



Dunshaughlin Community

National School

Special Education Policy

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1. Rationale

Dunshaughlin Community National School strives to achieve the highest possible standards for all its pupils in a happy, supportive, inclusive and caring environment, with due emphasis given to the individual needs of each pupil. Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. We are committed to creating an inclusive culture in our school by:

- Promoting a positive ethos and learning environment whereby all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging.
- Promoting pupils' participation and active engagement in their learning and in the life of the school.
- A commitment to developing pupils' academic, social, emotional and independent living skills.
- A focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for all pupils.

For pupils with SEN, some adaptations to teaching and the environment may be required to ensure these needs can be met. In developing this policy due consideration will be given to legislation related to this policy such as the Equality Act (2004), the EPSEN Act (2004) and the Disability Act (2005). Sources of reference will include circular 13/2017 and the Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017).

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The pupil with SEN has like all pupils individual strengths, personality and experiences and although particular needs will impact differently on individual pupils, the SEN should not define the whole pupil. In defining SEN, we refer to the EPSEN Act (2004) which defined special educational needs as:

“a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition”.

3. Aims

The aims of our special education policy are as follows:

- To outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with SEN.
- To set out procedures for the identification and/or enrolment of pupils with SEN in the school.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with SEN.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all partners in the education of pupils with SEN.
- To detail the planning, approaches, resources, and assessment viewed as necessary for high – quality effective instruction of a pupil with SEN.
- To identify links and supports available for all parties involved in the education of pupils with SEN.



4. Guiding Principles

Community National schools are underpinned by the core values of equality, community, care, respect, and excellence in education. All our pupils have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We aspire for all our pupils to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. In addition:

- Supports provided to pupils with SEN will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents/guardians and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines (National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), 2007)

- The class teacher will have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with SEN.
- Special education teaching supports will be used solely for the support of pupils with identified special educational needs, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.

5. Enrolment of Pupils with Identified SEN

The following procedures will be enacted pre-enrolment of a pupil with SEN.

- a) The principal and/or SEN coordinator will meet with the parents/guardians of a pupil wishing to enrol in the school and acquaint themselves with the pupil's SEN.
- b) Copies/details of assessments and other reports will be requested and permission to consult with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), psychologist, agencies or therapists obtained.
- c) Further meetings/contacts with concerned educational partners will then be made.
- d) To ensure smooth transition into the school for both the pupil and the school some/ or all of the following may be undertaken:
 - Staff visits to preschools/special schools/special classes.
 - Liaising with services/agencies for guidelines, recommendations, training
 - Parental and/or pupil visits to school
- e) Health and safety issues arising from the pupil's mobility and care needs will also need to be addressed and procedures established to enable:
 - Safe access to all necessary areas
 - Safe toilet and care facilities /arrangements
 - Supervision in line with pupil and employee safety
 - Correct administration of medicine in line with agreed school procedures
 - Intimate care provision
 - Safe lifting and transfers if required.

6. Support Provision

In planning for the provision of supports for our pupils with SEN, we will utilise the Six Actions to Guide Implementation (Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, DES 2017) so that we are appropriately and effectively using our SEN supports to best meet the needs of our pupils in our school context.

6.1 Action 1: Identification of Pupils with SEN

- We regularly review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents/guardians and external professionals.
- We engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches.
- We will endeavour to identify **all** pupils with SEN in the school and match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support. This is recorded on the School Register (Appendix 1)

6.1.1 Continuum of Support Framework

We will use the continuum of support framework devised by NEPS, to support us in assessing the needs of our pupils and planning appropriate interventions.

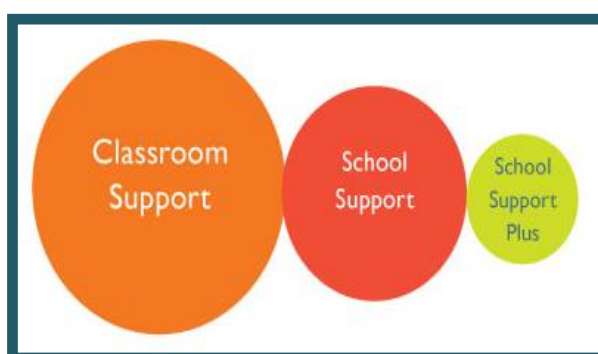


Figure 1. NEPS Continuum of Support

Level 1: Classroom Support-Procedures for the Early Identification, Screening and Support of Pupils with SEN

