deputies.</li> <li>-SETs to monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs &amp; Assessment Folders</li> <li>-Parent Teacher Meetings</li> <li>-SEN Meeting</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> </ul>
<b>January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-JI/SI parent teacher meetings</li> <li>-Informal assessment</li> <li>-SEN register is updated by SEN Co</li> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with Principal</li> <li>-Complete School Leavers Form <a href="https://ncse.ie/for-schools">https://ncse.ie/for-schools</a></li> <li>-SETs to review SSPs &amp; PPPs &amp; Assessment Folders</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> <li>-IPPN conference?</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-School Support Plan Reviews</li> <li>-Meetings re above where necessary</li> <li>-Informal assessment and formal individual &amp; group assessments</li> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with the Principal.</li> <li>-SSP Reviews</li> <li>-Ascertain possible candidates for Garden Classes for the coming year.</li> <li>-Contact relevant parents from above about most recent reports</li> <li>-Liaise with local preschool about any children needing an SNA- contact parents- application date at end of February/beginning of March</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with the Principal.</li> <li>-Order Standardised tests for term 3 <a href="http://www.erc.ie/erc-paper-tests/primary-order-form/">http://www.erc.ie/erc-paper-tests/primary-order-form/</a></li> <li>-SETs to monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs &amp; Assessment Folders</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> <li>-ILSA Spring Conference?</li> </ul>

<p><b>April</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>-Liaise with Principal and Deputies.</li> <li>-SETs to monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs &amp; assessment Folders</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> </ul>
<p><b>May</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Standardised Testing (1st to 6th classes inclusive)</li> <li>-Testing - Senior Infants - Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy + numeracy assessment from text book.</li> <li>-Check publication of SNA allocations on NCSE website</li> <li>-Record keeping</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with parents</li> <li>- Liaise with the Principal.</li> <li>-Drumcondra Testing</li> <li>-Prepare 6th class students for transitioning</li> <li>-Prepare transition document with all tests results with permission of parents (including Pupil Passports)</li> <li>- SETs to monitor SSPs &amp; PPPs for those with SNA support</li> <li>-Meeting with the Principal/DP and SENCO of secondary schools?</li> <li>-Ongoing liaison with teachers &amp; SNAs- formally &amp; informally</li> <li>- Ongoing liaison with NEPS and other outside agencies</li> <li>-Infant induction meeting and coordination</li> <li>-Meet parents of children with SNA access for next year</li> </ul>
<p><b>June</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-SEN Team and Class Teachers liaising to look at test results, review school support plans, communicate with parents before end of year reports if necessary</li> <li>-SEN Co Ordinator updating SEN Register</li> <li>-Transition to secondary passport/communication with secondary school</li> <li>-Meeting with children/ parents of any incoming JI with specific needs ahead of next academic year.</li> <li><b>-Detailed handover meetings between SETs and class teachers.</b></li> <li>-Drumcondra Testing done and uploaded to Aladdin</li> <li>-Organise school visits to post-primary schools</li> <li>-Prepare standardised test results sheet for BOM meeting and for submission to the department</li> <li>-Analyse results of standardised tests and begin to plan for support for next academic year</li> <li>Timetable SNA support for next year</li> <li>Allocate SETs for next year</li> <li>Meet SEN team to discuss support for next year for children on their caseloads</li> <li>Meet parents if appropriate.</li> </ul>

## **12. Record Keeping**

Files for each child with SEN containing, as appropriate; psychological reports, reports by other agencies, (S&L etc.), Student Support Files and reviews, diagnostic tests and work samples are stored on Aladdin with paper materials being stored in a locked cabinet in the school office. The SET teacher working with a child is responsible for updating the child's file and the class teacher will contribute to this. While records are secure to ensure confidentiality, they can be made available to relevant parties, i.e class teacher, SENO, psychologist, inspector or parents. Records for each child are retained in the school according to the school's record retention schedule.

### **13. Monitoring and Reviewing Policy**

The SEN Co-ordinator has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this SEN Policy. It is an ongoing and developmental process.

