A Continuum of Support for

Post-Primary Schools

Guidelines for Teachers

FOREWORD

In September 2007, NEPS circulated Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack to all primary schools. The Guidelines and Resource Pack were designed to assist teachers in mainstream primary schools to identify needs and to develop and evaluate interventions to meet those needs. These guidelines have been warmly received and teachers report that they are useful to them in supporting children with special educational needs.

We recognise the significant differences between primary and post primary schools in the organisation of teaching and resources. We have, therefore, developed these Post-Primary Guidelines and Resource Pack to address the unique needs of post primary schools. In doing so, we have tried to focus on supporting teachers to address learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs as they present on a continuum from mild to severe and from transient to enduring.

The Guidelines are intended to complement the Inclusion of Students with Special Educational needs, Post Primary Guidelines, (DES, 2007) and to be used in conjunction with the Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (NCSE 2006) and Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB, 2008).

I am grateful to all who contributed to their development through offering constructive feedback, including teachers, the Inspectorate in the Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Council for Special Education, the Special Education Support Service, the Irish Vocational Education Association, the Teachers' Union of Ireland, and staff from the colleges of education.

I particularly wish to thank those within NEPS who worked on the development of these guidelines and support materials. I am confident that they will be of practical use to teachers in addressing the needs of young people in our post primary schools.

Maureen Costello
Director

CHAPTER 1

An Introduction to the Continuum at Post-Primary

1.1 Overview of the Continuum

The focus of the guidelines is on how post-primary schools may include all students in processes of learning and development. The continuum of support encompasses a graduated solution orientated framework of assessment and intervention in schools, comprised of three distinct school based processes which are summarised below:

Support for ALL is a process of prevention, effective mainstream teaching and early identification. These systems are available to **all** students and effectively meet the needs of most students.

School Support (for Some) is an assessment and intervention process which is directed to **some** students, or groups of students who require some additional input.

School Support Plus (for a Few) is generally characterised by more intensive and individualised supports. This level of intervention is for students with complex and/or enduring needs and relatively **few** students will need this level of support.

The advice and templates provided here build on good practice already in evidence throughout the country. Teachers may use them, or adapt them for use, in ways that suit their current context.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is committed to developing best practice in relation to meeting the needs of all children with special educational needs and to supporting school communities. Your feedback and suggestions for further developments are welcome.

1.1.2 The Continuum

The model of assessment and intervention outlined here is underpinned by a recognition that special educational needs occur along a **continuum,** from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Therefore, our response to the needs of students is also offered along a continuum, from whole school and preventative approaches to individualised and specialist approaches.

School Support Plus
(for a Few)
Individual

School Support
(for Some)
Individual and / or Group
Approaches

Support for ALL
Whole School Approaches/ Classroom/
Subject Support
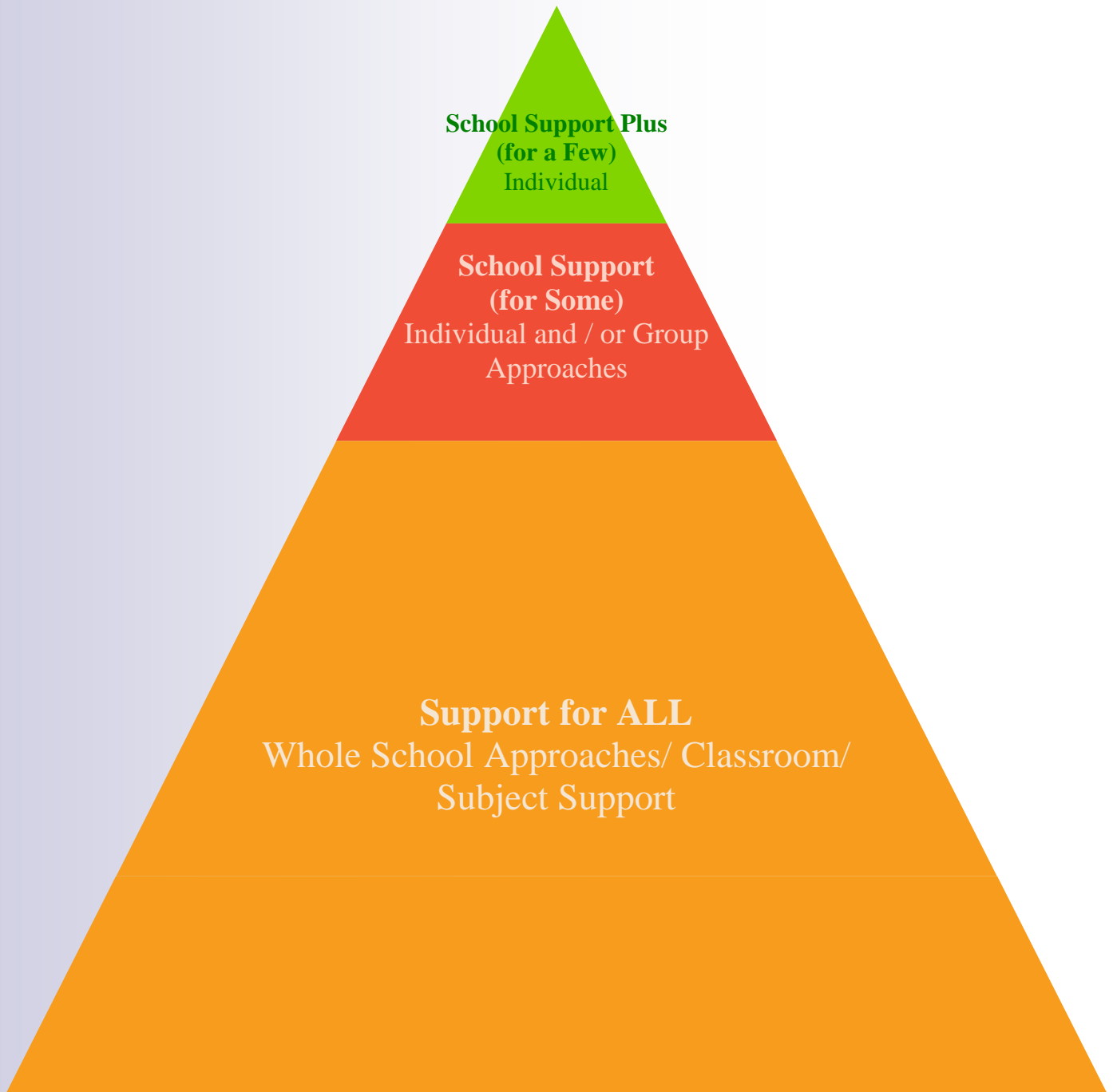
1.1.3 Supporting documentation

This document builds on good practice already established in Irish primary schools and supported by:

- The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning (Department of Education and Science (DES) Special Education Circular 02/05)
- The Special Educational Needs, Continuum of Support (primary) NEPS, 2007

It should be noted that the NEPS Primary Continuum of Support focused on learning difficulties, with a further document following to support social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, this post-primary document integrates both aspects of development.

These guidelines should be considered alongside other publications:
- Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs, Post-Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007)
- Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2006)
- NEPS Model of Service and the staged approach to assessment and intervention
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB, 2008)

This continuum of support encompasses all students, including those with special educational needs. Students whose needs may fall within the remit of the EPSEN Act (Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs, 2005) are included in the continuum. The procedures outlined here are compatible with the expectations of EPSEN.

Additionally, this Continuum document is supported by a substantial **Continuum Resource Pack**, which includes templates and guidance. Throughout the text there are references to materials available in the resource pack.

