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**SCOIL NAOMH IOSAF (SNI)**

**Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow**

**Roll No: 20039P**



**Additional Educational Needs Policy**

**Introduction**

Scoil Naomh Iósaf is a modern primary school in the heritage and market town of Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow, with an enrolment of approximately 400 boys and girls. The administrative principal is Dr. Máiréad Hennessy and there are thirty teachers and 10 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) on staff. Seven of the teaching staff work on the Special Educational Needs Team. Since September 2023, Scoil Naomh Iosaf has two EAL teachers to cater for pupils with English as additional language needs (EAL needs) . Since April 2022 we have had 20 pupils from Ukraine join our school alongside 30 pupils from other countries including Malaysia, South Africa, Syria and India. Scoil Naomh Iosaf also has 2.5 Special Classes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with two purpose built ASD classrooms, a life-skills area, a sensory room, additional toilets and shower area as well as a purpose built playground. The third ASD class opened on a half class basis in September 2023 and caters for three pupils.

Scoil Naomh Iosaf aims to foster the development of each child’s unique talents and abilities and aims to support each child in achieving the highest quality education possible. The school nurtures the physical, social, spiritual and emotional development of each child, their ability to communicate effectively with others and their sense of wellbeing and mental health. We aim to encourage each child to reach their potential and to experience a sense of positive well-being and achievement by catering for each child’s individual need through a full and diverse curriculum. Through coherent and practical planning for the inclusion of children with special education needs (SEN), Scoil Naomh Iósaf aims to nurture and sustain a safe, happy and caring learning environment. Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, the school collaborates with parents and guardians to ensure the best possible outcomes for each child.

**Consultation**

This policy was formulated in consultation with the teaching staff of Scoil Naomh Iósaf, parents of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the Board of Management (BOM), Special Needs Assistants (SNA’s), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO).

**Legal Framework**

This policy outlines the provision of education for pupils with special educational needs in line with the needs of the pupils, Guidelines from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and NEPS, and relevant legislation/circulars from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as mentioned below. The policy will be updated as appropriate, in the light of any newly published DES circulars and/or guidelines.

* The Education Act (1998)
* The Education Welfare Act (2000)
* The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004
* Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. (NCSE) [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)
* Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (NCSE) [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)
* Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) published by NEPS.
* Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support. Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack
* Supporting Students with Special Education Needs in Mainstream Schools (DES 2017)
* New Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model (Sept 2017)
* NCSE Guidelines for Schools 2018/2019
* Education for People with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN 2004)
* Exemption from the study of Irish Circular 0054/2022
* Circular 0075/2022: Commencement of the Education (Provision in respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act 2022 and Commencement of remaining sections of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018:

Scoil Naomh Iósaf Special Educational Needs Policy takes particular note of Section 2 of the Education for People with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN 2004) which states that:

*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 is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:*

*(a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or*

*(b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.*

**Definition:**

Section 1 of *The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004),* defines the term “special educational needs” as a restriction in the capacity of a 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”. This is the definition of special educational needs that is the foundation for this policy.

**Aims of the Policy**

The principal aim of Special Education Needs (SEN) Support in Scoil Naomh Iósaf is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social, emotional and behavioural development of students with special educational needs as defined above and to enable each child to realise his/her individual potential.

Special Educational Needs provision in Scoil Naomh Iósaf also seeks to:

* Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
* Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
* Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
* Involve parents in the support of their child’s education.
* Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
* Enhance the self-esteem of the learner.
* Include the most recent ‘best practice’ in SEN.
* Reflect recommendations from the National Educational Psychological Service and the National Council for Special Education, including the Continuum of Support and the development of individualised Personal Pupil Profiles/Plans.
* Outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with SEN.
* Assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
* Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
* Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
* Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and

community.

* Ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum.
* Ensure that pupils from the ASD classes are integrated into mainstream classes whenever possible taking the best needs of the child and the mainstream class into consideration.
* Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance and encouragement to enable them to achieve to their full potential.
* Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
* To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN. (Learning Support Guidelines)
* Create positive partnerships with parents to facilitate a home-school partnership in the best interests of the child.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

