

# **Multi-Disciplinary Special Class Enrolment Policy**

## **Cong National School**

### **Background to the establishment of a Multi-Disciplinary Class in Cong N.S.**

The Multi-Disciplinary Class was established in 2018 in response to an expression of interest form received from the NCSE, Special Educational Needs Organiser. Cong N.S. have always offered a very inclusive educational environment for all children of all abilities and embraced the opportunity to provide a specialist class for children with additional needs.

A classroom was set up with one class teacher and two SNAs. An Occupational Therapy designed toileting facility was developed by the school to meet the personal care needs of the children as well.

### **Guiding Principles**

We want all children with complex needs and ASD to feel that they are a valued part of the School Community. **We do this through inclusion, which has at its core, the following principles:**

- Setting suitable learning challenges/goals. The mild and moderate curriculum is in use.
- Responding to children's diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming barriers to achieving their full potential.
- Addressing the triad of impairment.
- Providing a structured, safe and suitable environment.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for this policy is to ensure compliance with the Education Act (1998) the Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), Disability Bill (2002), and the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004).

## **Aims:**

Cong National School aims to meet the needs of its pupils in An Nead by:

- Offering a variety of consistent educational opportunities for learning
- Collaborating with a range of professionals and communicating with parents/care providers
- Planning to address the individual and specific needs of pupils with complex needs and autism including behavioural needs
- Delivering curriculum which balances social and academic need, mental health and emotional wellbeing to ensure all children have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
- To use all resources efficiently and equitably so that all children develop as learners, engage meaningfully with the curriculum and develop the skills and competencies necessary to lead an independent life.
- To enable all pupils with disabilities in the school to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible. ( Integration for learning)
- Ensuring that staff have access to CPD and support

## **Enrolment**

“A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his/her overall needs” – The Ed. For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004.

A special enrolment policy pertains to the special class. A child will be admitted to the Special Class if a space is available, and the admission criteria as outlined below are met.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child’s Special Needs in advance of enrolling in Mainstream. The B.O.M. will request a copy of the child’s medical or psychological report. No child will be refused permission solely on the grounds of S.E.N.

**As reflected in our main enrolment policy, this special class policy further outlines the following criteria:**

- Pre-school teacher questionnaire
- Teacher Observation i.e. home/preschool visit prior to enrolment

- OT and SLT activities and recommendations noted
- Reports that are current are made available to the school: eg. psychological reports
- Principal and teacher liaises with Early Intervention teams (children under 6 yrs) or school age team (children over 6)
- Class teacher liaises with the child's mainstream classroom teacher in providing integration as appropriate

## **School Support Plans**

An I.E.P. is then formulated by breaking down the existing levels of attainment of the S.E.N. child into finely graded targets. This is a collaborative process between Class Teachers (mainstream & An Nead ), S.E.N.O., parents and outside agencies.

### **The plan includes:-**

- The nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills.
- The degree and nature of the child's Special Needs.
- Phased inclusion of the SEN child into mainstream classes as appropriate
- The child's present level of performance.
- The services to be provided.
- Targets and goals on a termly basis

The management of school support plan is the responsibility of An Nead Class Teacher. The plan is reviewed throughout the year.

## **Staffing:**

An Nead is led by a classroom teacher and also benefits from support of two special needs assistants (SNA's).

At *Cong NS* we believe that pupils independence should be promoted wherever possible and, although there will be some opportunities for pupils to work 1:1 with staff throughout the day, we do not have a policy of providing continual 1:1 support for pupils.

*\*Wherever possible, Cong NS will cover staff absence from existing staff from within the school in order to promote consistency and continuity which is particularly beneficial for SEN pupils.*

## **Learning Environments:**

An organised and well planned learning environment is essential for the holistic development of pupils with complex needs and autism. All learning environments within Cong NS will therefore provide:

- A high level of visual support eg. timetables/first then
- Clear teaching areas and opportunities for interaction
- The necessary amount of structure to address the needs of pupils with autism in each class eg. TEACCH
- Opportunities to develop intended and spontaneous communication
- Low arousal environments where necessary
- Access to other environments where possible eg. Multi Sensory Room/Kitchen/mainstream classrooms for inclusion etc.