At this level of the continuum of support, a class teacher/parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural

or emotional development of a pupil. The class teacher will collect some data on these concerns to give further information on the possible nature of the concern. Data could emerge from screening and diagnostic measures such as:

- Teacher’s observations
- Checklists such as e.g., AFAISC checklist of language skills, attention checklist, social skills checklist
- Parental observations
- Belfield Infant Attainment Profile BIAP (Junior Infants)
- Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test (Senior Infants)
- TEST 2R Literacy Assessment (Senior Infants)
- Drumcondra Standardised Reading Assessment (First Class & Second Class)
- Micra T Standardised Math Assessment (First Class & Second Class)

This information collected will be recorded on the **Classroom Support Checklist (Appendix 2)** and the class teacher will devise a **Classroom Support Plan (Appendix 3)** outlining the strategies that will be put in place to help the pupil for a period of time. Parents/guardians will be consulted (Appendix 4) about the development of this plan and will be consulted regularly and on its review. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the SET may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at **School Support** level.

Level 2: School Support - Referral to Special Educational Teacher (SET).

If intervention is considered necessary at **School Support**, then the pupil will be referred to the SET, with parents/guardians’ permission (Appendix 5), for further diagnostic testing.

These diagnostic assessments may include:

Area of focus	Assessment Measure
Phonological awareness	Two Peas Assessment
English as an Additional Language	Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK)
Language	British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) Speech and Language Checklist

Maths- Sense	Number	Early relationships of Number Sense Assessment Ready Set Go Maths Checklists Drumcondra early Numeracy Test- Diagnostic Tests
Cognitive Estimate		British Picture Vocabulary Scale Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT) Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
Specific Difficulties	Literacy	Test 2R – Diagnostic Tests Dyslexia Portfolio
General Assessments		Assessing Neuromotor Maturity

- If this diagnostic assessment suggests that additional teaching support would be beneficial, this will be reviewed by the SET. The SET will review the pupil's needs based on the whole school needs contexts and the principle that the pupils with the greatest level of support are getting the greatest level of support.
- In identifying pupils for support, we will consider the following:
 - Pupils performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.
 - Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention through the continuum of support process.
 - Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties.
 - Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.
 - Pupils with significant special educational needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils may need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
 - Pupils who may present with a range of learning whose interaction may present a significant barrier to the pupils' learning and ability to access the curriculum.
 - Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need additional English language support.

- Additional teaching support may take the form of in-class team teaching or individual or small group withdrawal. As no one model suits all pupils with SEN, a combination of these methods may be utilised to best support the needs of the individual pupil. In cases where withdrawal is agreed as the most appropriate form of support, permission will be sought in writing from parents/guardians to commence additional teaching at that point in the school year.
- Parents/guardians will be consulted about the method of teaching support to be utilised, but the school will have the ultimate decision on this as they must look at the provision for this pupil in the context of the whole school SEN provision also. The additional teaching support in whatever form will endeavour to meet the needs of the pupil.
- A School Support Plan (SSP) (Appendix 6) will be drawn up with involvement from the parents/guardians, the class teacher, the SET and the pupil where appropriate. The plan will outline the targets and interventions to be deployed to best support the priority needs of the pupil. These strategies may be implemented in the home, in the classroom and during additional teaching support sessions. The plan should be regularly reviewed by the SET, class teacher, parents/guardians, and pupil where appropriate. If significant concerns remain after several reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at School Support Plus.

Level 3: School Support Plus: Consultation or Referral for Assessment to External Specialist

Some pupils who continue to present with significant needs will require more intensive intervention at the school support plus stage of the continuum of support. The school may request a consultation and/or an assessment of need from a specialist e.g., psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc. Following assessment, the specialist will provide feedback to the parents/guardians, class teacher and SET. The class teacher and/or SET will gather and record all relevant information on the School Support Plus checklist (Appendix 7). Following this a School Support Plus Plan/Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be devised for the pupil. The parents/guardians and the pupil where deemed appropriate will be fully consulted throughout this process. The plan should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the identified targets and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the event of limited availability of assessments through NEPS, the Principal may have to prioritise pupils based on degree of need, age, duration since previous assessment (if it is a review). Educational assessments are carried out during school time in a familiar setting such as the SET room (Sunshine Room)