1.1.4 The context of post-primary schools

It is recognised here that the post-primary context is different to that of primary schools. In particular, there are challenges and opportunities in an environment where individual teachers may interact with 250 plus students per week and students may be taught by 9-11 teachers per week. Post-primary schools tend to be larger and more complex both in their physical structure and in their organisation than primary schools. This complex environment presents particular challenges for both students and teachers.

1.2 Rationale and Key Principles

The Continuum of Support at post-primary is based on the following principles:
- Effective learning for all
- A preventative, early intervention approach
- A consultative and collaborative solution orientated framework
- A focus on systemic factors- instructional and environmental
- Timely and effective interventions for those with additional needs

1.2.1 Response to intervention model and evidence-based practice

At the whole school level, Support for ALL, schools will want to adopt an approach that gives all students the best chance of success. For this reason, the Response to Intervention Model is promoted here. The essential components of Response to Intervention are:
- Providing evidence-based instruction and interventions in general education
- Monitoring and measuring student progress in response to the instruction and interventions
- Using these measures of student progress to shape instruction and make educational decisions

This approach emphasises the need to offer all students high quality, evidence-based instruction and behavioural support, within the context of mainstream classes.

A crucial element is that the school also offers school-wide screening of attainments, aptitudes and behaviour, to identify those which may need monitoring or intervention. The idea is that, rather than wait to see which students may fail, the school intervenes quickly and at the least intrusive level to respond to needs.

There are then further levels of support offered, again using evidence-based interventions. At each level, the student's progress is measured using objective measures to evaluate the student's response to the intervention. The model also promotes the active engagement of parents in the process as well as a collaborative approach taken by school staff.

It is intended that this model of support will encompass a wide range of student needs, including those with special educational needs, ethnic minority and minority language students, students of Traveller heritage, those experiencing educational disadvantage and exceptionally able students.

The approach has 3 key elements
- School- wide screening
- Monitoring of student progress
- Evidence based interventions

1.3 Summary Description of the Continuum

A summary of the continuum of support is set out below. The different types of support will be described more fully in following chapters, with practical examples of the system in use in schools.

Support for ALL Students

Intervention at the whole-school level is intended to be proactive. It is focused on the main student body, and this phase of intervention should effectively meet the needs of about 80-90% of the school population. It aims to support and promote positive student behaviour and learning for all.

An integral part of this level of support is effective whole-school screening for learning and behavioural needs, so that there is early identification of 'at risk' students.

School Support (for Some Students)

Intervention at this level is for those students, typically around 10-20% of the school population, who do not respond to the whole-school strategies sufficiently and who need more support. A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which may be short-term, while others may be longer term. These may include:

- A process of consultation and planned intervention
- Group and/ or individual plans and interventions
- Subject goals
- Accommodations to support learning and social interaction

School Support Plus (for a Few Students)

These students, typically about 2-5% of the school population, have significant difficulties and may require intensive, individualised interventions. Interventions at this stage are likely to include

- Individual Educational Plans (including behavioural plans)
- Involvement of additional professional input, such as from psychologists/ speech and language therapists etc.
- Specialist interventions

1.4 What Level of Support?

This section describes how schools can decide whether to place an individual student at School Support or School Support Plus. Support for ALL will, of course, be available to all students, and should effectively meet the needs of most students. It is intended that the Continuum is perceived as reasonably fluid, so that schools can apply it sensitively within their own particular context.

In this document we make a distinction between **known and documented needs** and **emerging needs**.

For most students with significant special educational needs in post-primary schools, their difficulties have been identified during primary schooling and are well documented. For a smaller group of students, needs may emerge in post-primary, perhaps arising out of an acquired injury, the more complex school environment, changes in home circumstances or perhaps needs may emerge as new students from abroad join the school community.

Collaboration between primary and post-primary schools is also important in helping to identify those who might be at risk during transition, so that monitoring can be put in place for students who may have emerging needs.

1.4.1 Known and documented needs

In terms of known and documented needs, the following structure can be helpful in determining what level of support is likely to be needed:

Information on entry to Post-Primary school

In considering which level of support a student is likely to need **on entry to post-primary school,** the following factors need to be considered:

- **Did this student receive support at primary level, and if so, what level of support was offered?**

Broadly speaking, schools may wish to continue support at the level at which it had been offered in primary school, unless there is evidence to suggest that this is now inappropriate.

Sometimes a student who had been receiving School Support or learning support at primary school, may revert to Support for ALL in post-primary school, perhaps because of significant progress made. Equally, a student who had School Support or learning support in primary school, may need School Support Plus in post-primary school, perhaps due to the more complex structure of post-primary education.

Post-primary schools will be assisted in this process by considering the Post-Primary Transfer Review **(see Chapter 3 and the Resource Pack, p24).**

- **How did this student perform in school screening tests?**

Many post-primary schools use standardised tests of ability and achievement to help identify students who may have difficulties with learning. This information may inform decisions about the appropriate type of support for a student joining the school. See Chapter 2.

- **Have parents or other agencies alerted the school to possible difficulties?**

Sometimes, parents or other agencies (such as the Health Service Executive (HSE) social work department or Visiting Teacher services) will have alerted the school to anticipated difficulties. This information will help determine whether a student is likely to need support, and what type of support should be offered.

1.4.2 Emerging needs

Students who have needs that emerge during their post-primary education, would typically have their needs met through the Continuum, by first receiving Support for ALL. The process of identifying needs, gathering information and planning and reviewing interventions, will help identify students with higher levels of need who will need additional support. In turn, the processes inherent in School Support, will identify those needing School Support Plus. Therefore students with emerging needs might typically work their way through the levels of support, as needed. Of course, many students will be able to have their needs met at School Support and will not need the level of support needed at School Support Plus, while others might need School Support for a period of time and then revert to Support for ALL.

However, sometimes a student will be 'fast-tracked' because needs emerge quickly and require intensive levels of support. For example, a student who receives serious injuries in a car accident may need to move directly to School Support or School Support Plus. Equally a student who develops severe social, emotional, and or behavioural difficulties over a short period of time, may need the intensive support offered at School Support Plus.

1.4.3 Understanding special educational needs (SEN)

Students with additional needs in post-primary schools may be understood as having special educational needs. With the growth of inclusion, students now entering mainstream post-primary schools have a wide diversity of strengths, needs and aptitudes. Teachers are encouraged to access the Special Education Support Service (SESS) resource, Signposts, a resource pack for teachers, which outlines many types of need, with suggestions about how to enhance learning and teaching for such students. It can be accessed through www.sess.ie

1.5 Role and Responsibilities

It is not intended to be prescriptive here about how schools will organise support for students. Organisation and structures may vary considerably between schools, taking account of the size of the school, the school population and the experience and expertise of staff members. Therefore, the following suggestions are for guidance and may be adapted as schools require. Further information about the roles and responsibilities of staff can be found in the DES Guidelines, Inclusion for Students with Special Educational Needs (Chapter 3).