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| **The BOM** | * The Board of Management (BOM) will oversee the development, implementation and review of the Special Educational Needs policy and provide adequate resources and accommodation for the SET team
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| **The Principal** | * Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policy on SEN in co-operation with the BOM, teachers, parents and children.
* Develop inclusive whole school policies and monitor their implementation.
* Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
* Encourage the SEN team to work/plan together and with class teachers as appropriate to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
* Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
* Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupil’s needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
* Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with SEN and ensure that all school staff (mainstream class teachers, SEN teachers and SNAs) are clear with regard to their roles and responsibilities in this area.
* Report annually to the BOM
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| **The Parents** | * Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher, provide relevant information, reports etc
* Collaborate with the class teacher and SET team to provide input into the child’s Student Support File
* Foster positive attitudes and expectations about school and learning in the child, such as good attendance, consistent supervision of homework, punctuality and attendance at parental information meetings etc
* Create a home environment where literacy and numeracy can thrive through help with homework, visit to the library etc
* Value and reinforce homework done in Kids Aloud Homework Club.
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| **The Child** | * Involvement in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes, reflecting their interests, as stated in the Student’s Checklist within the Student Support File.
* Take responsibility for their own learning to their level of capacity, through engaging fully and positively with their learning programmes.
* Work to the best of their ability.
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| **The Role of the SEN Co-ordinator** | * Co-ordinate and devise a school SEN plan in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
* Create and maintain a school register of students with SEN.
* Communicate the needs of students to teachers.
* Assist in the identification of students with SEN.
* Ensure that student support files/IEPs are in place and updated for students with SEN.
* Advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments in relation to individual students.
* Oversee the SEN school timetable and ensure the correct allocation of resources.
* Liaise with outside professionals.
* Ensure that procedures exist for SEN pupils as they transition to second level.
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| **Role of the SEN Team** | * Support individual pupils with specific needs in collaboration with the class teacher, parents and SNAs, using a wide range of teaching approaches.
* Cater for particular learning styles and meet a variety of needs through using a combination of team teaching, co-operative teaching, early intervention, small group withdrawal and/or individual support.
* Administer a variety of diagnostic tests and use formal and informal assessment to identify individual needs.
* Collect and analyse relevant data to develop, implement and review a Student Support File based on the child’s needs.
* Construct a timetable to provide the most suitable support for children with SEN.
* Organise and deliver early intervention programmes such as Power Hour and Literacy Lift Off.
* Encourage teachers to engage in Guided Reading to sustain and improve literacy development across middle and senior classes.
* Organise the resources required for Buddy Reading/Buddy Maths as required.
* Provide support for children with behavioural and emotional needs, including, implementation of the Friends for Life Programme in mainstream classes.
* Contribute to meetings with parents and external agencies in order to optimise the learning outcomes of the child.
* As the child’s advocate, seek external professional advice to inform the child’s care plan.
* Administer the
* Beginning of the year initial screening of junior/senior infant pupils in literacy/numeracy.
* Administer UFLI phonics screener to first and second class, 2Peas phonics assessment to senior infants in September.
* SWST (single word spelling test to all classes 1st – 6th ) third week September
* Phoneme sounds/names assessment to Senior infants September.
* Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) in February.
* MIST review in May.
* Sigma T and New Micra T to all classes 1st to 6th May/June
* NRIT to 2nd and 4th classes during first term.
* Further diagnostic testing (WRAT 5, DSJ, Aston Index, BIAP as needed during the year.
* At the end of each year, check that all standardised testing throughout the school is fully administered and recorded to inform targets for the next phase of intervention.
* Store and securely maintain school records under the GDPR guidelines 2018
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| **SNA** | * Refer to Scoil Naomh Iósaf’s policy on the Role of the SNA for details.
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**The Revised Model for Allocating Special Education Teaching Supports**

Circular 0013/2017 published by the Department of Education and Skills outlines the provisions for the allocation of special education teaching supports. According to the circular “the Special Education Teaching allocation will provide a single unified allocation for special educational support teaching needs to each school, based on that school’s educational profile. This allocation is being made to allow schools to provide additional teaching support for all pupils who require such support in their schools. Schools will deploy resources based on each pupil’s individual learning needs”. A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all pupils, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

**Implementation of the Revised Allocation Model**

The following principles are used by Scoil Naomh Iósaf to guide the implementation of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports. They form a whole school approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs in our school.

**Principles to Guide the Implementation Process**

* Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs are based on identified needs and are informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines from NEPS.
* The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
* Special education teaching supports provided to schools are 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 have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible these pupils are supported by teachers with relevant expertise.
* Schools with more than one support teacher should establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs

**Clustering Arrangements with Local Schools.**

Clustering arrangements have remained the same for the past two years (2021- 2023) with four special educational needs teachers from Scoil Naomh Iósaf working with the following local schools:

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| **School** | **Roll Number** | **Address** | **No. of Hours** |
| Scoil Naomh Iósaf | 20039P | Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow | 20.5 |
| Green Road | 18615N | Carlow | 10 |
| Knockananna N.S. | 18470N | Knockananna, Co. Wicklow | 5 |
| Stratford Lodge N.S.  | 19339U | Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow | 7.5 |
| Scoil Fiontáin Naofa | 18609S | Rathmore, Tullow, Co Carlow | 15 |
|  |  | Total | 145.5 |

