

SET Policy 2026

1. Introduction

St. Peter's National School is committed to providing a fully inclusive education where all children, including those with special educational needs (SEN), are welcomed, valued and enabled to achieve their full potential. This policy outlines our approach to the identification, planning, provision and review of support for children with SEN and reflects our obligations under the Education Act (1998), the EPSEN Act (2004) and current Department of Education guidelines (2024).

Our approach to special education teaching is inclusive, child-centred and needs-based. The policy supports staff practice and promotes consistency across the school.

Our aim is to ensure that all children:

- Experience belonging and active participation in school life
- Are supported to engage meaningfully in their learning
- Receive timely, appropriate and targeted support where needed

2. Our Inclusive Approach

Our school is committed to an inclusive education system where:

- Diversity is respected and valued
- Children with special educational needs are supported, to the greatest extent possible, within mainstream classrooms
- Inclusion is the responsibility of the whole-school community

Effective special education teaching takes place within a positive school culture that promotes wellbeing, collaboration and high expectations for all learners.

3. Guiding Principles

Special education teaching in our school is guided by the following eight principles, which underpin all planning, decision-making and review



Figure 1 Principles underpinning the special education teaching model (*Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes, 2024*):

- 1. Inclusive Education**
All children are welcomed, valued and supported to learn and participate as full members of the school community.
- 2. Inclusive School Culture**
The school promotes belonging, respect and high expectations for all learners through positive relationships and shared responsibility.
- 3. Whole-School Approach**
Supporting children with special educational needs is a whole-school responsibility involving leadership, teachers, SNAs, pupils and parents.
- 4. Collaboration**
Effective support is built through purposeful collaboration between class teachers, SET teachers, SNAs, parents/guardians, pupils and, where appropriate, external professionals.
- 5. Wellbeing**
Children’s social, emotional and physical wellbeing is central to planning, teaching and support.

6. Engagement and Participation

Children are actively supported to engage in learning and school life, and their voices are considered in decisions that affect them.

7. Child-Centred and Needs-Based Support

Support is planned around each child's strengths and identified needs and is responsive to their changing circumstances.

8. Evidence-Informed Practice

Decisions about support are informed by professional observation, assessment, reflection and review to ensure effectiveness.

4. Continuum of Support

SET time is allocated using a tiered, needs-based model in accordance with Circular 0064/2024 and the 2024 SET Guidelines. Allocation is informed by the staffing schedule issued annually by the Department of Education, which is based on enrolment, educational need and disadvantage profiles.

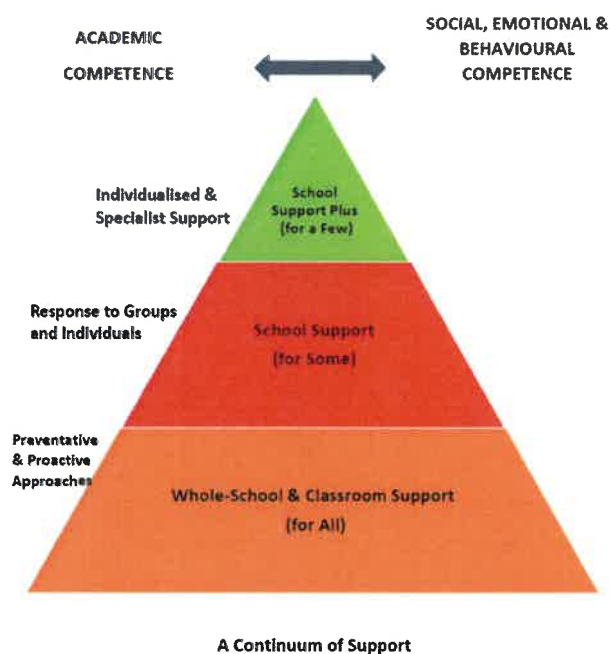


Figure 2 The Continuum of Support (Department of Education)

Provision is organised across the Continuum of Support:

- **Classroom Support:** High-quality, differentiated teaching for all pupils
- **School Support:** Small-group or individual interventions for pupils requiring additional support
- **School Support Plus:** Individualised, evidence-based interventions, often involving collaboration with external agencies

Prioritisation Framework

SET resources are allocated in the following order of priority:

- Pupils with the greatest level of need, including those with significant learning difficulties or very low STen scores or social, emotional and behavioural challenges
- Pupils who have not made adequate progress despite high-quality classroom interventions
- Pupils with emerging needs or temporary setbacks, where capacity allows and as evidenced through assessment and professional judgement

Principles Governing Deployment

- Allocation decisions are based on documented evidence in each pupil's Student Support File (SSF)
- Allocation of support is flexible and responsive and is reviewed regularly and formally at least once per year in light of pupil progress and changing needs

SET resources will not be used for:

- General class size reduction
- Pupils performing at average levels, unless exceptional circumstances are clearly identified and evidenced
- Extension or enrichment for gifted or high-ability pupils, which are addressed through differentiated classroom practice

5. The Problem-Solving Process (DES)

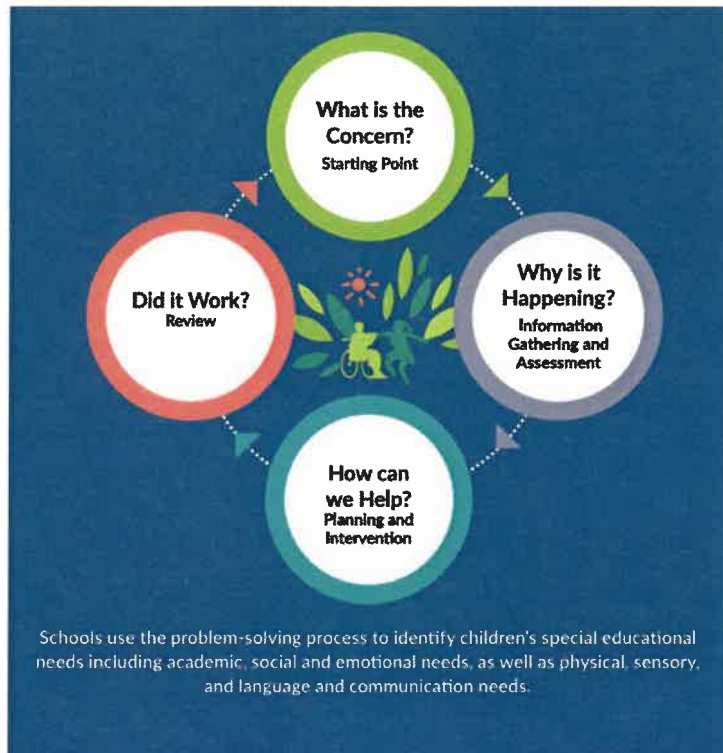


Figure 3 The Problem Solving Process (DES, 2017; 2010; 2007)

Where concerns arise, the school follows a four-step problem-solving process:

1. **Identification** – clarifying concerns and identifying strengths and needs
2. **Assessment** – gathering relevant information from multiple sources
3. **Intervention** – planning and implementing targeted supports
4. **Review** – monitoring progress and adjusting support as needed

This process is collaborative, cyclical and ongoing.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the whole-school community fulfil a range of roles and responsibilities, including the following:

Board of Management

The Board of Management:

- Holds overall responsibility for ensuring the provision of an appropriate and inclusive education for all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), in line with relevant legislation.

- Ensures that special education teaching (SET) resources are used solely for their intended purpose - to support pupils with SEN - and are not diverted to other uses.
- Oversees the development, implementation and regular review of school policies relating to the inclusion of pupils with SEN.
- Ensures that all pupils have access to a high-quality education, including high standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Makes arrangements for the development and review of the School Improvement Plan through the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process, with a focus on equity of access, participation and inclusion for pupils with SEN.
- Ensures that the school has an up-to-date policy on special educational needs, including:
 - Admission of pupils with SEN
 - Identification procedures
 - Provision of supports and interventions
- Arranges for periodic review of curriculum provision to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN.
- Promotes awareness among the school community (staff, pupils and parents) of the needs of pupils with SEN and supports a culture of inclusion.
- Ensures appropriate governance and accountability structures are in place for the effective management of all school resources, including SET allocation.
- Works in collaboration with the principal to ensure that all resources are used appropriately, in line with the Education Act (1998) and relevant Department of Education circulars.
- Ensures that the school maintains appropriate records (including Student Support Files and Student Support Plans) to document decisions regarding the allocation and use of SET resources.
- Reviews and monitors the Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers to ensure transparency and appropriate use of supports across the Continuum of Support.
- Receives an annual report from the principal confirming that SET resources have been used appropriately and in accordance with Department guidelines.
- Oversees the school's engagement in the SSE process, ensuring that provision for pupils with SEN is regularly reviewed, evaluated and improved in line with best practice.