### **14. Teacher Professional Learning (TPL)**

In our school, we appreciate the importance of participating in high quality CPD. We utilise the support provided by Oide, the NCSE and local education centres to upskill in the areas of curriculum and specific needs provision. Teachers also engage in online seminars in the evenings after the school day. The SET team use meetings throughout the year and the SET group on Aladdin to share new approaches, ideas, initiatives with each other and regularly consult informally as part of invisible preparation. The SEN folder in the staff share also contains information on many topics of relevance to the work of the SEN team (see Appendix D for list of sub folders).

### **15. English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

Please refer to our EAL policy - to be reviewed March - June 2024.

### **16. Exceptional Ability and Gifted Children**

Please refer to our Exceptional Ability and Giftedness Policy - March - June 2024.

### **17. Assessment:**

See Assessment policy (to be reviewed and updated a/c year 23-24, 24-25).

This policy will be reviewed periodically in accordance with educational, staff and enrolment developments but at a minimum every three years.



## **18. Initiatives/Collaborations**

### **18.1 Music therapy**


LETS has been engaging with the University of Limerick since September 2022 to host an MA student in music therapy for 10 weeks in January. The MA in Music Therapy is a two-year full-time programme of study which prepares graduates for professional practice as a music therapist. The course requires a high level of music skill at entry allowing students to make the transition to the use of these music skills in therapeutic work with a range of client groups in different contexts. Students across LETS work with the music therapist over a 10 week period to connect and communicate.

### **18.2 Community Music**

LETS collaborates with the University of Limerick each Autumn to host a MA in Community Music class group at school and at the University. The MA offers a comprehensive grounding in the skills and knowledge needed to function as a successful community musician in a range of contexts. The course is aimed at musicians who want to extend or develop the abilities needed to facilitate the expressive work of others and work effectively with a wide range of people in diverse settings. Students attain practical perspectives and hands-on experiences in the emerging field of Community Music in conjunction with developing the skills required to realise projects from their inception to their final execution.

### **18.3 Speech and Language Therapy, UL**

In the Autumn of 2023, LETS participated in a pilot programme in conjunction with the MSC Speech and Language Therapy Programme in UL and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). This programme provided a student with 3 visits from a Senior SLT in the NCSE accompanied by 2 student SLTs delivering in class sessions. The aim of the visits and sessions was to collaborate with the LETS student's teacher in implementing whole class strategies to enhance the provision of an inclusive learning environment for all children.

<b>Date</b>	16.05.24
<b>Chairperson</b>	
<b>Principal</b>	<i>Michael Quenly</i>
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	January 2025 

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## List of Appendices

<b>Appendix A</b>	Glossary of terms
<b>Appendix B</b>	Gestalt
<b>Appendix C</b>	School wider poster on inclusive language
<b>Appendix D</b>	Contents of SEN/AEN folder on staff share at LETS
<b>Appendix E</b>	Target setting
<b>Appendix F</b>	Procedure for seeking external agency support - referral pathways

## Appendix A - Glossary

A non-comprehensive list of terms and ideas important in our neurodiverse affirming setting.

**AAC** - Alternative augmentative communication, this can be digital or analogue use of symbols, buttons, apps, communication boards etc to replace, supplement or help to organise a child's communication.

**Accommodations** - adaptations we make to our environment, instruction and expectations for each individual based on their needs.

**Autism** - preferred term over ASD, s/he is autistic or is a person with autism, depending on that person's personal preference.

**Autistic lens** - Viewing the world through the perspective of autistic people

**Behaviour - all behaviour is communication** - it is our role to understand the function of a child's actions

**Connection** - the prerequisite of all our children to ensure they can safely regulate, learn and enjoy school life.

**Compliance** - An outdated approach to education that results in rote learning and a lack of self generated thought

**Communication** - any form of communication, not limited to language, vocalisations or formal responses, it includes but is not limited to mouth words, eye contact, gestures, AAC, pointing, leading etc.