## Inclusion Initiatives and Strategies in Scoil Naomh Iósaf

* Across the whole school community, teachers strive to match instruction with pupils’ ability level and needs while additional resources and time are provided to accommodate these needs.
* The SPHE programme is taught in each class and aspects relating to friendship, bullying, respect for inclusion, disability and difference are covered.
* Themed weeks/fortnights are organised throughout the year to cover aspects of the SPHE Programme. These include, Friendship/anti-bullying week/fortnight, Healthy Eating Week, Road/Water Safety etc.
* The staff are very conscious of promoting wellbeing and mental health and a suite of activities are implemented in the school. These include Zippy’s Friends , Fun Friends, FRIENDS for Life, The Mindful Heart Programme and the Weaving Wellbeing programme (second to sixth classes).
* Relationships and Sexuality and the Stay Safe Programmes are implemented.
* Pupils for whom English is an additional language, are provided with additional English tuition and a buddy system for improved social interaction as required.
* Prior to the enrolment of all new pupils, an information letter is provided to the parents and a link to the school website in which key policies and procedures are outlined.
* An annual open evening is held and parents and children are invited to attend to familiarise themselves with the school environment and the work of the school and pupils. Parents are requested to provide the school with any information relating to their child’s particular needs on the enrolment form in order to ensure that the services the child may be entitled to are in place as early as possible in the school year and to ensure that the class teacher is aware of the child’s needs.
* Through regular formal and informal parent teacher meetings, information relating to each child’s progress in relayed and regular feedback from the parents in relation to their child’s needs is sought.
* Contact is made each year with the Learning Support Teacher of the local Post Primary School, Scoil Chonglais, to provide background information and pass on any relevant documentation on the needs of the pupils from our school including, the Educational Passport.
* For pupils transitioning from our ASD classes to a similar unit in secondary school the school organises up to date assessments through NEPS to assist in their transition.
* The school has access to a psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) in relation to any concerns they may have about the progress of individual pupils.
* The school liases with the Educational Welfare Office in relation to attendance and or school refusal in order to resolve the issue.
* All pupils are encouraged to participate in curricular/extra-curricular activities to the best of their ability and are facilitated in this with assistance from the teachers and special needs assistants as necessary. Current activities include, swimming, Music Generation, GAA training, School choir, chess, dance and drama, credit union quiz participation, trips to the local library/park/forest, Gaelic football and hurling teams, art competitions, cross country athletics, basketball, and outdoor activities training in the Outdoor Education Centre. All children are facilitated in participating in these activities to promote their holistic development.
* The SEN team provide individual and/or small group intervention and support to pupils in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, social and emotional development and behaviour. They also provide early intervention support to those children who experience difficulties settling and progressing in Junior and Senior Infants.
* In-class maths support is provided from second to sixth classes.
* Literacy Lift Off is implemented in first and second classes each year and Power Hour is implemented in senior infants in the third term each year when personnel are available. (See Literacy Lift Off Policy). Children are assessed and grouped at their instructional level for Literacy Lift Off using the PM Benchmarking kit.
* Buddy Reading is facilitated between junior and senior classes.
* Guided Reading is implemented in third to sixth classes. The class teacher may have the assistance of a special education teacher(s) as resources permit.
* The Aistear Curriculum is used in the infant classrooms to promote language and social development through play.
* ASD pupils are timetabled for daily integration into their age equivalent mainstream class in maths, literacy, art, PE ect. According to their capacity to benefit from the experience.
* Pupils in mainstream who are in need of emotional regulation are facilitated with a supervised break in the sensory room to allow them to self regulate.
* Pupils who are particularly overwhelmed by the main play areas for mainstream at breaktimes are allowed to play under supervision in the enclosed purpose built playground.
* The needs of the exceptionally able children are catered for under the guidance of the class teacher.
* SNA?

**The Continuum of Support**

Scoil Naomh Iósaf uses the continuum of support recommended by the Department of Education and Skills and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to assist in identifying and responding to pupil needs. The continuum of support is used to identify and cater for the special educational needs of individual pupils in proportion to the impact of those needs on their learning and socialisation. The process moves from simple classroom-based interventions to more specialised and individualised interventions. The continuum of support is comprised of three distinct school-based processes which are outlined below:



**Level 1: Whole School/Classroom Support for All**

Classroom support coordinated by the class teacher in the classroom to meet the needs of all. pupils

**Level 2: School Support for Some:**

Identification, targeted prevention and early intervention for pupils with additional needs.

**Level 3: Support for a Few:**

Individualised, targeted intervention for children with more complex and enduring needs.

The starting point for the Classroom Support process is when a teacher, parent or other professional expresses a concern about a pupil in school. Any indications that a pupil may have additional or special educational needs should be explored and addressed. Concerns may relate to learning and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties which may affect the pupil’s ability to progress at the same rate as his/her peers. Difficulties may be identified by the class teacher through observation, classroom screening and/or assessment procedures. Sometimes a parent may approach the class teacher with concerns about their child’s progress. The guidelines from the National Educational Psychological Service recommend that the following questions be considered prior to initiating the Classroom Support process:

* Do the pupil’s skills and behaviour fall within the range considered typical for his/her age group?
* To what extent do any gaps in skills and behaviour affect the pupil’s learning and socialisation?
* How is the pupil responding to simple interventions (adjustments to teaching style, differentiation) already in place?

**Continuum of Support Level 1: Classroom Support for All**

Classroom Support is an intervention process coordinated by the class teacher and carried out within the regular classroom. The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. The assessment of the pupil’s additional or special educational needs will include the strengths and particular talents which the pupil may have. The classroom support plan is informed by a number of the following assessment and data gathering sources to identify the needs, as appropriate:

* Parental consultation
* Information gathered from the child’s enrolment form
* Information gathered from previous school reports (new pupils).
* Teacher observation records
* Teacher designed assessments
* The basic needs checklist
* Pupil attendance - recorded on Aladdin and monitored by the class teacher.
* Learning environment checklist
* Pupil consultation - My thoughts about school checklist
* Progress on the milestones and progression steps for Oral Language, Reading and Writing in the Primary Language Curriculum. All teachers from junior infants to second use the progression steps to assess their pupils and plan the next steps in the learning. This will help to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the class teacher and will facilitate collaborative planning with the SEN team.
* Literacy and numeracy tests, including the standardised test results: Micra T, Sigma T, Single Word Spelling Test (SWST) and the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
* Intelligence testing use the New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
* Exceptionally able children with a Sten of 10 in Literacy or Numeracy
* Consultation with and advice from the SEN team

**Meeting the Needs at Level 1:**

Following an assessment of the pupil’s needs, the teacher will contact the pupil’s parents – can be formal or informal. A simple plan will be drawn up which outlines the pupil’s additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil s needs. The plan may also include home based actions to be taken by the pupil’s parents to support their child’s development.