Principal

The principal:

- Ensures the development of inclusive wholeschool policies and procedures relating to children with special educational needs, and monitors and reviews their implementation.
- Oversees a wholeschool approach to assessment and screening to identify strengths, needs and interests.
- Ensures effective engagement with early learning and care settings and with postprimary schools to support the transition of children with special educational needs.
- Deploys teachers who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to special education teaching roles.
- Ensures that systems are in place for effective collaboration between special education teachers and classroom teachers for the sharing of relevant information on children's needs, to ensure continuity of provision for the children.
- Facilitates teacher professional learning (TPL) for all teachers in relation to wholeschool inclusive teaching and learning practices, and to the education of children with special educational needs
- Encourages special education teachers to undertake the PostGraduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers that is available through a number of Higher Education Institutes.
- Ensures that all school staff, including class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs), are clearly informed of their roles and responsibilities.
- Provides opportunities for the sharing of specialist knowledge with school staff as part of promoting a wholeschool inclusive culture.
- Ensures that wholeschool procedures are established to facilitate the meaningful and effective involvement of parents/guardians, children and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensures that the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs (Appendix 1) is updated.

- Ensures that all children identified with special educational needs, who receive additional teaching support, have their needs documented in a Student Support File.
- Ensures that a Classroom/Student Support Plan is developed and contained within the Student Support File for all children identified at all levels of the Continuum of Support.

Special Education Teacher (SET)

The role of the special education teacher includes:

- Contributing to the development of an inclusive school culture, demonstrated through ethos, values and inclusive school policies and practices.
- Promoting inclusive wholeschool preventative and proactive teaching and learning approaches.
- Developing inclusive school structures and systems in the organisation of provision for children with special educational needs.
- Leading in the identification and provision of support for children with special educational needs in the school context, using the Continuum of Support problem solving process.
- Liaising closely with the principal on the development, implementation and monitoring of wholeschool approaches to the education of children with special educational needs.
- Leading, in collaboration with the class teachers, on the development of Student Support Files, including Log of Actions and Student Support Plans for children with special educational needs who are identified in the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs at the levels of School Support Some and School Support Plus Few (Appendix 1).
- Collaborating, liaising and communicating with parents/guardians, the child, other relevant teachers and staff, the school principal and relevant others, as part of the problem solving process.
- Engaging and collaborating with external agencies and services outside of the school as appropriate and necessary.
- Planning to support transitions for children with special educational needs.

- Using evidenceinformed teaching and learning approaches to support the special educational needs of children, and monitoring response to intervention.
- Sharing relevant information, regarding the special educational needs of children, with class teachers to support their meaningful engagement and participation in lessons.
- Advising and supporting class teachers when requested.
- Engaging in TPL to upskill and develop the knowledge, competencies and skills required for high quality provision of support for children with special educational needs
- Reflecting on individual professional practice, including teaching and learning approaches, to enhance provision.
- Preparing and planning on a weekly basis in order to address each child's specific needs as reflected in support plan targets.

Class Teacher

The class teacher's duties include:

- Availing of relevant TPL, to develop capacity, knowledge and understanding of special educational needs.
- Using a variety of appropriate methodologies, activities, experiences and materials to cater for children's individual needs and to create a stimulating and supportive classroom environment.
- Collaborating with the principal, other relevant teachers, parents/guardians and external professionals, as required, to support children with special educational needs to participate and engage in meaningful learning.
- Identifying children's strengths, interests, and priority learning needs, to inform the planning, implementation, assessment and regular review of intervention at each level of the Continuum of Support.
- Developing Classroom Support Plans for children with emerging needs who require additional classroom based support.
- Developing Care Plans for children with emerging needs who require additional support from SNAs in consultation with parents/guardians and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student (SNA toolkit, 2024).
- Recording all actions and keeping copies of the Log of Actions and Classroom Support Plan/s in the Student Support File.