6.2 Action 2: Setting Targets

- Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. There are four guiding principles when devising targets for our pupils that we will strive to do:
 1. Linked to assessment.
 2. Strengths-based
 3. Linked to interventions.
 4. Developed collaboratively.
- Best practice indicates that our targets should be few in number and we will consult with parents/guardians 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.
- Targets will be written as Specific Measured Achievable Realistic Timed (SMART) targets with a focus on the priority learning needs of the pupils. The Behaviour Condition Criteria (BCC) method will be used in writing targets to fulfil the SMART criteria.
- The BCC method suggests that in writing targets 3 aspects should be considered. They include 1) the behaviour of the target 2) the condition of which the target will take place 3) the criteria in which it will be met.
e.g., Pupil A will count forwards (behaviour) from 1-30 (condition) independently and chorally (criteria).

6.3 Action 3: Planning Teaching Methods and Approaches

- Integral to the continuum of support framework is identifying the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support.
- We will consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching.

- We will be mindful that the interventions and supports that we are using are evidence informed.

6.4 Action 4: Organising & Planning Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes

- As a school we will look at the needs of our pupils in a whole school context and plan appropriate interventions that we hope will help mitigate against the development of additional needs for our pupils.
- Based on our identified needs in the school, we will choose evidence-informed early-intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns.

6.5 Action 5: Organising and Deploying Special Education Teaching Resources

- In trying to be as effective as possible with our teaching resources we will cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.
- We will be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.

6.6 Action 6: Tracking, Recording and Reviewing Progress

We understand the importance of establishing a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored. We will do this by:

- At Classroom Support level- Classroom Support Plans will be reviewed regularly by the class teacher and the results of the review recorded on the plan. Any pupil who may need support at School Support level will be brought to the attention of the SET team following the review.
- At the School Support and School Support Plus – plans will be reviewed regularly by the SETs with appropriate people of interest. The SET co-ordinator will maintain the School

Register and adapt accordingly based on pupils who moving up and down the continuum of support.

- Pre and post testing will be an integral component of any early intervention and prevention programmes rolled out in the school. This will allow us to evaluate the benefit of the programmes for the pupils.
- Information in relation to pupils with SEN will be made available by the SEN co-ordinator on Aladdin at the beginning of each school year under the extra information section of pupil profiles. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to read this information. Additional information can also be obtained by talking to the class teacher and the SET responsible for the pupil in the previous year.
- There will be provision for an end of year handover where information regarding a pupil with SEN will be communicated to the class teacher and/or SET teaching the pupil the following year. The individual pupil file will also be transferred on this occasion.

7. Discontinuation of Support

Where a pupil receives additional support, and it is deemed that the additional teaching is no longer required this decision will be relayed to the parents/guardians in writing using the Discontinuation of Support Record Card (Appendix 8). This record card should be copied and stored with the pupil's file in the SET room.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The adoption of a collaborative approach by all those who work with pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning differences leads to effective learning situations for the pupil. Each of the following have specific, different but complementary roles and responsibilities.

8.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management will make every effort to:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy for SEN.
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the SET.
- Provide secure facilities for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN support.
- Provide funding where necessary to allow SEN staff to attend courses e.g., Irish Learning Support Association Conference.

8.2 The Principal Teacher

The leadership role is highly important to the success of quality inclusive provision for pupils with SEN. This role involves:

- Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation
- Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents/guardians, pupils and external professionals / agencies.
- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.

8.3 The Class Teacher

Effective teaching and learning are critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, they will endeavour to

- plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.

- adapt their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs.
- implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:
 - Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms.
 - Collaborative problem-solving activities
 - Heterogeneous group work
 - Differentiation
 - Interventions to promote social and emotional competence.
 - Embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

8.4 The Special Education Teacher (SET)

- SETs will be 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, cooperative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with SEN may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.
- Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. The SET will choose such interventions based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary.
- SETs, in consultation with class teachers, will plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan.
- Short-term planning will reflect the Support Plan targets and will break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis.

- Outcomes for pupils will be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes will be used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

8.5 The Parents/Guardians

- The parents/guardians of any pupil enrolling shall make the school aware of any SEN that the pupil may have. They will provide the school with a copy of any assessment/professional reports etc. which will help the school to make appropriate provision for the pupil.
- The parents/guardians of pupils with SEN will meet with the class teacher and SET and will contribute towards developing a plan to meet the needs of the pupil.
- The parents/guardians will support work done in school by working with their pupil at home using strategies and methods discussed with the teachers.