**Monitoring and Review at Level 1**

A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review. Should this intervention plan fail to adequately meet the needs of the child, then advice and support will be sought from the SEN team. Implementation of the school’s prevention and intervention programmes such as Literacy Lift Off, Power Hour and Aistear provides opportunities for the teacher to both assess progress and extend the learning of each child within the context of classroom support. Class teachers will regularly communicate with parents in relation to a child’s progress or failure to progress and will also communicate regularly with the SEN team.

**Continuum of Support Level 2: School Support**

During the review of a pupil’s Classroom Support Plan the decision may be made by the class teacher, principal and parents to initiate the School Support process. This decision is taken when interventions which are additional to, or different from, those provided within a Classroom Support Plan, are considered necessary to enable the pupil to learn more effectively. School Support is an assessment and intervention process which is usually co-ordinated by the special educational needs teacher working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support. At this level a School Support Plan is devised.

**Identifying the Needs at Level 2**

At Level 2, the needs are identified and informed by aforementioned sources (re. Classroom Support) in addition to:

• Parent and pupil interviews

• Checklists that pertain to the area of need the child is presenting with

• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy

* Checklist/observations of learning styles and multiple intelligences.
* Observation of the pupil’s behaviour in the classroom and in informal settings such as the school yard.

• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC (Antecedent; Behaviour; Consequence) charts, frequency charts etc.

• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

* Proficiency in using English for EAL pupils
* Current information from parents on the pupil’s health and development including any medical assessments.
* Information on the pupil’s learning and behaviour in school and at home.
* With parental consent, information and advice from other agencies such as Health and Social services, Voluntary agencies, Education Welfare Board, etc.

The SEN teachers will complete various checklists with individual children to assist in informing the School Support File. A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. The School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

**Meeting the Needs at Level 2**

Special education teachers in Scoil Naomh Iósaf use a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention, small group and individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level with additional teaching delivered through in-class support and/ or withdrawal support models.

Class Teachers will meet the support teacher assigned to their class group at the start of each academic year to discuss pupil progress and programmes of work, and to ensure the transfer of common practices (e.g. pencil grip) between the special education classroom and the mainstream classroom. (A Croke Park hour is assigned annually). Informal conversations will continue during the course of the year.

In consultation with the class teacher, the special educational needs teacher will review each child’s standardised test results in English and Maths and provide in class support in maths with occasional withdrawal of pupils for extra reinforcement. Diagnostic testing will be undertaken by the SEN teachers as appropriate. They will then record the findings and inform parents.

**Monitoring and Reporting on Progress at Level 2**

SEN teachers use on-going assessment records and on-going observation to monitor progress. The review process will involve a review meeting between the teachers and parents and focus on the progress the pupil has made towards the targets set out in his/her Support plan. The outcome of the review process may be that the pupil continues to have a Support plan. If the pupil’s progress towards the targets is considered satisfactory, additional targets are set as appropriate, and a new review date may be agreed. If the pupil’s progress is less than expected, revised targets and adjustments to the strategies being implemented may be agreed and a revised Support plan drawn up. A date for further review will be agreed. If progress remains satisfactory following the review, it may be decided to continue with the plan in order to maintain the progress made with an agreed date to review the need for continuation. In the event that a pupil’s progress with the School Support plan continues to be satisfactory and the pupil is achieving his/her targets, intervention for the pupil will revert to the classroom level with a classroom support plan. If a further review of a School Support Plan indicates that the pupil’s difficulties continue to create a significant barrier to their learning and/or socialisation, then the pupil’s needs will be considered at School Support Plus level.

**Continuum of Support Level 3: School Support Plus**

School Support Plus is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement of relevant external services in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at the previous levels.

**Identifying the Needs at Level 3**

This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, and reports from parents and outside professionals using a problem solving approach. Data generated from this process is then used to plan a more appropriate intervention through devising a more detailed and individualised support plan. The support plan will be based on the aforementioned sources of information and data gathering, in addition to reports from external professionals and the results of assessments of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation. It is also likely that external professionals, including the NEPS psychologist, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists etc. may be involved on an ongoing basis.

**Level 3: Meeting the Needs**

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions are based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary and these will inform the work of SEN teachers.

**Level 3: Monitor and Record Progress**

Outcomes of interventions for specific pupils are routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes are also used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

**Commencing the Continuum at Stage 3: School Support Plus**

While most pupils’ initial needs should be met through classroom-based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant, or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school and have a clinical/psychological/speech and language report prior to commencing school. However, it may also apply for some pupils, following an event in their lives which impacts significantly on them in school.

**Standardised Testing**

The school conducts standardised testing in English and Maths each year in the Summer Term. The school uses the New Micra-T and Sigma-T from first to sixth classes. In general, the class teachers administer and correct these tests. Class results sheets are kept by the individual class teachers and stored by the SEN co-ordinator. Individual record pages which detail the annual results achieved, are maintained and up-dated each year for ease of access and confidentiality when speaking to parents. Each child’s Class Based sTen score is communicated to parents at the end of the school year in the end of school year report. The Single Word Spelling test (SWST) is administered each year from first to 6th class at the beginning of the school year.

