

School Logo
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Integration of Children with Special Needs into Mainstream

Introduction:

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities and removing barriers within and from education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school. (NCSE *Inclusive Education Framework* 2011)

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 integration. 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 the children

Aims:

- To provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with Special Needs 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 Special Needs child

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
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustment following consultation
- Working with parents and out of school agencies

Special Class Teacher(s):

The Special Class teacher(s) will

- Identify the appropriate curriculum area the Special Needs child should experience
- Ensure S.N.A support is available during integration
- Collaborate and consult with mainstream class teachers in setting realistic targets
- Assume responsibility for an on going individual education plan in consultation with support services, parents and Principal

Class Teachers:

The mainstream class teachers will

- Adjust programmes to meet the needs of the Special Class pupil
- Provide a suitable seating arrangement in the mainstream setting
- Collaborate with the Special Class teacher and the S.N.A

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will:

- Encourage their child to participate in activities where they can meet children of the same age with different abilities.
- Encourage their child to develop friendship with classmates or other neighbourhood children.
- Discuss their goals, expectations and preferences for their child with regards to integration with their teachers before going to school.
- Work in partnership with the class teacher in devising a suitable integration plan for their child.

Implementation:

The school promotes a policy of integration with age appropriate peers on a social level and ability appropriate on a curriculum level. Integration will be on a phased basis and always based on the individual needs of the child.

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. The school insists that a maximum of 2 children per class be integrated at any given time. Early levels of integration into mainstream are on a **social level only**. The Special Needs child will not partake 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 Special Needs child has adjusted on a social level he/she will slowly be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level and interests. Integration into mainstream classes can extend to additional levels of integration such as school choirs (communion), carol singing groups and school plays and recitals. Children from the Special classes are also integrated for some mainstream school outings and mainstream activities such as Sports Day and Fire Drill.

Reverse integration:

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

- Special Needs children being integrated 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 Special Needs child in his/her own environment. Hopefully this will lead to conventional integration into mainstream in the long term
- Children from mainstream Junior/Middle classes engage in life skills integration with the Special Needs children on a regular basis
- Children from the Senior Classes provide reverse integration by accompanying the Special Needs children on selected extra curricular activity sessions such as Gaelic football or swimming.
- A timetabled "Buddy System" involving the Special Classes is operational for some or all playtimes, throughout the school year as appropriate.

Staff Development:

Opportunities for in service and staff development in relation to the implementation of a workable system of integration will be provided as necessary by a suitably qualified practitioner.

Assessment:

Assessment by observation and testing will be conducted by the class teacher(s) covering 3 aspects of development

- Social Integration
- Language and Communication
- Play and Behaviour

Home – School Liaison:

Parents will be informed of any integration that their child partakes in on a regular basis.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in June 2017 as more information on techniques to ensure effective integration becomes available.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairman:_____ **Date :**

Principal:_____ **Date**

Appendix 1: Sample Integration Timetable

Student:

ASD Class Teacher:

Integration Class:

Mainstream Class Teacher:

Date:

Review Date:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.50					
9.00	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear
9.15	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear	Aistear
9.30					
9.45					
10.00	Music				
10.15	Music	SPHE Social Group (R)	SPHE Social Group (R)	SPHE Social Group (R)	SPHE Social Group (R)
10.30	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground
10.40	Mindfulness (5 mins)	Mindfulness (5 mins)	Mindfulness (5 mins)	Mindfulness (5 mins)	Mindfulness (5 mins)
11.00					
11.15					
11.30					
11.45					
12.00					
12.15	English Social Group (R)	English Social Group (R)	English Social Group (R)	English Social Group (R)	English Social Group (R)
12.30	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground	Snack & Playground
12.45	Playground	Playground	Playground	Playground	Playground
1.00					
1.15					
1.30					
1.45					

(R) Denotes REVERSE INTEGRATION

Appendix 2: Integration Goal Support Plan

Student:
Integration Class:
Date:

ASD Class Teacher:
Mainstream Class Teacher:
Review Date:

1	Subject Strand & Strand Unit	Content Objectives	Brief description of how these goals will be achieved (E.G. Reinforcement Systems, Social Stories, Playground Rules, Communication Strategies)	Assessment:
1				
2				
3				