	Subject Teachers	Specialist teachers (learning support/ resource/ language (EAL*)/ guidance counsellors/ HSCL*/ tutors/ heads of year)	School Management
Support for All	Differentiate teaching and learning activities Create positive classroom environment, including use of positive and constructive feedback Assess & monitor progress Create opportunities for success Communicate concerns to colleagues Collaborate with specialist teachers	Collection and analysis of school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records Collaboration with subject teachers	Leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion Strategic management of implementation of policies and practices Strategic support for evidence based interventions
School Support (for Some)	As above, plus Contribute to group or individual planning and review Implement agreed strategies Communicate progress and concerns to co-ordinating teacher	As above plus Diagnostic testing Liaising with parents Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff Plan, implement and review individual and/or group intervention Seek external professional advice, as needed Undertake tasks of co-ordinating teacher as needed	As above plus Assign roles and responsibilities Keep records of those receiving this level of support
School Support Plus (for a Few)	As above plus Prepare information for IEP planning meetings Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies Direct the work of SNAs* in the classroom	As above plus Plan, implement, monitor and review specialist and individualised responses Direct the work of SNAs in the school	As above plus Compliance with statutory requirements when EPSEN* is implemented.

*EAL- English as an Additional Language   *SNA - Special Needs Assistant
*HSCL – Home School Community Liaison   *EPSEN - Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

1.6 The Role of NEPS Psychologists

NEPS has set out its way of working in the NEPS Model of Service brochure. Broadly, there are two main strands to our work: casework (within a consultative process) and support and development work. One way in which psychologists support this Continuum of Support at Post-Primary is by using a process of consultation.

At Support for ALL schools may consult with NEPS psychologists about appropriate methods of identifying those at risk, or ask for support in further developing whole school policies, such as positive behaviour approaches, or give input to the whole staff about effective differentiation in class.

At School Support (support for **some** students) the psychologist may be involved in consulting with staff about individual students or groups of students, and may be involved in some direct work with the student, his/ her teachers and/or parents.

At School Support Plus (support for a **few** students) consultation might involve input into specialist interventions, and the psychologist may also be involved in individual assessment and intervention with the student.

A key task for psychologists is to help schools build their capacity to respond to student needs. We work with school communities to develop awareness, knowledge and skills. This may involve, helping schools develop their whole school policies and procedures, delivering relevant in-service, working alongside teachers to develop group-work interventions or engaging with schools in research activities. For example, NEPS psychologists may be involved in supporting teachers to develop social skills groups in their school, or helping a school evaluate the effectiveness of a new approach to reading.

Throughout this document, the role of the NEPS psychologist will be highlighted in special sections, indicated by a key symbol.

The Continuum model aims to promote academic success, social competence and emotional well-being. See the summary diagram over.
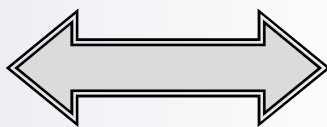
Academic Success ⟷ Social, emotional & behavioural competence

Evidence Based Approaches

Monitoring of Student Progress

FEW

Individualised & Specialist supports

SOME
Responses to groups and individuals

ALL

Preventative and proactive approaches

School-wide Screening
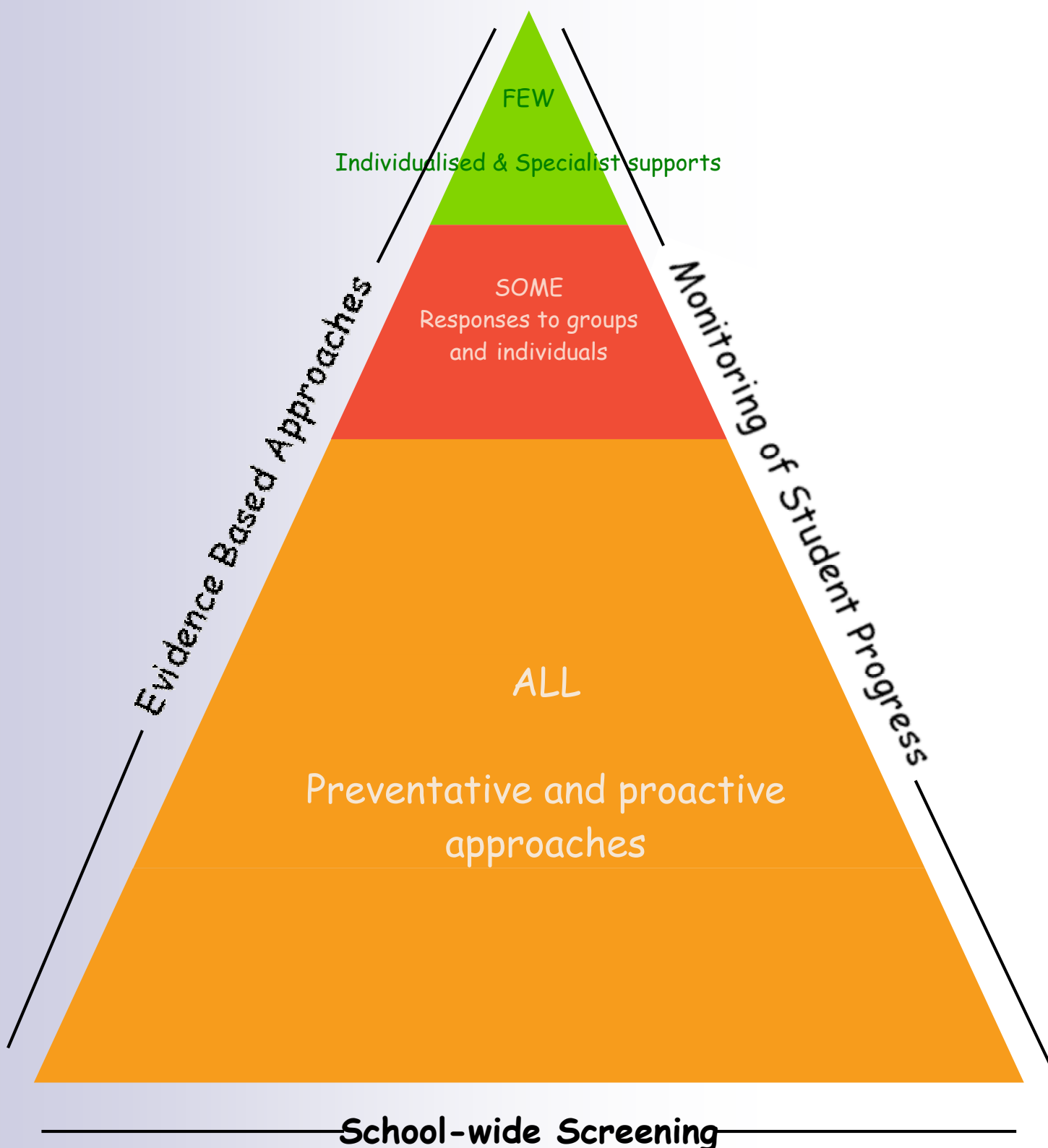
CHAPTER 2

Support for ALL

Introduction

This chapter sets out how the Support for ALL is structured. The emphasis here is on whole-school approaches to developing best practices in responding to the need of all students. There is also information on how to identify those students who may be of concern, through screening and information gathering, especially during first year intake. The solution-orientated framework is introduced as a way of responding to needs and this is supported by an illustrative case study.

2.1 Whole School Approaches

All students have needs including the need to feel a sense of belonging, the need to communicate and to be communicated with and the need to be respected and valued. Meeting such needs is central to protecting and developing student mental health. These needs are met both within the classroom and within the context of the ethos and culture of the school. It is helpful, therefore, to be mindful of how the culture, ethos and learning environment of the school demonstrates to each student that he/she is respected and valued. The most successful outcomes are likely when all staff have a shared vision and collective responsibility for delivering the Continuum of Support. Equally, students benefit from learning about their responsibilities. Students can be engaged in school processes in many ways. For example, students can be consulted about classroom rules, or have a Student Council to represent their views.

