

WOODLAND NATIONAL SCHOOL

INTEGRATION/INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) INTO MAINSTREAM CLASSES

Introduction:

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

Rationale:

The policy was formulated so that

- teaching staff have clear well defined guidelines on best practice
- there is consistency throughout the school
- optimum learning experiences are provided for all pupils

Aims:

- to provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with SEN have access to, participate in and benefit from learning in a mainstream setting
- to foster awareness and understanding of SEN in mainstream pupils leading to acceptance , inclusion and friendship
- to develop the social skills and self esteem of all pupils
- to foster inclusive practice where the education of pupils with SEN is seen as a collective whole school responsibility

Staff Roles:**Principal/ Deputy 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 Teachers:

The Special Class teachers will

- identify appropriate curricular areas for inclusion
- establish and monitor what level of support is needed for each pupil during the inclusion process
- collaborate and consult with mainstream class teachers in setting realistic targets for learning and behaviour
- assume responsibility for creating and updating the Student Support File in consultation with relevant support services, parents, SENCO and Principal

Class Teachers:

The mainstream class teachers will

- differentiate programmes to include the pupil with SEN
- provide a suitable seating arrangement in the mainstream setting
- liaise and collaborate with the Special Class teacher regularly

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 should

- lead to increased understanding and acceptance of the pupil with SEN in the mainstream class
- further develop social and communication skills
- not interfere with the level of learning within each class
- be done in conjunction with and have the goodwill of the class teacher, taking into account timetabling issues, and the needs of the other pupils in the mainstream class
- have clear objectives, a timeframe and review of targets, which are all documented and kept on file
- have realistic expectations of the pupil from the Special Class

The process must be open to review at all times.

Curricular Integration:

When the pupil with SEN has adjusted on a social level in the mainstream, he/she will slowly be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level. All curricular areas are open to inclusion of pupils from the Special Classes, including Irish, depending on the ability and needs of the pupil. Structured subject areas such as maths or phonics are often a good way to start.

PE, Art and Craft, Drama and Music are often considered to be useful subjects to develop social skills, as well as providing access to the curricular areas. However, due the unstructured nature of these subject areas, some pupils who become anxious due to uncertainty may not do well when included for these subjects. Each pupil's case needs to be considered on an individual basis.

Pupils from the Special Classes may also be included in mainstream school outings and mainstream activities such as Sports Day, plays, school tours and Fire Drill.

Reverse integration:

Where appropriate the school operates a policy of reverse integration, whereby pupils from mainstream classes come to the special class for "buddy time". This may operate in any of the ASD or Speech and Language classes, from the pre-school to the senior classes, depending on the needs of individual pupils. Mainstream pupils can be included in Special Class social outings as helpers or friends.

Playground integration:

If appropriate, pupils from the special classes will go to their mainstream class for lunch and then out to the yard to play with their mainstream peers, or back to their own class, depending on the needs and abilities of the pupil.

Staff Development:

Where opportunities for in service and staff development in relation to the implementation of a workable system of integration/inclusion arise, staff will avail of same.

Assessment:

Reviews of the success of the targets of the inclusion will take place on a regular basis, and will be documented on the Student Support File.

Home – School Liaison:

Each pupil takes home a class diary and, if appropriate, details of the inclusion in which the pupil has engaged may be included for parents to read.

Ratification and Review

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management on 7th December 2020

It will be reviewed every three years with next review due in December 2023

Signed: Susan Kenny Date: 7/12/2020
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Patricia Slevin Date: 7/12/2020
Principal