- Supporting the development of Student Support Plans in collaboration with special education teachers, parents/guardians, children, external professionals as required, in order to plan assessments, interventions, and to track children's progress at the levels of School Support Some and School Support Plus Few.
- Ensuring that lessons are accessible through the use of a variety of approaches, including active learning, smallgroup tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction.
- Identifying and responding to the learning difficulties and learning preferences of children with special educational needs.

7. Planning and Documentation

Planning for children receiving additional support is:

- Strengths-based and needs-led
- Proportionate to the level of support required
- Focused on meaningful outcomes for pupils

Documentation supports professional practice and decision-making and is reviewed regularly as part of the problem-solving process.

Assessment

The school employs a holistic and evidence-informed assessment process, which may include:

- Standardised assessments
- Teacher observation and professional judgement
- Consultation with parents/guardians
- Pupil voice
- Diagnostic and curriculum-based assessments
- Professional reports, where applicable

Interventions are recorded in a Student Support Plan with clear targets.

The following documents are also updated and reviewed regularly:

- School Provision Plan (see Appendix 1)
- Schedule of Deployment (see Appendix 2)
- Support plan templates (see Appendix 3)

8. Models of Support

Provision may include:

- In-class support, including team teaching and station teaching
- Withdrawal for small-group or individualised instruction and support
- Social, emotional and behavioural support
- Early intervention and literacy or numeracy programmes

All supports are flexible, time-bound and regularly reviewed.

9. Review and Ongoing Development

This policy is reviewed regularly as part of the school's ongoing reflective practice. Staff feedback, pupil voice and engagement with national guidance inform continuous improvement in special education teaching provision.

Signed:

Barry O'Flynn

Date:

4/6/26

Signed:

D. Murr

Date:

4/6/26

Appendix 1

School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs

Year

Term

Classroom Support - All						
Pupil	Class	Description of special educational need(s)	Area of support e.g. literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, sensory, life-skills	Type of support In class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Date of starting at this level of the Continuum of Support	Dates support plan reviewed

School Support - Some

Pupil	Class	Description of special educational need(s)	Area of support e.g. literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, sensory, life-skills	Type of support In class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Date of starting at this level of the Continuum of Support	Dates support plan reviewed

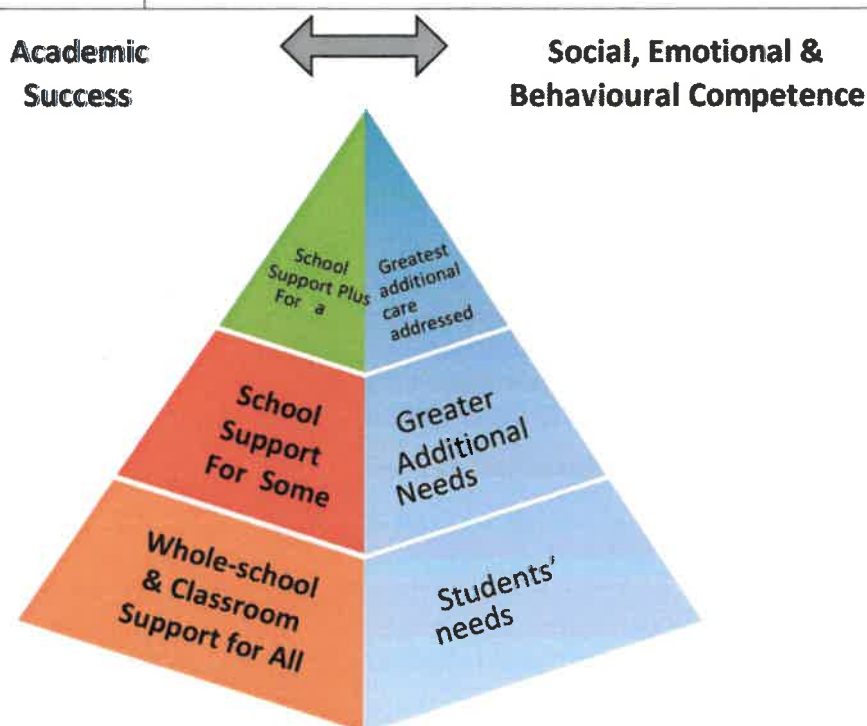
School Support Plus - Few

Pupil	Class	Description of special educational need(s)	Area of support e.g. literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, sensory, life-skills	Type of support In class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Date of starting at this level of the Continuum of Support	Dates support plan reviewed