Whole school policies in relation to the identification of special needs, bullying, attendance, positive behaviour management and enrolment all contribute to having a shared, coherent and transparent approach to all students. Additionally, schools which develop policies in relation to study skills, the development of thinking and solution orientated skills and literacy skills, find that these approaches enhance learning and academic success. For example, creating an Inclusive School Policy, which can be broadly implemented, will meet the needs of many students with additional needs.

Support for ALL aims to support and promote positive student learning and behaviour. Key elements of this approach are:

- **Creating positive learning environments**
- **Best practice in teaching, with a diversity of learning opportunities**
- **Establishing and teaching clear behavioural and learning expectations for students**
- **Having a system for reinforcing and monitoring students**
- **A student support team**
- **Listening to the voice of the student**

2.1.1 Creating positive learning environments

Teachers continually make adjustments in their classroom to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for students. They vary classroom seating, activities and task instructions. They take into account classroom organisation, teaching and learning styles. Sometimes, teachers may want to reflect on aspects of the learning environment that may need to be changed in order to bring about improved learning for the student. Using a structured checklist can be a means of doing this more comprehensively and reflectively. For this reason, a Learning Environment Checklist in included in the **Resource Pack (p6)**.

Teachers also use a variety of teaching methods and give students opportunities to learn through a range of teaching strategies and learning experiences. Learning by doing, multi-sensori teaching and practical assessments are particularly valuable. Teaching in the post-primary context is a skilled and demanding role and this document draws on best practices already in use in Irish schools.

Research consistently shows that adolescents learn best in a safe environment where they are encouraged to ask questions, can learn from their mistakes and experience success.

Ways in which all post-primary teachers can develop a positive school climate and foster positive mental health
- Helping students to feel they belong, are connected, and are welcome in school
- Fostering self-determination and helping students to have a sense of ownership
- Identifying and reinforcing a student's learning styles and competencies
- Identifying/developing a student's coping strategies

(See also the detailed guidance in **Resource Pack (p22),** Guideposts to Providing a Positive School Climate for Students).

2.1.2 Best practice in teaching methods and a diversity of learning opportunities

Some examples of best practice include:
- Differentiation
- Appropriate curricula
- Teachers working as reflective practitioners
- Teachers working collaboratively within and outside of the classroom
- Co-operative learning & peer tutoring
- Curriculum-based assessment & assessment for learning

In terms of the curriculum, differentiation and the availability of appropriate curricula are of particular importance. Additionally, the way teaching is organised and the availability of co-operative teaching and of assessment for learning approaches can all have a positive impact of learning and behaviour.

Differentiation

Differentiation is about responding to individual needs in a group context. It involves matching teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles. Differentiation is an important means by which teachers can show each student that they are respected and valued. The needs of the majority of students within a mainstream class can be met by differentiating teaching approaches.

Differentiation can include:
- Assigning different tasks to different groups
- Giving more support or direction to some students
- Extending the work of more able students, with more sophisticated tasks
- Adapting questions asked to the ability level of students

Further information about differentiation is available from:
- Section I of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities www.ncca.ie/inclusion
- Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs, Post Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007), Section 3.5.1.
- Special Education Support Service (SESS), DVD to support differentiation.
- Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers. www.ncca.ie/inclusion

Appropriate curricula

The type of curricula options available to students will have an impact on how students cope in school. For example, a school which is able to offer the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) may find that many students with learning and behavioural needs, or for whom English is an additional language, have an appropriate curricula within these frameworks and do not need further supports. However, the JCSP programme was developed specifically for those at risk of early school leaving and schools should exercise caution in the processes they use to select students for this programme. Where available, programmes such as the JCSP, LCA (Leaving Certificate Applied), LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) and the Transition Year programme can offer some students varied and flexible opportunities. It is not implied here that all students with learning and/ or behavioural needs will be suited to such programmes. Clearly, what is needed is a careful match between the programmes offered and the individual needs of each student.

Organisation of teaching

There is good evidence that the streaming of class groups has a negative impact on student behaviour and learning. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) study found that students did not benefit from streaming, but became progressively more negative about school. It was also found that students in lower streams found the pace of teaching too slow and did not feel challenged enough. Mixed ability teaching and subject setting were found to have beneficial affects on behaviour and learning. (See NCCA, 2007)

Co-operative teaching (in-class support)
DES Guidelines on Inclusion (2007) note that '*The possibility of addressing the student's needs within the mainstream classroom should be fully explored before any withdrawal is decided on*' (p55). It is suggested that co-operative teaching, where two teachers or more work together with a class group may be an appropriate way of meeting the needs of a diverse range of students. Further guidance about co-operative teaching can be found in the DES Guidelines 2007 (p106-107).

Assessment for learning
This approach is associated with improvements in levels of achievement and a better attitude to learning. Teachers who adopt this approach engage students in identifying the learning intentions of each lesson and help the learner appreciate what they will learn and why. Students and teachers may discuss criteria for success and this will help students understand their progress. Assessment for learning provides feedback to the learner about his/ her progress and suggestions for improvement, using comment-only marking. For further information, see www.ncca.ie

2.1.3 Establishing and teaching clear behavioural and learning expectations
Research has shown that behavioural and learning expectations (ie policies and rules) are most effective when they are clearly defined, communicated and taught to students. When teaching these expectations the following should be considered:

- Broad expectations should be taught using concrete specific behaviour and learning examples
- Teach the words and the actions in the settings where the behaviour and learning is to occur

School and classroom rules are an example of a framework from which positive learning and behavioural expectations can be taught. Teaching classroom rules helps to build independence and personal responsibility. Below is an example of some classroom rules. Further examples and information can be found in **Resource Pack (p21)**.

Sample of classroom rules:
1. Be on time, be on task, be prepared
2. Demonstrate respect for yourself, other students and property
3. Behave appropriately at all times

2.1.4 Systems for reinforcing and monitoring students: Rewards, awards and sanctions
Reward systems work best when they include verbal, symbolic and/or tangible rewards and awards. Research recommends a ratio of four positive reinforcements for desired behaviour to every one correction for undesired

behaviour. In other words, teachers should aim to praise students four times more often than they correct students. Developing an effective system should:

- Increase the frequency of positive behaviours
- Focus both students' and teachers' attention on positive behaviours
- Foster a positive learning environment
- Decrease the amount of time spent on disciplinary procedures

Schools may also wish to consider how they use awards to promote positive behaviour (both in learning skills and in inter-personal skills). Awards such as Student of the Week can be used, alongside end of term or end of year awards. While end of year awards traditionally focus on academic and sporting success, schools have also found that other kinds of awards that reflect the school's ethos and value less traditional areas of achievement are very worthwhile.

While the importance of developing a system for positive reinforcement of expectations is necessary, there must also be systems for responding to unacceptable behaviour. It is recommended that a policy for sanctions should aim to do the following:

- Be appropriate to meeting individual needs
- Be fair, consistent and discrete
- Be appropriate to the behaviour
- Be prompt in response to behaviour

Schools may find it helpful to refer to the document: *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, published by the National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

2.1.5 Student support teams

Many post-primary schools have found that establishing support teams serves a preventative or early intervention function, particularly in relation to students with social, emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties, or about whom there may be child protection concerns. Many students who have such needs may also have learning needs. Different schools use different structures and terminology, and approaches may include a pastoral care team, or a structure with Tutors and Heads of Year. The development of effective support teams will require leadership from senior management in school.