**Dysregulated** - the preferred term for someone experiencing emotional upset or what was previously referred to as challenging behaviours. All behaviour is communication, they are communicating their own dysregulation.

**Executive function** - A set of skills that include organisation, time management, working memory, flexible thinking and self-control that some of our autistic students may find challenging or may be inaccessible to them during times of dysregulation.

**Echolalia** - Repeating words or phrases from others, often media, that may be either an immediate or delayed echo of that person. Delayed echolalia that has a specific meaning to a GLP is a gestalt, see below.

**Echopraxia** - Like echolalia, echopraxia is an echo of another person's actions, it can manifest to look like a child is acting out a scene or they may adopt a characteristic like a limp or tick in imitation of an action they have seen others do.

**'Functioning' labels** - e.g. high/low functioning. These are ableist terms that do not recognise the unique abilities of every child and should be replaced by a reference to a child's required level of support IF NECESSARY.

**Gestalt** - a chunk of language, a non-generalisable piece of language spanning either one word or an entire 'script' that has a specific function for a child that may not be literal.

**GLP (Gestalt Language Processor)** - a person whose style of language acquisition begins with longer chunks of language based on emotional associations with language and intonation.

**Glossing** - when a child indicates shared connection or the correct association with a gestalt, often indicated by direct and intentional eye contact.

**Hand-over-hand** - an outdated method of manipulating a child's hands to go through the motions of an activity without their explicit engagement, consider other forms of modelling

eg, the opportunity for them to put their hand over yours, modelling without expectation or using other resources or forms of response.

**Hypersensitive** - Being especially susceptible to a certain sensory sensation eg. very keen sense of smell and easily overstimulated by smells or seeks out very strong smells. Applies to any sense. May try to control their environmental exposure to the stimulus eg. sensitive to sound and hearing a sound they don't like, may want to hear only their own preferred sounds and may try to fill the space with their own sound/media/voice to regain control.

**Hyposensitive** - Having especially high tolerance to a sensory sensation eg. can tolerate high levels of proprioceptive input such as spinning. May seek out very high levels of sensory input e.g. strong smells.

**Interoception** - Feeling the sensations or messages of your body, the ability to understand feelings of pain, hunger, thirst, ache etc, people with autism may be more or less sensitive to this sense.

**Joint Attention** - Shared interest in an activity or resource, it does not require eye contact. Joint attention can be any form or reciprocal action.

**NLA (Natural Language Acquisition)** - The 'other' kind of language acquisition as opposed to analytical language processing. The six stages of language acquisition that GLPs go through and the approaches necessary to elicit language and move through the stages of language acquisition through following children's lead and high interest

**Neurodiversity affirming** - beyond understanding is advocating for the validity of the neurodivergent experience, we advocate for our children just as they are

**Non-speaking** - this is the term used for children who communicate in any way other than through mouth words. It has replaced the term non-verbal which does not account for the level of language and understanding that these children have.

**Minimally-speaking** - A child who uses minimal mouth-words.

**Masking** - The act of hiding or minimising one's neurodivergence, usually to 'fit in' or due to compliance

**PDA** - Pathological Demand Avoidance, a term not liked in the neurodivergent community, another descriptor may be Persistent Desire for Autonomy - an instinctive negative reaction to demands, it may be linked to trauma, burnout or feelings of being consistently overstimulated.

**Proprioceptive** - the sense that lets us perceive the location, movement, and action of parts of the body. A child requiring this input in their sensory diet may use heavy work, swinging, running etc to meet their needs.

**Schedule** - Schedules can be very beneficial for our children as they help reduce anxieties about what might come next, what the expectations are or when their preferred events might be happening. They can be visual, symbolic, physical objects or written depending on the child. Schedule changes should be explicitly taught and teachers should be responsive to emergent needs that may require changes to schedule and avoid over-rigidity. We meet regulation needs as they arise rather than using regulation breaks as an incentive.