Standardised tests will be analysed on three levels –

1. whole school, class and individual pupil level. The overall trends across the school will serve to plot progress from year to year and will also inform the school self-evaluation process.
2. At class level, the results will be used to inform each class teacher of the strengths and areas of need in their class. The results will also enable the teacher to plan a differentiated curriculum and ensure that the ability levels of all pupils are catered for. Each teacher will take cognisance of high achieving pupils who may need challenge and enrichment activities to enhance their learning. The class level results will also highlight those children who may need access to support and intervention from the special educational needs team. Children at or below the 12th percentile in English and/or Maths on the Micra-T, Drumcondra or Sigma-T Standardised screening tests are selected for additional support.
3. The standardised tests are also analysed at individual pupil level and in particular for pupils scoring below the 20th percentile. Careful analysis of all the test information gathered both formal and informally may highlight a pupil whose profile indicates that they need further assessment. The results of the standardised tests are also used to inform the caseload for SEN provision during the school year.

**Exemption from Irish**

A child will only be considered for an exemption where his/her educational circumstances come within the provisions of [circular](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/pc12_96.pdf) 0054/2022. The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Iósaf is required to observe the following prescribed procedures in relation to granting pupil exemptions from Irish:

 Procedure for processing application for Irish Exemption

(as per Circular 0054/2022)

1. The parent approaches the school (class teacher, SET or principal) to apply for an exemption from Irish for their child.
2. If the child is attending a special class in the school there is an automatic exemption and there is no need to apply.
3. If the child is in the mainstream check that the child meets the criteria for an exemption. (pg 3 of circular). They must present with a Standardised Score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10 percentile. They must have reached at least 2nd class. The child may have to have a test administered if they have no up to date report. The school has chosen the WRAT5 to administer to these children.
4. Give the parent a copy of Appendix 2 Application for Exemption of study from Irish. (The parent ticks whichever category they are applying under.)
5. This must be returned signed.
6. The SNI generic letter (typed up and personalized to the child) re exemption is given to the parents . A copy stored and a hard copy sent to the parent.
7. A copy of the Circular 0054/2022 is attached to the letter for the parents information.
8. The parents send back the ‘acknowledgement of receipt section’ at the bottom of the letter and this is filed away.
9. Ensure the individual checklist for processing applications has started and is maintained during all these steps. (note2.2.2 checklist is one we most commonly use for pupils who must have reached 2nd class)
10. If all the criteria are met an exemption from Irish is granted by the Principal.
11. The Certificate of Exemption is sent home for them to sign and this is returned to the school. The parents then receive a copy of this certificate.

In the folder of Irish exemptions an individual plastic pocket is used for each child please store: Appendix 2 An application for the Exemption of Irish, signed acknowledgement receipt of the letter, a copy of the certificate of the exemption signed by the parents and the principal.

**Whole School Approach to Record Keeping**

* Each individual child`s End of Year School Report is stored in a school file and kept in a filing cabinet in the storage room. When the child reaches the end of 6th class or leaves Scoil Naomh Iosaf, his/her School Report Booklet is removed and stored securely in a cabinet in a storage room in the school.
* Individual pupil Special Educational Needs files are stored and locked in the Learning Support room in a secure cabinet. These files contain results obtained from standardised testing, diagnostic testing, Psycho-Educational Assessments, Speech and Language Reports, Occupational Therapists Reports, medical reports and communication with and from outside agencies. When the child reaches the end of 6th class or leaves Scoil Naomh Iosaf, this file is stored in a secure locked cabinet.
* At the beginning of each year the standardised test results are examined to identify the children at or below the 20th percentile in both English and Maths for monitoring and/or supplementary teaching. The names of the children in receipt of supplementary teaching and their results are recorded.
* An individual Standardised Test Results page is kept in a class folder for the duration of the child`s time in Scoil Naomh Iosaf as outlined previously. (Stored in blue folders in the staff room).
* The rights of the child to confidentiality are observed and information and access to these reports is confined to the teachers who have responsibility for the child.
* A register of additional needs pupils is completed and updated yearly.

**Prevention Strategies/Programmes**

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils our school has the following prevention strategies/programmes in place:

* Whole school agreed approaches to the teaching of English, Maths, spelling, early phonics instruction and handwriting to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. These agreed approaches are outlined in the School Curriculum Plans and planning grids discussed by teachers at the beginning of each school year. (c.f. Spellings/Phonics class programmes)
* Oral language programmes are used throughout the school - e.g. Starlight, The Aistear programmes.
* The Reading schemes used throughout the school: junior to sixth classes use Starlight.
* A planned and structured homework sheet is used from Monday to Thursday in the infant classes detailing homework to reinforce work done in the class.
* Guided Reading groups and associated written and oral activities are used in third to sixth classes.
* A senior infants home shared reading scheme is promoted within the school in Term 3. Twice a week children take home books for the parents to read to their child. Each week these books are used for oral language development and to promote reading for pleasure. A similar take home reading scheme is used in Term 3 in junior infants.
* Upon request from parents children in the school with a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty are provided with a selection of books to read at home during the school holidays.
* A page of tips and ideas for parents on how to help their children with reading and/or maths is distributed to parents during the Parent Teacher meetings and a page of ideas to foster literacy and numeracy at home during the Summer holidays is sent home with the end of year school report.
* An additional teaching resource is deployed in junior classes to strengthen and promote the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills using teaching approaches such as Aistear, station teaching and withdrawal/in class support for EAL pupils.
* The Literacy Lift Off Programme is implemented each year in first classes from October with the support of class teachers and special educational needs staff. (Refer to the Literacy Lift Off/Power Hour Policy). Literacy Lift off operates in second class in Term 2.
* Power Hour is implemented in Senior Infants using a station teaching approach in the Summer term each year.
* Aistear is used in the infant classrooms to promote development of language and social skills
* Structured observation and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is ongoing in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
* The use of the Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP), The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) and the review section of the MIST test later in the year for those children in Senior Infants initially identified as being at risk, combined with check lists from the class Reading Scheme help to provide information on the progress of the children in the infant classes.
* Collaboration and consultation between the Infant teachers and the Learning Support teachers.
* A structured phonics programmes is used in the junior and senior infant classrooms as an introduction to letter names, letter formation and letter sound correspondence. – the Jolly Phonics programme Beginners Level. This is supplemented by other class-based resources.
* In line with our spelling policy, a “Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check” spelling homework sheet is used from first to sixth classes. 1st to 6th classes are using an SNI Approach to spelling which involves a pre test on Mondays to decide which spellings to assign to individual pupils for the week along with challenge words (where appropriate ) and a form of paired testing or dictation on Fridays
* Basic sight vocabulary lists are selected by the staff for use at class level and revised and reinforced during supplementary teaching. These include, social sight vocabulary, Maths vocabulary, Dolch lists, subject/topic specific vocabulary for History, Geography etc (c.f. sheets in Learning Support Policy folder)
* Timetabled self regulation breaks are organised for children with physical and sensory needs and for those who find it hard to concentrate in class for long periods of time.
* The school uses a unified approach to teaching the comprehension strategies and writing genres. A yearly timetable is used to ensure all strategies and strands are covered. See Literacy Development Grid in Appendix.
* Eligible pupils are registered for the TTRS typing skills programme which can be completed in class or at home. Participation is tracked online.

**Additional School Based Preventative Measures to help ensure Continuity in Phonics and Spelling Across all Classes**

All classes have a phonics and spelling programme to follow. In addition to the formalised spelling lists, teachers will focus on spelling lists associated with particular themes, topics/subjects being covered in class or social vocabulary. A specific spelling list may also be generated as a pre-curser to writing so that children have vocabulary and spellings to hand to assist them in their writing. It is recommended that an alternative spelling list (separate to the spelling programme) would be generated once a month for both Irish and English. In this manner pupils develop a range of vocabulary and spelling in context. These alternative vocabulary sheets should be part of the teachers planning folder. Differentiated spelling lists may be necessary for individual children.

Spelling and Phonics will be explicitly taught, and teachers will engage the school strategies for teaching and reinforcing spelling and vocabulary.

**Junior Infants:**

* Jolly Phonics
* Individual sounds. No formal spellings.
* CVC regular blends
* Term 2/3 Tricky words : 2 per week.

**Senior Infants:**

* Jolly Phonics: Tricky words. List and sentence at end.
* Sight words from Starlight Reading Programme.

**1st Class**

* UFLi systematic phonics programme
* Dolch Lists 1-11
* My word book (to assist with writing and spelling).
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix)
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**2nd Class:**

* UFLi systematic phonics programme Scoil Naomh Iósaf:
* My word book (to assist with writing and spelling).
* Individualised spelling lists as necessary/required.
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**3rd Class**

* Phonics as per English Class reader, Starlight
* Spellings Made Easy Level 1 (All of Book)
* Individualised spelling lists as necessary/required.
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**4th Class:**

* Spellings Made Easy Level 2 pp 6-38
* Phonics based on Starlight English reader.
* Individualised spelling lists as necessary/required.
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**5th Class:**

* Spellings made easy Level 2: Start at p. 32 (Magic e) and continue to end of book.
* Spellings Made Easy Level 3: first quarter of book.
* Phonics as per class English Reader, Starlight
* Individualised spelling lists as necessary/required.
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**6th Class:**

* Spellings Made Easy Level 3: Full Book.
* Phonics as per class English Reader, Starlight
* Individualised spelling lists as necessary/required.
* Literacy Development Grid for SNI (See Appendix
* Follow up spelling lists from analysis of SWST common errors.

**School Handwriting Scheme: (c.f. Learning Support Policy folder)**

* Print style of handwriting (junior infants-first classes)
* Cursive style (lower case only) introduced in second classes and reinforced in third classes.
* Cursive style (upper and lower case) introduced in fourth classes and continued in fifth and sixth classes.
* Use of SNI cursive style handwriting book throughout the school.

**Maths (c.f. Learning Support Policy folder)**

Mathematical procedures are standardised throughout the school (see attached page for details)

**Early Intervention**

Early intervention is a vital component of the special educational needs provision in Scoil Naomh Iósaf. Following the identification of pupils with particular needs and close collaboration with the class teachers involved, early intervention programmes can be provided and supported by the S.E.N team. The following are in place for infants to second classes:

* Literacy Lift Off – first class.
* Friends for Life - first and second classes.
* Buddy Reading - senior infants to second classes.
* Power Hour - Senior Infants
* Weaving Wellbeing Programme – starts in second class.
* Aistear - junior and senior infants
* Zippy’s Friends (Junior and senior infants on a rolling two year basis).

**In- Class Support Arrangements for SEN provision within Scoil Naomh Iósaf**

* The special educational needs teacher will go into the classroom and support the child`s learning with the class Maths programme. The support teacher/class teacher may provide mini lessons, engage in parallel teaching or work with children at their group.
* The learning support teacher will go into the classroom to promote the child’s learning in literacy to include working with writing groups and guided reading groups.
* The SEN team will implement station teaching programmes in literacy as required.