Support teams need to be seen as separate to the usual disciplinary processes. They:

- allow for the sharing of information in a confidential setting
- provide a forum for key staff members to share concerns and work towards solutions
- encourage the formulation of a co-ordinated response to students
- allow for the monitoring and reviewing of individual students

Support Teams often work at the level of School Support or School Support Plus but may also be involved in developing systemic responses, which are at the Support for ALL level.

It is suggested here that Support Teams should collaborate and confer at least once every week and that there is a core group of members, supplemented by other interested teachers, as needed. The core group might consist of the school principal and/or deputy principal, the guidance counsellor, member of the special needs team, school chaplain, HSCL teacher and other invited staff or outside members, as needed. Students would usually be referred to the Support Team when there are significant concerns and where a disciplinary response is not the central issue (although behavioural difficulties may be a factor). A protocol about the confidentiality of information discussed by the support team may be helpful.

The following checklist can be used in considering students referred:
- Is the behaviour unusual for the student?
- Is there a pattern to the behaviour?
- What further information do I need to make a judgement?
- Who can help me gather this information?
- Can I afford to wait?
- Is the student in danger?
- How can I improve my relationship with the student right now?
- Who do I need to consult?

The practical application of a support team is demonstrated in Chapter 3, in Jane's case study.

2.1.6 Listening to the voice of the student
Engaging students in their education is another way of meeting the needs of diverse students. This engagement can take many forms, from assessment for learning approaches (see above) to participation in a student council. The views of students can also be considered in more systematic ways, for example, by school management considering the findings of the ESRI research, which documents the views of students over 3 years in post-primary schools.

2.2 Identifying Students of Concern
This section looks at systems in place to identify students who may have additional needs. These processes cover a range of systems:

- **Screening first year intake to identify strengths and needs**
- **Collecting up-to-date information from primary schools**
- **Monitoring of student progress (across the age range)**

2.2.1 Screening first year intake to identify strengths and needs

Many post-primary schools already have effective systems in place to screen students joining the school. These screening systems may serve many functions, including enabling grouping of students (to ensure mixed ability groups or to ensure group setting according to ability), planning for provision, identifying those at risk of learning difficulty and monitoring progress over time.

It is important to reiterate here that screening information cannot be used to determine whether a student will be enrolled in a school. In particular, discrimination against a student on the grounds of special educational needs is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act (2000).

While neither NEPS nor the DES endorses any particular tests, information provided in **Resource Pack (section 3, p40-50)** highlights tests which may be particularly helpful to post-primary schools in screening and diagnostic testing.

Understanding test results

Results of any one test should not be considered in isolation and tests results should always be considered alongside other information: parental information, information from the primary school, information from teachers etc. It is recommended that intake screening is a joint endeavour between the guidance counsellor/ learning support teacher/ subject teachers, as relevant.

Additionally, schools need to be aware of the risks associated with early labelling, which may place a ceiling on expectations or consign students to particular groups.
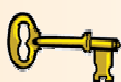
The NEPS Psychologist may assist schools in identifying particular tests that may be helpful, including tests suitable for intake screening, or indeed diagnostic tests. The NEPS psychologist may also assist the school in interpreting results and may offer advice on suitable interventions arising out of identified needs.

Timing of intake screening

It is suggested here that intake screening take place pre-enrolment, where possible. An orientation day or even two days, ideally in the summer term, gives students an opportunity to become familiar with the new school environment, meet some staff and their peers. Research indicates that such preparation is very helpful in preparing students for post-primary transfer. Students who do not attend such screening should be tested within the first month of joining the school and schools need to be proactive about testing such students.

It should be noted that some students with exceptional needs may find the process of pre-enrolment screening overwhelming and may not be suited to such group testing. These students should be encouraged to attend the orientation day, but sensitive arrangements should be made in relation to screening.

2.2.2 Transfer information from primary schools

Schools will find it helpful to have a system for collecting information from the primary schools. Best practice involves members of staff from the post-primary school visiting the feeder primary schools. Many primary schools administer standardised tests of reading and maths and post-primary schools may wish to seek access to these results, with parental consent. Teachers involved in this process could be the guidance counsellor, learning support teacher or Head of Year.

Primary schools should be in a position to provide post-primary schools with information about all students who had been receiving some additional classroom support (in primary schools this is known as Classroom Support), those receiving some form of additional support for learning or behaviour (School Support or learning support) and those receiving more intensive and specialist support (School Support Plus or resource teaching). The Post-Primary Transfer Review (see **Resource Pack (p24)** will be useful for all students for whom School Support or School Support Plus will be needed in post-primary school.

Parental consent for the sharing of information

Best practice is that parents give their consent for the sharing of information, including if post-primary schools are to receive copies of existing professional reports*. For this reason, many schools have found that the most efficient way of managing this process is to include a section on the school application/enrolment form, covering these matters. See **Resource Pack (p28)** for an example of such wording.

*Section 28 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is intended to ensure that information regarding the educational welfare of children can be shared among agencies which can help them (e.g. sharing information between schools when a child is transferring from one to another). The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Section 28) (Prescribed Bodies) Regulations of 2005 allow education professionals (e.g. teachers) who will be making key decisions affecting the educational welfare of a child to share relevant information (oral or written) concerning that child without breaching data protection law.

2.2.3 School-wide information gathering

School–wide systems can serve two functions; to screen students and to monitor students. All schools collect additional information about students and the systematic organisation and monitoring of this information is particularly helpful in developing effective practice at the whole school level. For example, schools collect information about attendance, about school reports (often twice per year) about results of in-school examinations and state examinations. Schools also typically have systems for recording incidents of behavioural difficulty, achievements and successes and of the rewards and sanctions applied to named students. All of this information is useful in understanding the needs of

students and identifying those students who may have particular difficulties, across the age range.

When used judiciously, this information can be used to quickly identify students who are experiencing difficulties in any of these areas. Typically, where difficulties emerge, the school can respond to students with a type of support which best meets the students' needs.

A further crucial form of information gathering is through teacher observation. While all teachers observe their students and adapt teaching accordingly, there are times when teacher observation needs to be shared beyond the classroom. For example, a teacher who notices that a student has become increasingly withdrawn may wish to alert the Head of Year or Guidance Counsellor. Schools which develop clear systems for the sharing of such information will be best placed to respond to such needs quickly.

2.3 Supporting Students at Support for ALL

So far in this section the focus has been on preventative approaches and identifying needs through whole-school systems. Interventions at this level arise directly from the information gathered. Interventions will tend to be local, specific and relatively low-key and would normally reflect the good practice already evident in schools. For example, a student who is having difficulty settling might be seen by the class tutor and perhaps offered a peer buddy. Where a subject teacher is aware of a student struggling with curriculum content, that student might be offered differentiated homework, or teaching methods might be adapted.

2.3.1 The solution orientated framework

The focus in the Continuum of Support is on identifying actions which can be taken to make a positive difference to the student/s. The framework can be applied across all levels of support: Support for ALL, School Support or School Support Plus. The same thematic questions guide the thinking and action process at each level:

- **Identifying Concerns and Gathering Information - What is the concern? and What factors are contributing to the concern?**
- **Planning and Intervention- What is working? How can we help?**
- **Monitoring and Review- Did it work? What do we need to do next?**

It is helpful to think of these processes as dynamic. Experience in schools certainly shows that this is not a neat linear process: Sometimes the process of identifying concerns or gathering information informs interventions very directly. Equally the process of reviewing an intervention may inform both the review process and the further gathering of information.

This solution orientated framework will be used throughout the remainder of the document and a number of case studies will illustrate how it might work in schools.