**Sensory Seeker** - a person who seeks out high levels of sensory input; swinging, spinning, chewing, tactile resources, being upside down, walking in bare feet (this may also be an avoidance of the feeling of shoes)

**Sensory Avoider** - a person who seeks to avoid certain sensory experiences as they may be hypersensitive to them eg. sunlight, prefers to wear sunglasses, uncomfortable with certain sensory provisions eg. wet paint, sand, cotton wool, slime or water.

**Social avoidance** - When a neurodivergent person prefers their own company or excludes themselves due to either social burnout or

**Social Story** - This is a trademarked name that refers to Carol Gray's context stories. They do not aim to enforce a behaviour, they provide context in positive language to help students understand social situations.

**Spectrum** - The autistic spectrum is not a continuum of 'how' autistic someone is or a spectrum we are all on, it relates to the individuality of each autistic person's experience and recognises the 'spiky profile' of strengths that each autistic individual might have. Some autistic individuals might prefer to identify themselves as being 'on the spectrum.'

**Stimming** - self-stimulation is any repeated action that provides regulation, conveys emotion or creates focus for an individual, this may be as unique as the individual, spinning and flapping hands are classic examples that may help regulate, convey excitement or nerves, other may include repeating a certain sound or repeated visual tracking of an object.

**Regulated** - The state of the nervous system that allows us to be calm, happy, able to learn, plan, focus and think clearly. If a person is dysregulated they may not be in a position to learn, articulate themselves or repair any upset until they have become regulated again.

**Trauma** - the negative experiences a person has undergone in their lives, through the lens of autism, this may relate to struggles to be understood, feelings of burnout, anxiety or feelings of 'otherness.'

**Token Rewards** - a method of generating compliance that generally does not address the underlying needs of the child in order to regulate and engage. Consideration should be made to whether or not the lesson is relevant to the child, if their sensory needs are being met, if their communication style is being supported and whether or not their autonomy is being supported.

**Unit** - We never call our classes a unit, this is a clinical or architectural term that does not reflect the ethos of our classes.

Note, this list should be amended in line with new research or input from autistic individuals who may wish to comment on or update terminology.



## **Appendix B**

### **Gestalt Language Processing**


The 'other' way to develop language.

- As opposed to Analytical Language Processors who learn individual words, then learn to combine them; Gestalt Language Processors start with longer pieces of language that are ear-catching, have rich intonation or convey a strong emotion. These kids are musical, have strong preferred interests that they learn language from and often speak in what sounds like echolalia or jargon but these scripts are in fact 'gestalts.' Gestalts can be as long as a whole movie , as short as a single word and everything in between.
- It's not a new idea, just a forgotten one, unfortunately other approaches took precedence over the past few decades but this approach is the perfect fit for some of our children.
- Through the 6 stages of natural language acquisition Gestalt Language Processors break their pieces of language apart slowly into smaller chunks, then single words then work through various stages of emergent grammar.  
This might be an area to investigate if you know children who communicate with echolalia, who are 'stuck' on single words and can't combine them or who use consistently poor grammar and are slower to speak.
- Many of our non-speaking children are also GLPs as the language they do use is long, lyrical and has deep meaning for them connected to a preferred topic. Using AAC such as core boards and language apps on ipads have given a whole new access to language to these children.
- It has also been found that children can revert back to earlier stages of language if they are distressed or dysregulated and so may revert back to what seems like echolalia but are in fact 'gestalts.'
- Gestalt language processing is common among autistic people and the Natural Language Acquisition approach is foundational within the Garden Classes at present. If any of the children from the Garden Classes integrate to your class please touch base with us so we can let you know what level of language they work with currently and what approaches we use to promote that language.
- We have been guided by the Meaningful Speech course online and by our Speech and Language Therapist Jenny Lang.
- If you are interested in Gestalt Language Processing or have a feeling that this sounds like a child you know, Anne-Marie and Jenny have questionnaires to help

identify GLPs and you can come and talk to either myself or Anne-Marie and we would be delighted to give you any other information.

