
Inclusion & Integration Policy



**San Carlo Senior National School,
Leixlip, Co. Kildare**

Introduction:

Scoil San Carlo Senior National School is a co-educational, senior primary school with two autism classes for children with a diagnosis of autism. Scoil San Carlo Senior National School is a mainstream, inclusive school and all pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in the full range of activities offered on and off site. Where there are barriers to learning or participation, there is an expectation that differentiation and the appropriate targeted support will enable access. At Scoil San Carlo Senior National School we believe “*all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. Teaching such children is therefore a whole school responsibility.*”

Definitions:

Inclusion versus Integration

An *integrated* classroom is a setting where pupils with additional educational needs or special educational needs (SEN) learn alongside their neurotypical peers.

An *inclusive* classroom is a setting where the belief is that all pupils are different, learn differently, and are enabled to access the curriculum.

Inclusive Education:

Inclusive Education means that learning and teaching is adapted to meet all our pupils’ needs through environment, expectations and effort. The NCSE (2011) states inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of learners.

San Carlo Senior NS endeavours to foster an inclusive culture by:

- Establishing a positive ethos and learning environment where all pupils feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging.
- Placing emphasis on pupils’ participation in their learning, and in school life.
- Developing all pupils’ skills – social, emotional, academic, and independence.
- Having high aspirations for all our pupils.

Rationale:

This policy is formulated so that

1. Teaching staff have clear guidelines on the core values for inclusive education such as:
 - Valuing pupil diversity
 - Supporting all pupils
 - Collaborating with others
 - Ongoing professional development to respond to changing needs
2. Maximising learning experiences for all pupils
3. Consistent approach on a whole school level
4. Address parent expectations

San Carlo Senior NS aims to include all pupils in line with their abilities at every opportunity.

Currently, our special classes operate on a 6:1 pupil teacher ratio. There are also 2 special needs assistants (SNAs) allocated to each of these classes. Additional SNA support is considered on the basis of individually assessed needs of the pupils attached to the class.

When parents enrol their child in our school, they are made aware that San Carlo Senior NS is an inclusive school and learning opportunities are available to all pupils.

Staff Roles:*School Principal supported by the SENCO:*

- Direct responsibility for coordinating an effective whole school approach to inclusion and integration.
- Responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resourcing.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustments following consultation.
- Working with parents and out of school agencies.
- Ensure SNA support is provided for pupils when required.
- Seek advice from NEPS and the SENCO with regard to suitable pupil placement.

Special Class Teachers:

- Identify the appropriate curriculum and learning opportunities their pupils should experience.
- Ensure SNA support is provided for integration opportunities.
- Collaborate with colleagues in setting realistic and appropriate targets.
- Responsible for ongoing Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Student Support Plan (SSP) in consultation with parents, support services and collaborating colleagues.

Mainstream Class Teachers:

- Differentiate the curriculum content, learning process, and learning materials that are flexible and responsive to the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure seating arrangements are suitable and inclusive for all pupils in their class.
- Collaborate with colleagues to support integration where possible.
- The Special Education Team become involved when integration occurs and the pupil enters the Continuum of Support (COS).

Special Needs Assistants:

- Provide care support to pupils with additional needs, including assistance with personal care, mobility, feeding, and toileting, in line with individual care plans.
- Support pupils to access the school environment safely and participate in school activities, including classroom tasks, yard time, and school outings.
- Assist in the implementation of agreed care supports and help maintain a structured and supportive environment as directed by the class teacher.
- Support pupils in managing behaviour where it is linked to care needs, promoting safety and inclusion for all.
- Prepare and organise materials or equipment as required to facilitate pupil participation in learning activities.
- Work under the direction of the class teacher and school leadership, contributing to the overall care and inclusion of pupils, while not undertaking teaching, planning, or assessment roles.
- Observe and share relevant information with teachers and the wider team to support planning and review processes.
- Promote pupil dignity, independence, and social inclusion throughout the school day.

Implementation:

Scoil San Carlo Senior National School promotes integration with age-appropriate peers on a social level, where learning opportunities can be achieved.

For inclusion and integration to be effective it must;

- Allow for peer interaction and social skills development.
- Enhance learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Afford time for colleague collaboration.

This process should be specific and tailored to individual pupils. Examples of how integration can begin are as follows:

- a) *Identify Classroom* – when pupil is on movement/regulation breaks around the school, pass by their associated classroom and identify classroom number, door colour etc.
- b) *Classroom Visit* – allow the pupil the opportunity to visit their associated classroom when it is empty to have a look, see their seating area, and become familiar with the environment.
- c) *Visual Supports* – support the pupil by presenting them with a photograph of their associated class teacher, as well as a photograph of their associated classroom – these can also be included as part of the pupil's visual timetable.
- d) *Greetings* – explicit teaching of how to greet associated staff and pupils based on pupil's method of communication.
- e) *Tasks* – pupil may be asked to bring a message/note to associated class as a means of becoming more familiar with the environment and to develop confidence, comfort levels, and independence over time.