## **Inclusion:**

**The goal of inclusion is to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that values their individuality.** This school attempts to promote inclusion through:-

- Modifying activities.
- Allowing all children the opportunity to participate in targeted group work in the class
- Providing appropriate tasks and practical work.
- Establishing a "Buddy System".
- All children with Complex Needs and ASD require SNA support in order to attend their mainstream class for integration

## **Curriculum:**

The overall curriculum delivered at *Cong NS* is based on the National Curriculum which has been differentiated. In addition other ASD specific curricula eg. TEACCH Pre-School Curriculum/NCSE CAT-GLD/Stepping Stones may be used where appropriate.

The curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced taking into account the social, academic, social, emotional needs and general wellbeing of pupils. The overall curriculum delivered at *Cong NS*. includes opportunities to address the following:

### **Communication and Language/Engagement/Joint Attention**

#### **Interaction/Social Skills**

#### **Flexibility of thought**

#### **Sensory sensitivity and regulation**

#### **Anxiety**

#### **Independence**

#### **Self Care**

#### **Safety Awareness**

#### **Real life experiences outside of the school environment**

### **Planning:**

Teachers short term planning follows the school's own schemes of work which are adapted from the National Curriculum. Teachers differentiate learning opportunities for pupils with complex needs and autism in a variety of ways, all of which are detailed in their class plans.

Additionally, every pupil with autism has a pupil needs analysis which highlights areas of learning needs and strengths and School Support Plan which covers the following areas:

- 1. Communication**
- 2. Sensory Needs**
- 3. Social & Emotional Needs**
- 4. Independence**

### **Behaviour:**

At Cong NS we acknowledge that the following basic principles of good behaviour practice can reduce the incidence of such behaviour:

- Ensuring all staff have an awareness of the strengths and difficulties associated with autism and co-occurring conditions
- Providing a structured and consistent approach which enhances predictability
- Supporting pupils communication in order to reduce frustration
- An understanding that social interaction can place additional demands on pupils over and above academic learning intentions
- Addressing sensory needs throughout the day helps pupils to remain calm and focused
- Recording behaviours using eg. ABC/STAR charts and put in place Individual Behaviour Plans where necessary.
- Seek support from outside agencies if necessary, appropriate and available eg. Multi-D Teams/Middletown/NCSE etc.
- *Cong NS* will follow the school code of behaviour for all students in the Multi-Disciplinary class.

#### **CPD for Staff:**

Staff will have a range of CPD opportunities to enhance their understanding of complex needs and autism. Autism specific CPD is delivered through the NCSE and Middletown Centre for Autism. The NCSE will provide guidance on training along with SENO in consultation with school Principal and class teacher.

#### **Collaboration:**

***Cong NS will make an effort to collaborate with the following where available:***

- Parents and carers
- Disability Service Teams
- Autism Early Intervention
- Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs)
- Occupational Therapists (OTs)

- Physiotherapists
- Educational Psychologists (EPs)
- NCSE
- Middletown Centre for Autism

### **Other Information:**

- The school is wheelchair friendly.
- The school has a Safety Statement and an Administration of Medicines policy.
- Each Special Needs child has access to a shared S.N.A.
- The school promotes a positive school environment through S.P.H.E.

### **Out of School Trips**

School trips are a regular feature of Special Needs Provision. Permission forms in relation to the proposed trips and for seeking medical assistance in the event of an accident are sought from parents. A number of contactable mobile phone numbers are held by staff. S.N.A.'s are issued with clear instructions as to their duties for the day.

From time to time assistance from parents may be requested to support trips/outings/swimming.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson of BOM**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal**

**Review**

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.