Social media is also a great way to dip your toes, meaningful speech, natural.communication natural.language.acquisition and speechtherapyinreallife on instagram all have really accessible resources and examples.

## Appendix C - Language of inclusion

<p>Limerick Educate Together Primary School  Dromdarrig  Mungret  Limerick  V94 27P3  061 300889  <a href="mailto:letsnationalschool@gmail.com">letsnationalschool@gmail.com</a>  Roll No.: 20175A</p>	 <p><b>LIMERICK</b></p> <p><b>EDUCATE TOGETHER  NATIONAL SCHOOL</b></p>
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### SET/AET TEAM

**Is the language we use  
inclusive/empowering/enabling?**

<b><i>Instead of..</i></b>	<b><i>Consider...</i></b>
<b>Unit</b>	<b>Autism Class/ Garden Class</b>
<b>ASD</b>	<b>Autism/Autistic</b>
<b>Behaviour(s) of concern</b>	<b>Dysregulated</b>
<b>low/high functioning</b>	<b>low/high support needs</b>

## **Appendix D - Contents of SEN/AEN folder on staff share at LETS**

Up to date information that is gathered by school staff is collated, curated and shared here in folders:

- Additional Technology
- ADHD friendly school
- Assessment
- Assessment - EXTERNAL
- Autism
- Continuum of Support
- Curriculum Team
- DCD - Dyspraxia - Developmental Disorder
- Fine Motor - handwriting
- Inspectorate - guidance
- Listening
- Literacy - Language difficulties - dyslexia
- Music therapy
- NCSE support NEPS
- Numeracy - maths learning difficulties - dyscalculia
- PDA
- Policies
- Policy Review - Oct 23- March 24
- Primary Language - SEN
- Sensory Regulation Supports
- SET team meetings
- SNAs
- Social Skills Resources
- Training Ideas
- Transition Planning
- Typing Skills

## Appendix E - Target Setting

Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with specific education needs. There are four guiding principles when devising targets for pupils. Targets should be:

Linked to assessment

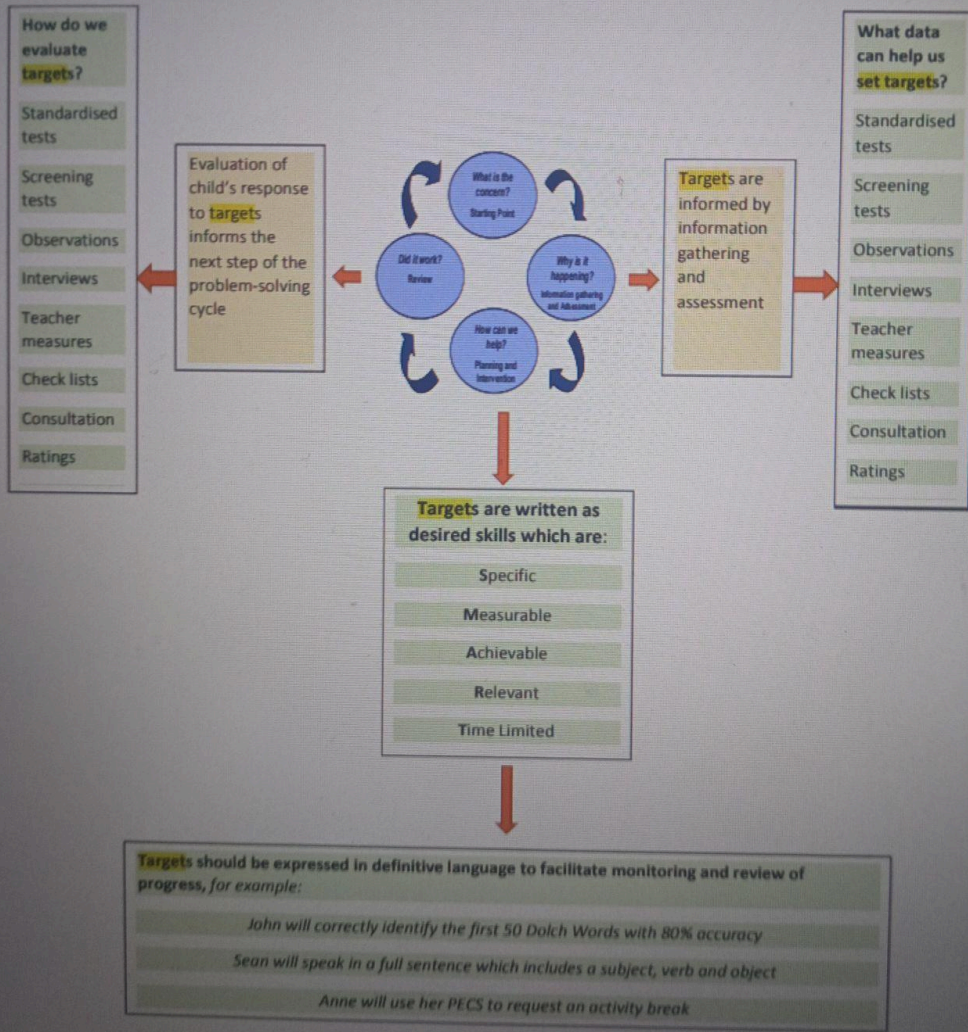
Strengths-based

Linked to interventions

Developed collaboratively

Best practice indicates that targets should be few in number; they should be informed by priority learning needs and directly linked to suitable interventions. Targets should be based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches. Schools should consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress. The views of pupils should also be included in this process, through their direct involvement in the discussion or by gathering their views in advance of the review process. This collaboration will help ensure that targets are relevant, meaningful, realistic, and that they draw on the strengths and interests of pupils. Targets should be expressed in a way that is measurable and observable, and should reflect the specific educational needs of individual pupils (for example, focus on social and emotional difficulties if that is a primary area of concern). While targets should be achievable within a specified time frame, they should also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address pupils' holistic needs.

Appendix 1: **Target-setting** as part of the problem-solving framework



## Appendix F - Pathways to external support

# Referral Pathways

Difficulty	Title	Referral Pathway
ADHD	Clinical Psychologist Psychiatrist	CAMHS - Parents need to go to G.P. School can write a letter to support concerns  Primary Care Team Form – Psychology
Anxiety	Clinical Psychologist	+CAMHS - Parents need to go to G.P. School can write a letter to support concerns  Primary Care Team Form – Psychology
Auditory Processing Disorder	Audiologist Speech and Language Therapist	Parents need to go to G.P  Primary Care Team (PCT) form
Autism	Multi-disciplinary Teams	Children’s Disability Network Teams  Assessment of Need
Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) or Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)	Clinical Psychologist  NEPS – Teacher Consultation	Primary Care Team Form – Psychology
Depression	Clinical Psychologist Psychiatrist	+CAMHS - Parents need to go to G.P. School can write a letter to support concerns  Primary Care Team Form – Psychology

Dyscalculia	Educational Psychologist	NEPS
Dysgraphia	Occupational Therapist	Primary Care Team Form - OT
Dyslexia	Educational Psychologist	NEPS
Dyspraxia	Occupational Therapist Physiotherapist Paediatrician	Primary Care Team Form – OT Primary Care Team Form – Physiotherapy Letter from G.P.
Eating Disorders	Clinical Psychologist Psychiatrist	+CAMHS - Parents need to go to G.P. School can write a letter to support concerns Primary Care Team Form – Psychology
General Learning Disability	Educational Psychologist	NEPS
Global Developmental Disorder	Multi-disciplinary Team	Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) Assessment of Need
Motor Skills Difficulties	Occupational Therapist	Primary Care Team Form – OT
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	Psychologist NEPS – Teacher Consultation	Primary Care Team Form – psychology
Self-Harm	Clinical Psychologist Psychiatrist	CAMHS - Parents need to go to G.P. School can write a letter to support concerns
Sensory Processing Disorder	Occupational Therapist	Primary Care Team Form – OT