Appendix 3: Support plan templates - Classroom Support Plan, School Support Plan, School Support Plus Plan

Student Support File – Incorporating Additional Care Support Targets

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	



A Continuum of Support

Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

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 student		
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 special Education teacher or other school staff?		
16	Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed			

SUPPORT PLAN	Classroom Support
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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 (If any)	
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 class teacher	

SUPPORT PLAN: ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where additional care needs are identified)

To be completed by the class teacher in consultation with parents/guardians and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student.

Name of Child	
Class	
Care need(s) in line with DES Circular 0030/2014	
Long-Term Care Goals	
Care Targets	
Strategies to help the student achieve the care targets	
Staff, including support staff, involved:	
Frequency of support	
Timeline for achievement of targets:	
Review date	
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Signature of principal	

Signature of teacher	
Signature of SNA(s)	

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW RECORD	Classroom Support
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Student's name:	Class/year	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review	
Outcomes: Targets met/unmet - Current needs/concerns - Recommended future actions:		
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher(s)		
Outcome of review		

	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/Support for Some/Support for few		Progress to next level of support-Support for all/Support for some/Support for a Few
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW RECORD: FOR ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where identified)

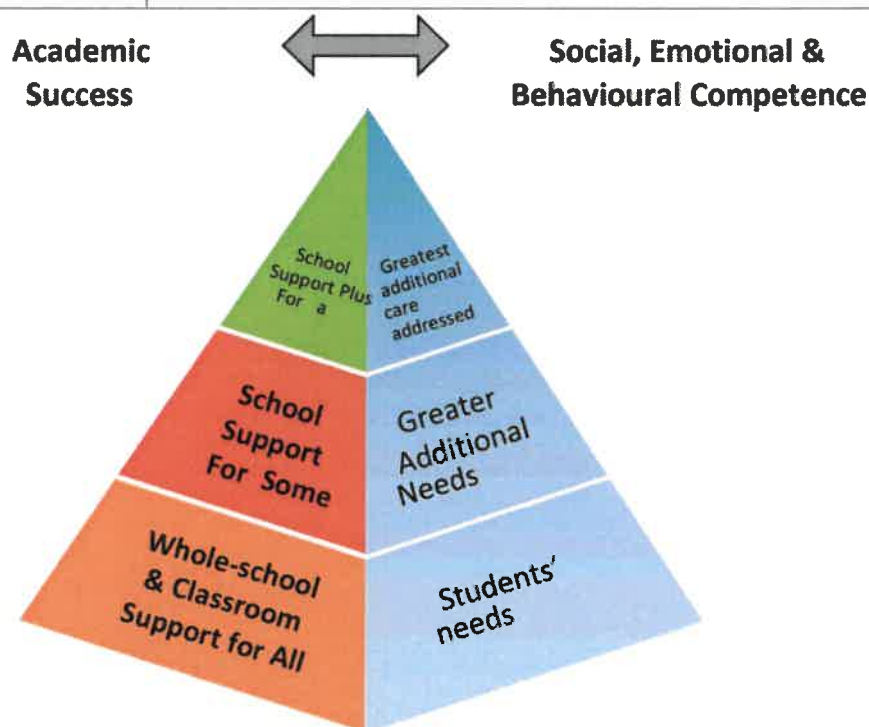
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Name of Child	
Class	
Outcomes: Targets met/unmet - Current needs/concerns - Recommended future actions:	
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Signature of principal	
Signature of teacher	
Signature of SNA(s)	
Outcome of review	

	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/Support for Some/Support for few		Progress to next level of support-Support for all/Support for some/Support for a Few
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

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12	Learning environment adapted?		
13	Yard/school environments adapted?		
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15	Advice given by special Education teacher or other school staff?		
16	Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed			

SUPPORT PLAN	School Support
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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 (If any)			

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 class teacher	
Signature of Special Education Teacher (SET)	

SUPPORT PLAN: ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where additional care needs are identified)

To be completed by the class teacher in consultation with parents/guardians and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student.