This process is open to constant review and adjustment based on changing circumstances and/or emerging pupil needs. Due to this, the beginning stage of integration will be on a social level only.

For pupils to effectively integrate, the following is a guide that supports a staged approach:

Stage 1:

- Enter the class calmly and without trepidation or distress.
- Sit at an assigned location.
- Interact socially with other pupils – those closest to them.
- Sharing snack and lunch times with the class.
- Engaging in a ‘buddy’ system during recreation times.
- *Responding to, and following simple, direct teacher instructions.*

Stage 2:

Collaboration/Planning with colleagues initially for non-academic lessons such as yard time, Golden Time, structured games etc.

Skills supported through this are:

- Listening
- Following instructions
- Turn-taking
- Social cues from peers
- Developing friendships
- *Play*

Stage 3:

Over time, the expectation is that integration will increase to include lessons such as Music, Drama, Visual Arts, PE, SPHE, and the use of Digital Technologies.

As academic abilities are identified, other academic areas/lessons can be included for integration.

Skills supported through this are:

- Focus and engagement
- Participation during class lessons/activities
- Communication
- Independence

SNA support will be provided throughout this process. As the pupil progresses through school, the aim is that this level of adult support will reduce.

Pupil Awareness:

Inclusion and integration is for all pupils in our school. Before a pupil from a special class integrates into a mainstream class, the teacher should do the following:

- Engage in an open discussion about inclusion.
- Present the information in a child-friendly, age-appropriate manner.
- Explain what integration looks like in their classroom.
- Conduct regular lessons relating to individual differences and tolerance.

Resources and information are available from autism.ie or the AsIAm website.

Reverse Integration:

Alternatively, pupils from a mainstream class can also integrate into a special class to support social skills development and positive peer interaction. This scenario may be optimal for a pupil who needs more time in a quieter, familiar environment to begin the integration process.

Steps to follow for this process are:

- a) Lessons and activities prepared in advance.
- b) Use of social stories will support communication and expectations.
- c) Peers chosen for integration are made aware of the process beforehand.
- d) Rotate pupils chosen to expand social circle and to develop relationships.
- e) Start with simple activities for short periods and develop over time.
- f) Collaborate with colleagues throughout this process, review and adjust accordingly.

Timeline:

September:	Pupils identified for integration should begin the process by completing Steps (a – e) outlined in the implementation section above during this month.
October:	Once reviewed and if the pupil is ready, Stage 1 outlined in the implementation section above should begin. Reverse Integration may also be the preferred option at this stage.
November:	Stage 1 should continue – a pupil may experience a setback after a school holiday such as Mid-Term Break and require additional ‘settling-in’ time. By mid-month, review pupil’s progress with relevant colleagues and arrange plan for further integration opportunities.
December:	Stage 2 as outlined in the implementation section above, may begin at this stage of the term if deemed the pupil is ready.

The remainder of the academic year should be reviewed and integration opportunities provided accordingly.

Important Notes:

- A pupil may remain at Stage 1 for longer than expected.
- Stage 1 for a pupil may remain at reverse integration for a prolonged period.
- A pupil may progress to Stage 2 but for only 1 lesson or for 1 particular subject area – this may depend on specific areas of interest.
- Professional judgement must be used throughout the integration process.
- If a pupil becomes used to periods of integration as part of their daily schedule, provision/advanced notice should be made for:
 - a. Changes to the usual routine
 - b. EPV days
 - c. Staff absences
 - d. Meetings/staff training

Target Setting:

Integration goals should align to set targets in a pupil's School Support Plan. Open communication and collaboration between colleagues allows for this.

Targets set for each pupil are designed to be achievable and measurable with a specified time period.

Best practice indicates that **targets** should be:

- Strengths based.
- Few in number.
- Guided by priority learning needs.
- Linked to suitable supports and resources.
- Evidence based.

Monitoring:

The Inclusion and Integration Record – Continuum Document (see attached) is a comprehensive and structured way to support a pupil effectively. This document provides teachers with a useful tool to support and record the process from the outset.

It will allow for:

- Planning
- Target setting
- Identifying learning opportunities
- Recording progress
- Regular review

This process includes measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social interactions, and overall pupil well-being.

Promoting Autism Awareness:

Scoil San Carlo Senior NS will raise awareness and understanding of autism through various activities and initiatives such as:

- Autism Awareness Month, World Autism Day, Explicit Lessons on Autism for all pupils.
- Fundraising to support our autism classes and/or an autism charity.
- Autism Awareness Posters – designed and on display around the school environment.
- Reverse Integration activities where pupils in the mainstream setting have the opportunity to visit the special classes and see the facilities available.

Review:

Our policy will be reviewed bi-annually and from time to time in light of experiences and circumstances that influence change within the school context.

Ratification:

This policy has been formally adopted for use in the school by the Board of Management at its meeting on and formally comes in to operation on 15th June 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Tony Boland

BOM Chairperson

Cian Forde

School Principal

Date: _____