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Policy on the Integration and Inclusion of Special Needs Children into Mainstream classes

Introduction:

The need for a policy on inclusion developed from the collective desire of the teaching staff to have a defined and uniform whole school approach to the issue of inclusion. The policy was devised following consultation with all stake holders including mainstream and support teachers, as well as the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS). The school strives to include all children in curricular learning experiences.

Rationale:

The policy was formulated so that:

- teaching staff had clear well defined guidelines on best practice
- there was consistency throughout the school
- optimum learning experiences were provided for all children

Aims:

- to provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) become exposed to learning in a mainstream setting
- to enable mainstream children observe at close quarters, the special needs of some children in society
- to develop the social skills and self-esteem of the pupils with SEN.

Staff Roles:

Principal:

- direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole school approach to integration/inclusion
- responsibility for the provision of in service training and adequate resourcing of same
- monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustment following consultation
- working with parents and out of school agencies

Special Class Teachers:

The Special Class teachers will:

- identify the appropriate curriculum area the pupils with SEN should experience
- initially provide Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support during inclusion in consultation with the mainstream class teacher, followed by phasing out of SNA support, where possible
- collaborate and consult with mainstream class teachers in setting realistic targets
- assume responsibility for an ongoing Individual Education Plan(IEP) in consultation with support services, parents and Principal

Class Teachers:

The mainstream class teachers will

- strive to cater for the individual needs of the child with pupils with SEN
- adjust programmes to meet the needs of the pupils with SEN
- provide a suitable seating arrangement in the mainstream setting
- collaborate with the Special Education Teacher (SET)and the SNA
- attend relevant meetings regarding the integrating child

Implementation:

The school promotes a policy of inclusion with age appropriate peers on a social level and ability appropriate on a curriculum level.

* For integration/inclusion to be effective it must:

- further develop social skills
- not interfere with the level of learning within each class
- be done in conjunction with and have the goodwill of the class teacher

The process must be open to review at all times. Early levels of inclusion into mainstream are on a social level only. The pupils with SEN will not partake independently in general class learning until they have mastered the art of –

- entering the class without trepidation
- sitting down at a designated desk
- interacting on a social level with child(ren) nearest them
- having lunch with the whole class
- engaging in a "buddy" system at playtime
- re-acting to general teacher instructions within the classroom setting

Curricular Integration:

When the pupil with SEN has adjusted on a social level he/she will slowly be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to their ability level. Visual Arts and Physical Education (PE) classes at Junior and Senior Infant level will be targeted initially. Inclusion into this class will continue up through the classes.

The school also designates Music as a curricular area open to inclusion. Inclusion into mainstream music classes can extend to additional levels of inclusion such as school choirs (communion), carol singing groups and school plays and recitals.

The school policy also offers PE as a curricular area open to inclusion. The pupil with SEN is included into their age appropriate class. Games are sometimes taught to all classes by an outside coach and sessions are timetabled by the school. Children from the special classes are also included for mainstream school outings and mainstream activities such as Sports Day and Fire Drill, where possible.

Reverse integration:

The school operates a policy of reverse integration and this extends to all classes:

- Pupils with SEN being included for core curriculum subjects such as Maths and English do so through the reverse integration route initially. This involves withdrawing 3-4 children from mainstream to work with the pupil with SEN in his/her own environment. Hopefully this will lead to conventional inclusion into mainstream in the long term
- Where effective inclusion (see * for description of effective inclusion) is not possible for the pupils with SEN a process of reverse integration will be developed with the age appropriate mainstream class. This will be developed focusing on social skills, in conjunction with the mainstream class teacher

Assessment:

Assessment by observation will be conducted by the class teachers covering 3 aspects of development

- social integration
- language and communication
- play and behaviour

Home – School Liaison:

Home – school communication will be by way of communication diaries in the Cárde classes and by way of homework diary for pupils with SEN in the mainstream class setting.

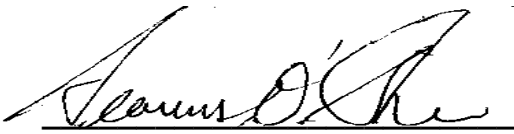
ICT:

All children will have access to ICT, both in mainstream and in the special class.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

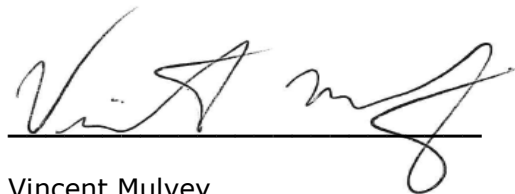
Ratified by:



Seamus O' Shea

Chairperson

Board of Management



Vincent Mulvey

Principal

Date: 10th March 2016