Name of Child	
Class	
Care need(s) in line with DES Circular 0030/2014	
Long-Term Care Goals	
Care Targets	
Strategies to help the student achieve the care targets	
Staff, including support staff, involved:	
Frequency of support	
Timeline for achievement of targets:	
Review date	
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Signature of principal	

Signature of teacher(s)	
Signature of SNA(s)	

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW RECORD	School Support
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Student's name:	Class/year	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
What has been least successful and why?		
What are the student's current needs?		
Recommended future actions—what, how, who, when?		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?		
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)		

Signature of class teacher	
Signature of Special Education Teacher (SET)	
Outcome of review	

	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/Support for Some/Support for few		Progress to next level of support-Support for all/Support for some/Support for a Few
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW RECORD: FOR ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where identified)

To be completed by the class teacher to inform future targets, in collaboration with parents/guardians, the student and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student.

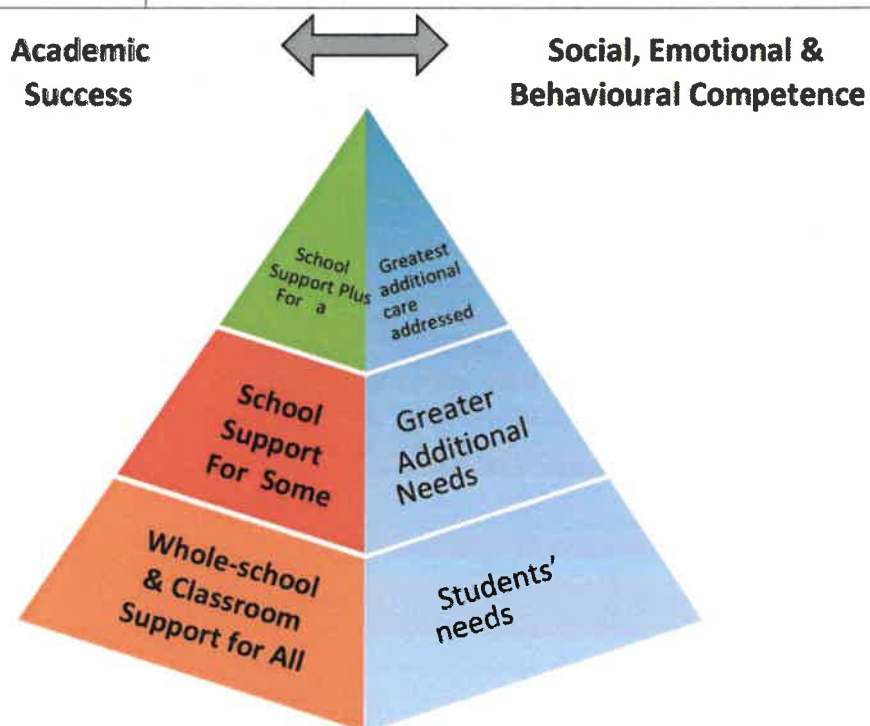
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Signature of teacher(s)	

Signature of SNA(s)	
Outcome of review	

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Action needed			



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Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns (If any)			

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 class
teacher

Signature of Special
Education Teacher
(SET)

SUPPORT PLAN: ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where additional care needs are identified)

To be completed by the class teacher in consultation with parents/guardians and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student.

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Strategies to help the student achieve the care targets	
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Frequency of support	
Timeline for achievement of targets:	
Review date	
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Signature of principal	

Signature of teacher	
Signature of SNA(s)	



Student's name:	Class/year	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review	
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What has been least successful and why?		
What are the student's current needs?		
Recommended future actions—what, how, who, when?		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?		
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)		
Signature of class teacher		

Signature of Special Education Teacher (SET)	
Outcome of review	

	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/Support for Some/Support for few		Progress to next level of support-Support for all/Support for some/Support for a Few
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

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Signature of teacher(s)	
Signature of SNA(s)	
Outcome of review	

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