**Withdrawal**

Following assessment and consideration of the best educational programme for pupils to progress with their learning, pupils may be withdrawn from the mainstream class individually or in small groups to follow an appropriate and sequenced programme of support.

A combination of in-class support and individual/group withdrawal are currently used in Scoil Naomh Iósaf.

**English as an Additional Language (E.A.L)**

The school acknowledges the right of children to communicate and socialise in the language of their home while simultaneously endeavouring to provide an inclusive school environment for all children. Since April 2022 we have had 20 pupils from Ukraine join our school alongside 30 pupils from other countries including Malaysia, South Africa, Syria and India. All of thes children speak a language other than English at home. Fluency in another language is a great benefit for children learning a second or even a third language. However, fluency in oral English/Gaeilge, reading and writing may initially be diminished for children for whom English is an additional language, particularly in the infant classes.

Last year in September 2022 children from Ukraine and from Direct Provision were provided with additional support to aid their transition into the country, to help them with their emotional needs and to assist them to learn English. They were grouped and timetabled into a junior and senior group (Hub in the Hall) with two teachers assigned to deliver a programme of basic communication skills, development of friendships and assist with integration into our school system. This year Children in need of extra support in English Language skills are withdrawn for approximately thirty minutes daily for a language based intervention – Hub in the Hall phase 2. This programme also follows a number of themes including Myself, food, clothes, family, my environment etc. Planning is based on these themes. The work completed with each child will be individually recorded and stored. Additionally those pupils who have progressed on from Hub in the Hall but who still need language support are withdrawn by an EAL or SEN teacher for literacy and language support.

In line with the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC) the staff at Scoil Naomh Iosaf acknowledge the transfer of skills that occurs across languages. Children transfer skills and concepts from their first to their second and third language. Where the teacher sees an opportunity for transfer of skills, particularly where children are proficient across the three strands of oral language, reading and writing, he/she will encourage pupils to use their own language as a scaffold. They will also be asked to share phrases in their own language that to link with phrases taught in English and as Gaeilge. Pupils may also be asked to write in a particular genre in their first language so that links between the second, and indeed third language can be mad.

**Supporting Transitions**

The staff of Scoil Naomh Iosaf are very conscious of continuity of educational provision as children move from one class/school to another. Accordingly, a number of strategies are in place:

* **Information on Pupils transferring from the local preschools is provided to the school through the ‘Mo Sceal’ documents.** This information is checked and informs the class teacher of any particular needs prior to the arrival of the child.
* **Staff Meeting at the beginning of the school year**: meeting between the new class teacher and the previous class teacher is scheduled as part of the agenda to ensure transfer of essential information in relation to each child’s learning. If the previous class teacher is not available, the Principal or Deputy Principal will meet the new class teacher.
* **Deputy Principal (SEN Coordinator) Meetings with Class Teachers:** The Deputy Principal meets with all class teachers to discuss their caseload and to ensure that each class teacher has access to the information they need to support each child’s individual needs (e.g. recommendations from Psychological reports/Occupational Therapist reports, standardised test results and previous support given by the SEN Team)
* **Review of School Support Plans:** The SEN Team assist class teachers in reviewing the School Support Plans (in consultation with parents and the pupils as appropriate) and in identifying targets for the coming year. This is generally done at the end of September/early October when the teachers have ascertained the child’s strengths, needs and interests.
* **Educational Passport:** The educational passport at the end of sixth class is used to present a holistic overview of each child’s learning and development based on information from the pupil, the parents, the class teacher and SEN teachers.
* **Links Programme:** Pupils who are supported by the SEN team have the opportunity to visit the local secondary school, Scoil Chonglais with their SEN teacher and the SEN coordinator from Scoil Chonglais. This gives them an opportunity to talk about their subject choices, their aspirations for their second level education and any concerns they may have
* **West Wicklow Transition Programme:** West Wicklow Transition Programme provides support for pupils with special educational needs for specified pupils from May in the year the child is transferring to secondary school. The school is asked to identify pupils with special educational needs who would benefit from sustained support as they transition to secondary school. The Principal then rings the parents to explain the Programme and to discuss this with their child. The Principal also requests that they fill in a consent form and information sheet. If the parents agree to their child’s participation in the Programme the class teachers also complete a form detailing the child’s strengths, needs and interests. The pupils are then supported through regular group sessions, each Friday from the May preceding their entry to second level and throughout their first year of second level. A summer camp for the pupils is also organised in the first week of July.
* **Transfer to another Primary School:** if a pupil transfers to another Primary School, SNI will transfer school reports, on request to the parents or the school, once the child is formally enrolled in the new school. The class teacher/principal will, on request, discuss the child’s educational and other development as appropriate and in line with SNI Data Protection (GDPR) policy.

**Caseload Sizing**

As per the Department of Education and Skills Learning Support Guidelines each special educational need teacher has a caseload of up to a maximum of thirty pupils during the school year.