8.6 The Pupil

- The pupils themselves have a role by taking responsibility for their own learning. Some pupils may be involved in the development, implementation and review of their own support plans where appropriate. Pupil's input sheets should be kept in their SEN file.

8.7 The SNA

- Preparation and tidying of the classroom.
- Assisting school pupils to board and alight from school buses if required
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g., helping a child with writing difficulties with typing or writing.
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with SEN during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature.

- Participation in school development planning where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices that arise.
- Engagement with parents/guardians of pupils with SEN in both formal and informal structures as required by school management.

9. Continuous Professional Development

The importance of continuous professional development is paramount when supporting pupils with SEN. Teachers will be facilitated and encouraged to undertake suitable CPD opportunities to help them effectively undertake their role and for the benefit of the pupils they are teaching.

10. Irish Language Exemption

Certain pupils with SEN may be exempted from the study of Irish. The procedures as outlined in Circular 0054/2022 will be followed in such cases.

11. Arrangement for dealing with complaints by parents/guardians regarding SEN provision in the school.

In circumstances where a parent/guardian are dissatisfied with the level of support being provided for their pupils with SEN the following procedures should be enacted:

- Initial consultation with the class teacher and/ or Special Education Teacher.
- Consultation with the Principal.
- Written complaint to the Board of Management.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary in line with DES circulars.

BOM Ratification

LMETB School/College:	Dunshaughlin CNS
Date of Board of Management Meeting:	19/10/2023
Policy:	Special Education Needs Policy
Proposed By:	Maria Murphy
Seconded By:	Jonathan Dunne
Signed by Chairperson BOM:	Gerry O' Connor

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 School Register

Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioral, life-	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school
School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support

Appendix 2

Classroom Support Checklist		
Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
1. Parents/ Guardians Consulted		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
3. Hearing		
4. Vision		
5. Medical Needs		
6. Basic Needs Checklist completed		
7. Assessment of learning- screening		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning		
9. Observation of behaviour		
10. Interview with pupil		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		
<i>Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20</i>		

Appendix 3 Classroom Support Plan

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support

School Support (Support for SOME)

School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s).

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed.			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

Appendix 4 Parental Questionnaire

<p>Child's Name: _____</p> <p>My child likes to be called: _____</p>	<p>Parent(s)/Guardian(s) name filling out the form. _____</p>
<p>What language(s) do you speak at home?</p>	
<p>What words would you use to describe your child?</p>	
<p>What are your child's interests and hobbies?</p>	
<p>What are some of your child's strengths? Include all areas your child does well in, including academic, emotional, social, communication, behaviour etc.</p>	
<p>Do you have any concerns about your child? Include any areas your child might need extra support in, including academic, emotional, social, communication, behaviour etc.</p>	

Has your child's hearing and vision been checked?

How long does it typically take for your child to complete their homework/reading at night? Is there any area they find difficult / struggle?

List 3 skills/goals you'd like your child to work on this year. This could be academic or social skills or both.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some things that motivate your child to learn?

What does your child like best about school?

Please list any other information you feel I should know. If there are any outside agencies supporting your child, please list them below.

Appendix 5 Parent/Guardian Permission

We have identified the need for further diagnostic assessment for your child. By completing school based diagnostic assessments, we will be able to use this information to support your child's learning and development. Please fill out the following below to give/decline your permission.

I _____ give/decline my permission for my child _____ to complete diagnostic assessment administered by the teaching staff of Dunshaughlin CNS for the purpose of supporting their learning and development while attending the school.

Signed: _____

Name in Print: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6 School Support Plan

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support

School Support (Support for SOME)

School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s).

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed.			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			

Appendix 7 School Support Checklist

School Support Plus Checklist		
Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
17. Parents/ Guardians Consulted		
18. Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
19. Hearing		
20. Vision		
21. Medical Needs		
22. Basic Needs Checklist completed		
23. Assessment of learning- screening		
24. Observation of learning style/approach to learning		
25. Observation of behaviour		
26. Interview with pupil		
27. Classroom work differentiated?		
28. Learning environment adapted?		
29. Yard/school environments adapted?		
30. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
31. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
32. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		
<i>Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20</i>		

Appendix 8 Discontinuation of Support Record

Following review of _____ support plan, we have identified that your child will no longer require additional support teaching from the Special Education Teacher. We will monitor the progress of your child closely and should a need for additional support arises, we will review their needs at this time.

Signed: _____

Special Education Teacher

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____