The Solution Orientated Framework

Monitoring and Review

Did it work?
What do we need to do next?

Identifying Concerns &Gathering Information

What is the concern?
What factors are contributing to the concern?

Planning and Intervention

What is working?
How can we help?
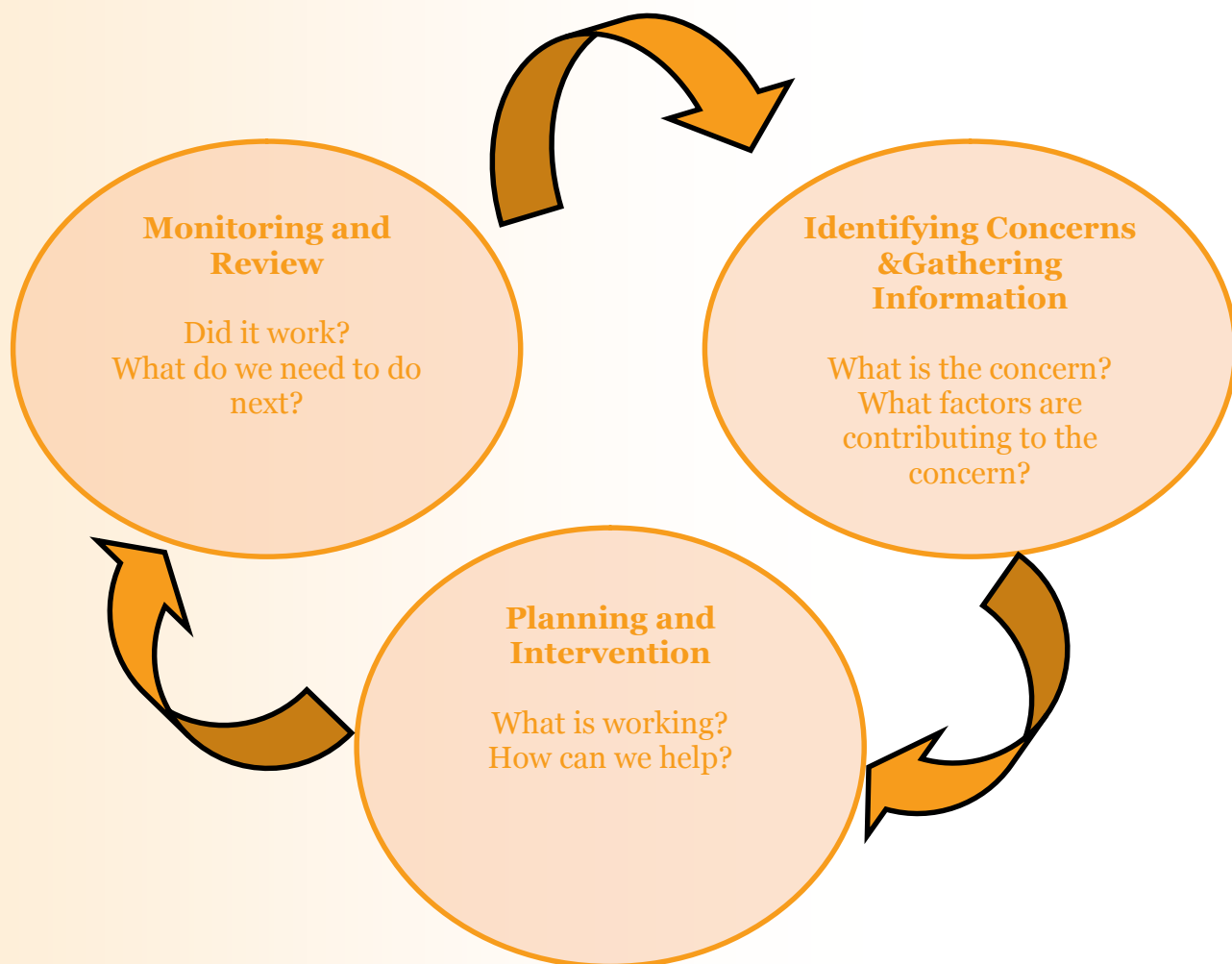
2.3.2 Solution orientated framework at Support for ALL

This Support for ALL is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. At the level of Support for ALL, interventions tend to be directed at groups of students and reflect whole school best practice.

The solution orientated process at this level typically begins when a teacher or group of teachers have concerns about a group of students or whole school issue. For example a teacher may become aware that some students have difficulties completing homework and attending regularly. This problem may be discussed and analysed and responses will typically be systemic. For example, whole school responses which may be effective might include guidance for teachers about differentiating homework and consideration of a reward system to promote good attendance.

2.3.3 Case Study

Below, an example of a Support for ALL intervention is set out demonstrating how the solution orientated process was used.

Identifying concerns and gathering information

As part of the school's transition policy for 1st year students, intake screening takes place for all 1st year students each May. Intake screening included the following tests:

- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)[*]
- Group Reading Test (GRT)
- Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)
- Vernon Maths Test (VMT)

Table 1: 1st year Intake Screening Data (May 2008)

Name	DOB	CA	Yr	NRIT		GRT		VMT		SWST	
				SS	Cen	SS	Cen	SS	Cen	SS	Cen
John	08/10/95	12yrs	1st	93,	32nd	85,	15th	92,	30th	82,	12th
Jane	04/04/95	13yrs	1st	90,	25th	83,	13th	92,	30th	84,	14th
Hassan	26/06/95	12yrs	1st	83,	13th	80,	9th	75,	5th	83,	13th
Ciara	04/07/96	11yrs	1st	86,	18th	85,	16th	88,	21st	90,	25th
Aisling	12/12/95	12yrs	1st	85,	16th	85,	15th	82,	12th	81,	10th
Paul	22/05/95	13yrs	1st	84,	14th	78,	7th	82,	12th	79,	8th

Standard scores (SS) and percentiles (Cen) are shown. A percentile on an age-standardised test shows how well a person does compared to 100 people of the same age. John's percentile of 15 on the reading test, indicates that he did as well as or better than 15 out of 100 students of his age.

On the basis on the above information, Hassan and Paul were already receiving School Support, in the form of extra English classes. However, the other four students had no additional supports.

Further information was collected through the Screening for Behaviour system, which this school does in late October of First Year. The process of screening for behaviour begins with identification of students who may be 'at risk' of developing 'acting-in' or 'acting-out' behavioural or emotional difficulties. See **Resource Pack (p45-50).**

The Screening for Behaviour form is completed by subject teachers - each subject teacher lists 3-5 students of concern in their class under two categories – Acting out (aggressive; defiant; oppositional; argumentative) & Acting in (shy, quiet, withdrawn). The Screening for Behaviour Summary Chart is completed – and a list of common names across subjects is collated.

[*] While this school has used the NRIT as a measure of general ability, some schools may prefer to use the Cognitive Attainment Tests (CAT-3), or other tests. Please see **Resource Pack** for more information about screening.

Case Study

This process highlighted 12 students in first year, about which there was some level of concern. Some of the students who were 'at risk' on the behaviour screening, also had learning needs, for example, John, Jane, Hassan and Aisling.

Additionally, school-wide monitoring showed that, by November, some 14 students had already missed 8 days of school (almost one day per week). The day most often missed was Fridays.

Subject teachers had also reported to both first year tutors and to the Head of Year, that a number of students were failing to complete homework tasks.

When difficulties with attendance and homework arose, the student support team were able to review the screening intake information to consider whether underlying learning or behavioural issues might be impacting on the difficulties. The student support team also completed the Learning Environment Checklist (LEC), Section A, which looks at the whole school environment. The section about whole school policies was particularly relevant.