#### Parental Involvement in SEN

* Parental permission is requested prior to the Learning Support teacher undertaking individual diagnostic testing with any child.
* A letter informing parents of the extra support and help available to their child is sent to parents prior to the commencement of supplementary teaching.
* A letter informing parents of the school’s decision to continue/discontinue supplementary teaching following testing and consultation with the class teacher is also sent to parents.
* An invitation is issued to parents to call and discuss any concerns they may have about their children`s progress with the Learning Support teacher.
* Informal meetings are necessary on occasion, to advise on procedures necessary in relation to applications for additional recommended resources for a child.
* A questionnaire/parental information sheet is sent to parents prior to the writing of Individual Education Plans/Student Support Files, to help establish the child’s learning targets from the parents’ perspective and to indicate the child’s strengths and learning needs.
* A target for parents to encourage their involvement in their child’s learning will be included in School Support Plans. The purpose of this target is to ensure that school and home are working together in the best interests of the child and that parents have a meaningful role in their child’s literacy development.
* Annual Parent/Teacher meetings are held in November and Learning Support teachers are timetabled to meet parents to discuss their child`s progress

**Learning Support Planning**

**Short Term**

* A fortnightly template designed by the SEN team is used for English and Maths planning. (Please see attached sample)
* A Student Support File/IEP is also used on Aladdin.
* An E.A.L Short Term planning page is used following consultation with the class teacher.
* Each SEN teacher is given a detailed timetable at the start of the year outlining the groups /classes they will be assisting , the names of the children and teachers involved and whether it is withdrawal or in class support.
* A colour coded wholeschool timetable for SET is compiled and displayed showing the schools SET provision for the year.

## Student Support Plans/Individual Education Plans

## Parental input will be sought when devising Individual Education Plans/Student Support Files through formal/informal meetings and written questionnaires, in which the parents can identify their priority learning targets for the child. This plan is written up in consultation with the class teacher, the Special Needs Assistant, the parents and the child if appropriate. The Support Plan will consider the recommendations of the child’s Educational Psychological report, Speech Therapist and/or Occupational Therapist reports etc. The child’s learning strengths are based on teacher, parental and Special Needs Assistant observations while the learning needs are based on the recommendations of the psychological report combined with teacher, parental and pupil input. When resources, over and above those available in the school are suggested, the SEN co-ordinator will bring this to the attention of the Principal and make applications through the NCSE. The child’s targets will be reviewed regularly and alterations to these learning targets made on the basis of progress achieved or continuing and persistent difficulties.

**Shared Learning Support Teacher Arrangements**

When Scoil Naomh Iósaf is sharing a SEN teacher with outside schools, the teacher will be available to attend staff meetings in the base school and in the shared schools if requested. The shared SEN teacher will ensure that the time spent travelling between schools is kept to the minimum possible. The shared SEN teacher will attend parent-teacher meetings as per each individual school’s policy. Each shared SEN teacher is required to return to Scoil Naomh Iósaf every Friday afternoon for planning meetings and for organising Literacy Lift Off, Stations for Maths/Literacy and for meetings with class teachers as necessary.

## Resources

The resources available to the Learning Support teachers are stored and categorised in the main Learning Support Room and are accessible by all the school staff members. A borrowing system exists in which the name of the book borrowed, the date borrowed and the name of the teacher borrowing the items is entered. New resources are sourced and purchased with the support of the Principal as required. The interactive white board is utilised as an additional support for intervention and teaching.

**Co-ordination of Special Needs Assistants**

In Scoil Naomh Iosaf,SpecialNeeds Assistants (SNAs) are recruited specifically to provide assistance of a non-teaching nature to children with disabilities in an educational context. When such needs are validated by an Educational Psychologist and a recommendation that a pupil requires an SNA is made, a formal request for this service is referred to our Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for approval. Following an appointment procedure, the duties of the SNA are assigned by the Principal in accordance with Circular 0030/2014: *The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme to support teachers in meeting the care needs of some children with special educational needs, arising from a disability*. The general employment duties of SNAs are supervised by the principal while their day-to-day allocation of duties is arranged in consultation with the class teacher and the SEN team. Each SNA is supplied with a timetable outlining the names of the pupils to be supported , the nature of the special need involved and the time allocated to each pupil. SNAs are requested to familiarise themselves with the childs report and any recommendations made by outside professionals. Further details are available in Scoil Naomh Iósaf SNA policy.

**Liaison with External Professionals and Agencies**

Regular contact is sought and maintained with our Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) in relation to resource allocations, Special Needs Assistant allocations, applications for new equipment as suggested by the Occupational Therapist and advice on pupil needs and appropriate interventions. The school has access to the services of The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to provide advice, to review the outcomes for children and to complete Educational Psychological Assessments as appropriate within the school. Following the completion of psychological assessments in the school, the educational psychologist meets with the parents of the child and subsequently the SEN and class teacher to discuss the findings of the assessment. Correspondence between Enable Ireland, the school and the S.E.N.O. regarding the requirements of any child with assessed physical needs is initiated and continues while the children remain in the school. Occasionally CAMHS/AON seeks to contact the school in relation to children referred to them with emotional/behavioural difficulties. This can involve observing the difficulties the child is experiencing in his/her school environment or providing a written report on the child.

**Implementation and Review**

The plan will be implemented by SEN team in collaboration with class teachers and SNAs. Implementation of this updated Special Educational Needs Policy (which supersedes all previous policies) will commence September 2023.

The policy will be reviewed in September 2024 or earlier in light of new Department of Education Circulars/Guidance.

This policy was presented to the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Iósaf for ratification on……………………... The Policy was further updated in light of Department guidance on special educational needs and Circular 0052/2019 Exemptions from the Study of Irish and ratified by the Board of Management in October 2019.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson) **Date**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) **Date**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_