



Policy on the Integration and Inclusion of children from the Special Classes into Mainstream Classes

The need for a policy on inclusion was developed from the collective desire of the teaching staff of Gaelscoil Bhréifne, to have a defined and uniform whole school approach to integration. This policy was devised following consultation with all stake holders including the Principal, mainstream and special class teachers, support teachers, parents and children, the Board of Management, as well as the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS). The school strives in so far as is possible to include all children in curricular learning experiences as a pathway to successful integration and inclusion for curricular subjects. Children with additional needs may initially be integrated in more social based activities, to support the development of their social relationships with peers.

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 states ‘A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
- The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated’.

The amount of integration/reverse integration that each child receives in Gaelscoil Bhréifne is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. SEN teachers, mainstream teachers, the Principal, support staff in consultation with Parents/Guardians, Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists.



Rationale

The policy was formulated so that:

- There is consistency throughout the school – All members of staff are aware of the need for this consistency, educationally and in terms of timetables.
- Teaching and support staff have clear well defined guidelines on best practice
- Optimum learning experiences are provided for all the children

Aims

- To provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with special educational needs to become exposed to learning in a mainstream setting.
- To provide support and address their individual needs and facilitate participation in the Primary School Curriculum, through integration/ reverse integration.
- To enable the children in the mainstream classes to develop relationships with children with special needs, encouraging understanding and inclusion,
- To develop the social skills and self-esteem of the children in the Autism classes, and the children with additional needs in mainstream classes.

Staff Roles:

Principal:

- Direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole school approach to integration/reverse integration and inclusion.
- Responsibility for the provision of in service training and adequate resourcing.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustment following consultation with staff.
- Working with parents and out of school agencies.

Special Class Teacher(s):

- Identify and provide the appropriate curriculum area that the Special Needs child should experience, both in the Autism class and in the appropriate mainstream class.
- Ensure SNA 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/ Continuum of Support Plan in consultation with support services, parents, the child and principal.

Class Teachers:

- Adjust programmes and timetables to differentiate to the needs of the Special Class pupil
- Provide a permanent suitable seating arrangement in the mainstream setting.
- Collaborate with the Special Class teacher and the SNA for planning, and provision.
- Collaborate with relevant staff regarding preparation, planning and implementation of reverse integration groups from mainstream to the autism classes.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- 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 and throughout the school year.
- Work in partnership with the class/ special class teacher in devising a suitable integration plan for their child.
- To communicate relevant recommendations from the services working with their child consistently and as regularly as possible.

Implementation

The school promotes a policy of integration with age-appropriate peers based on their current social level, and the current ability appropriate 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, including Autism class and mainstream class.
- There must be a clear goal with regard to each integration session, from both the special class and mainstream class teacher.



The process must be open to review at all times. The numbers of children integrated from the Autism classes to the mainstream (vice versa) at any given time is based on the needs of each individual child and the staff available to facilitate integration.

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
- Responding to general teacher instructions within the classroom setting.

Curricular Integration

When the Additional Needs child has developed certain social skills, he/she will slowly be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level and interests. Integration into mainstream classes can be extended to additional levels of integration such as school choirs, carol singing groups, and school plays, as appropriate. Children from the Autism classes are also integrated for some mainstream school outings and mainstream activities such as Sports Day and Fire Drills

Reverse integration:

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

- Children with Additional Needs being integrated for core curriculum subjects such as Maths and English do so through the reverse integration route initially. This involves withdrawing 2-3 children from mainstream to work with the special needs child in his/her own environment. The aim of this approach is to achieve this will lead to integration into mainstream.
- Children from mainstream Junior/Middle classes engage in SPHE classes with the Special Needs children as appropriate.
- Children from the senior classes provide reverse integration by accompanying the Special Needs children on selected extra-curricular activity sessions such as Gaelic Football.
- A timetabled "Buddy System" involving the Special Classes is operational for some or all playtimes throughout the school year as appropriate.

Gaelscoil Bhréifne
Cnoc an Choiligh
An Cabhán
H12 TD54
Uimhir Rolla: 20026G
Príomhoide: Niamh Ní Cheallaigh
Leas-Phríomhoide: Éadaoin Nic Éinrí



Assessment:

Assessment of our Integration /Inclusion policy will be by observation and will be conducted by the Autism class teachers and mainstream class teachers covering these aspects of development:

- social integration
- language and communication
- play and behaviour
- Wellbeing

Assessment will be by:

- Checklist of the above skills/ needs at the beginning, end as appropriate throughout of each integration plan.
- Planning and Review meetings will be held between class teachers and autism class teachers at the start, end and as appropriate throughout each integration plan. #
- A risk assessment will be prepared before any integration plan is commenced, to monitor, review and adjust as necessary throughout any integration.
- A planning template for
 - The integration plan
 - The risk assessment
 - The checklist
- Is available in Appendix 1.

Staff Development

Opportunities for in service and staff development in relation to the implementation of a workable system of integration are provided by the NCSE and Middletown Centre of Autism. The B.O.M encourages and will facilitate any staff member wishing to apply for CPD in this area.

Chairperson of the Board of Management

School Principal