The Head of Year discussed concerns and reviewed the above with the student support team. The group used the solution orientated framework, by asking themselves: What are our concerns and what factors do we think contribute to these concerns? A number of ideas were suggested: That some students might need homework support or homework differentiated more; That students and parents may not be aware of the school system for rewarding positive behaviour (in relation to attendance and homework completed). It was also suggested that there were not enough incentives for students to attend every day.

Planning and intervention

Arising from this discussion, the next questions asked were, What is working and how can we help? It was agreed to try the following interventions: the whole staff would try to develop best practice in differentiation, availing of resources from the Special Education Support Service (SESS). The school Board of Discipline, in consultation with the Student Council, were asked to consider recommending a hierarchy of rewards and sanctions with regard to completion of homework, which could be explained to students and implemented by all teachers. It was also felt that a letter home would be helpful in alerting parents to the expectations, the rewards and sanctions. A smaller number of parents would be phoned by the relevant Head of Year to discuss the importance of attendance. Finally, it was agreed that form tutors would hold a mini-raffle every Friday, for a token prize (chocolate, stationery or phone credit). Every child with full attendance that week would be entered in the draw.

Case Study

Monitoring and review
The school management team agreed to review attendance data at the end of the first term and class teachers undertook to advise form tutors about students who still had difficulty completing homework. At the time of review, four of the students had improved attendance and were coping better with homework expectations, while two students, Jane and John, continued to be of concern. Information about Jane and John and their school progress will be presented in the following chapters.

The chart overleaf summarises the solution orientated framework as applied at the Support for ALL level. It should be noted that this does not represent a form to be filled in, but an illustration of a process.

Case Study

2.3.4   Solution Orientated Framework

Solution Orientated Framework

What is the concern? What factors are contributing to the concern? • The school records indicate a number of students have already missed 8 days of school • Subject teachers have alerted the student support team to some students who frequently do not complete homework tasks • Homework tasks may need to be differentiated to take account of learning ability • Students may need reinforcement of expected behaviour and greater awareness of rewards and sanctions, relating to both homework and attendance • Completion of the Learning Environment Checklist, section A, whole school policies	**Identifying concerns & gathering information**
What is working? & How can we help? • In-service for teachers on differentiating homework and review of rewards and sanctions available for completion to ensure consistency by staff • Consideration of weekly rewards to encourage good attendance. Suggested that all 1st years with 100% attendance in any week be entered in class draw on Friday to win small reward (chocolate/ stationary/ phone credit) • Reminder letter to all parents of 1st years to reinforce expectations about attendance and homework and make them aware of reward and consequence strategy. Phone calls to reinforce/ discuss further to small group of parents	**Planning and intervention**
Did it work? What do we need to do next? • A review after a term found that the reward strategy for attendance had been very effective. Absence on Fridays reduced, with 97% attendance • Two students did not respond to this approach and have been referred to the Support Team and have moved to School Support • The in-service on differentiation was well received • Additionally, for future years it was thought that homework club might be beneficial	**Monitoring and review**

CHAPTER 3

School Support (for Some)

Introduction

This chapter sets out how the schools might respond to some students who need additional supports. Again, the solution-orientated framework is used, which takes us through the steps of:

- **Identifying Concerns and Gathering Information**
- **Planning and Intervention**
- **Monitoring and Review**

The chapter is illustrated with two case studies: Daniel and Jane. These case studies illustrate how various mechanisms can be used to support students: post-primary transfer review, school support plans, learning environment intervention plans and support team meetings.

3.1 The Solution Orientated Framework at School Support

In some cases supports offered at Support for ALL level are not enough to fully meet the student's needs and School Support may be required. The learning support/resource teacher/ Head of Year/ Guidance counsellor and perhaps the student support team, as needed, may be involved in the solution orientated process at this point. School Support involves systematic gathering of information and the development of some kind of intervention plan. This plan can take many forms and could be called a School Support Plan/ Group Intervention Plan or Individual Learning or Behavioural Plan.

> The co-ordinating teacher
>
> A key named member of staff, known as **the co-ordinating teacher**, takes overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the intervention and for liaising with others (for example, teachers, parents and external agencies). This person may be a subject teacher, tutor, head of year, learning support/resource teacher, guidance counsellor or senior member of staff, depending on the nature of the student's needs and the school context.

Some students will be placed at School Support on entry to post-primary school, because their needs are known and documented (see Chapter 1). For some students, needs will emerge over time and typically, the student will have been at Support for ALL for some time and it will have been found that a greater level of support is required. A Solution Orientated Framework, as already outlined in Chapter 2, will be followed.

3.1.1 Identifying the concern and gathering information

For students with **known and documented needs**, the concern is likely to have been identified before the student enrolled in the school. For students with **emerging needs,** the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems.

The school may want to collect detailed information, other than that already described in Chapter 2, either for students with known and documented needs or, more typically, for students with emerging needs. This information would be relevant to concerns and can include a wide range of activities, such as interviewing parents for detailed information about emotional issues, gathering information from medical/ para-medical specialists, (for example, about hearing or speech and language skills) or interviewing the student about motivation and attitude. To support schools in this task, a very comprehensive checklist for gathering information is included in **Resource Pack (p32).**

It is important to emphasise that this checklist is not intended as a form to be systematically filled in, but as a guide which will support teachers in thinking about various sources of relevant information and gives a format on which brief information may be recorded.

School-based diagnostic assessment
(including individual tests and tests for use with older students)

Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Additionally, some students may join the school mid-year, transfer from another school or be newly arrived in the country. Often such students are older than the age range covered by intake screening tests. Please see **Resource Pack (p43)** for further information on tests that may be helpful to schools in these situations.

It is also at School Support that schools may engage with the NEPS psychologist in a process of consultation, as part of the solution orientated framework.

3.1.2 Planning and intervention

At School Support interventions need to be planned in consultation with the student and the parents. A wide range of interventions are possible, for example:

- Participation in a learning support group
- A reduced subject load
- Participation in a social skills group
- Implementing a peer reading programme
- Making accommodations to testing situations (eg allowing a waiver of spelling and grammar in language subjects).

Interventions may be planned to meet the needs of a group of students or they may be tailored to meet the needs of an individual student. Indeed a student may have some group intervention, along with some individual intervention (as will be seen in the case study of Jane, below). It is important that there is one person responsible for the overall development of the intervention plan (*the co-ordinating teacher*).

Some method of recording the intervention should be in place. This need not be overly detailed, but it should be clear what interventions are in place and how they are to be implemented. The case studies below illustrate some of the ways that interventions can be documented.

3.1.3 Monitoring and review

This co-ordinating teacher would also have responsibility for monitoring interventions and planning and conducting reviews. It is usually helpful to have some system of sharing information, so that all staff are aware of the co-ordinating teacher's role and information is fed back to that person. For example, if there was concern about a very withdrawn and timid student and interventions were in place to encourage participation and build self-esteem, then all teachers involved need to know that it is the co-ordinating teacher who needs to be alerted if the interventions are (or are not) being successful.

Again, some documentation of the review is most helpful. Sometimes the process of review forms part of the information gathering process. For example, a student receiving literacy intervention might have his/her reading scores reviewed and the data collected, will inform what level of support is now warranted. The outcome of the review should include deciding whether the level of support currently offered is appropriate. School Support may be continued, the student may need School Support Plus or the student may now be able to have his/ her needs met through Support for ALL processes.

Case Study

3.2 Daniel (known and documented needs)

This case study of Daniel may help further illustrate the process and the use of some of the documents mentioned previously. Daniel is a student who joined the Post-Primary school with **known and documented needs**.

3.2.1 Identifying the concern and gathering information

Daniel transferred from St Martin's National School. He was assessed in 2007 (when he was in fifth class) and a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) was identified. The post-primary learning support teacher gathered information about Daniel's needs from a range of sources:

- Daniel's screening tests (reading comprehension skills were just within the average range).
- Post-Primary Transfer Review (see below) indicated a bright and able student, who had significant difficulty with producing written work and some difficulty with self-organisation.
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 4) spelling test found a severe level of difficulty.
- Psychological report (2007) indicated dyslexia and a weak auditory memory

For guidance about understanding the content of psychological reports, please see the **Resource Pack, page 37**.

Where a psychological report has been prepared, it is helpful if schools have a mechanism for ensuring that such reports are shared with teaching staff. At the very least, teachers should know that a report exists and have an opportunity to read it. While careful storage and the maintenance of confidentiality is important, it is also important that reports are accessible to professional staff. The NEPS psychologist will be able to advise schools about appropriate ways of sharing psychological information.

Case Study

Post Primary Transfer Review
Confidential

Name: Daniel   **Home Language: English**
Address:
Date of Birth:
Present School: St Martin's National School

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Assessment**

Has student undergone assessment/s?   (Yes)   No

Date(s) of Assessment(s):   *Report 04.04.07*

Nature of difficulties indicated?
Diagnosis of dyslexia, weak auditory sequential memory

Has the student been involved with any agency providing
Psychological/Psychiatric Services, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy etc?

                                Yes   (No)

If yes, please give details:

Exemption from Irish?(Please circle)   (Yes)   No

Access to specialist IT supports?   (Yes)   No

If yes, please give details:
Daniel has recently got a laptop computer and will be using it to produce longer pieces of written work. He is developing keyboard and word processing skills.

Specify what (if any) equipment will transfer with this student.
The laptop will transfer with Daniel when he goes to Post-Primary school.

Case Study

- **Results of recently administered tests**

AREA	NAME OF TEST	DATE OF TESTING	STANDARD SCORES	PERCENTILE RANK
Ability				
Reading	Drumcondra	Feb 2007	SS 79	8th percentile
Spelling	SWST	Feb 2007	SS 69	1st percentile
Numeracy	Sigma-T	May 2006	SS 102	55th percentile
Other				

- **Strengths/ needs and recommendations**

Strengths:
Daniel is well-motivated and hard working. He is very interested in animals and hopes to work with animals when he leaves school. He is generally bright and interested.

Identified Needs:
Daniel has great difficulty with spelling, particularly in free-writing situations. He sometimes gets overwhelmed when there is a lot of writing to be done. Daniel is sometimes forgetful and may need instructions given in smaller parts or some reminders about what is expected.

Recommendations:
Daniel has done really well in sixth class and he is increasingly socially confident. He does not want a particular focus on his dyslexia at post-primary school and is only learning to use his lap-top effectively- this will be a priority in post-primary school.

Case Study

SECTION TWO: PROVISION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Type of Support
Learning Support/ resource/SNA
Has been at School Support (Learning Support)

Frequency/ Grouping
Attends for one individual session per week and three times per week attends in a pair.

Key Areas of Learning/ Behaviour Addressed:
We have been working on Daniel's reading accuracy and his fluency. The focus has been on decoding skills (using advanced phonics). Spellings have not been a priority, although Daniel has been learning spelling rules through the Toe by Toe programme.

Any special programmes used? (e.g. TEACCH, Toe by Toe, Units of Sound, Social Skills groups etc)?
Daniel has been working on the Toe by Toe programme. He will be working on the SNIP programme for the last half term. Daniel was also a 'helper' in our reading partner programme and listened to a first class child read, 3 times per week, during the autumn term.

Any special arrangements in place? (eg differentiated homework/ use of technology/ positioning in the classroom)
Daniel used to have a buddy to remind him about homework requirements, but he no longer needs this support. His class teacher only corrects 3 spellings in any piece of work. Daniel uses the lap-top to develop key board skills, especially during Irish time.

Please attach copy of recent IEPs/ IPLPs/ Reviews.

Case Study

SECTION THREE: PLANNING FOR TRANSFER

Curriculum Needs (able for a full subject choice/ reduced timetable/ subject strengths & difficulties)

Daniel is looking forward to the post-primary curriculum. He is exempt from Irish, but is keen to try French, as he has relatives living in France.

Learning Skills (following instructions/ reading/ writing/ contributing to oral work)

Daniel is bright and able. He copes fine in most lessons.

Organisational Skills (ability to find way around the school/ manage locker/ keep equipment)

Generally good, although can be forgetful and a little disorganised. May need a little help to organise books/ locker/ homework demands.

Social Skills (particular friendships/ ability to get on with others)

A sociable and popular boy, he would like to be in the same class group as Sam Ryan or Eoin Mulvihill.

Other (any particular issues/challenges)

Names of persons involved in review:
Patricia Rooney (learning support, St Martin's National School) Michael Hurley (learning support, St Joseph's Community School) Mr and Mrs O'Shea (parents)

Do parents give consent for this information to be passed to post-primary school? Please name school_____

Date: *26th April 2008*

Case Study

3.2.2 Planning and intervention

As Daniel's needs were already identified and up-to-date information had been gathered, the school was in a position to plan effective interventions to support Daniel. His learning support teacher, in consultation with Daniel, Daniel's parents and with subject staff, developed the School Support Plan set out below. In discussion with the learning support teacher, Daniel noted that he found homework rather difficult, especially when asked to memorise material. He also commented that he sometimes made lots of mistakes with spelling and this was discouraging for him, as even when he had tried his best, his work often had many corrections. The **resource pack** contains a template of this Individual Support Plan, see page 51.

3.2.3 Monitoring and review

As can be seen, the School Support Plan was reviewed in February 2009 and new information about Daniel's supports was added. A further review is planned for the end of the academic year, so that provision can be evaluated and plans made for second year.

In Daniel's case, it seems likely that he will continue at School Support, as this level of support appears to meet his needs. It is possible that Daniel could revert to Support for ALL, where differentiation and the implementation of Inclusive School Policies might suitably meet his needs. There is no hard and fast rule about when a student should move from one level of support to another- schools use their judgement in identifying needs and planning effective interventions.

The **process** by which students have their needs met should remain the same: This process of identifying concerns and gathering information, planning interventions and reviewing is likely to repeated each year for a student like Daniel.

Case Study

School Support Plan For: Daniel O'Shea Date: September 2008	Review and Comments
Areas of Concern • Daniel's auditory memory is poor • His level of spelling is poor	
Understanding the Difficulties: • Daniel has a diagnosis of dyslexia (see report 04.04.07)	
Strategies to be Implemented: • All staff have been given a copy of the advice from the Task Force for Dyslexia. It is noted that Daniel should not be asked to read aloud from unprepared text. • Staff are asked to give differentiated homework when memorising is involved (particularly memorising sections of poetry or Shakespearian text) as this is very difficult for Daniel. • Teachers are asked to highlight only 4 spelling errors in any piece of work and to direct Daniel's attention to key words in their subject area. • Daniel is exempt from Irish and will be attending the learning support room for assistance with study skills and will be learning to use word processing facilities, including spell-check. • Daniel is likely to be eligible for a waiver of spelling and grammar (in languages only) at Junior Certificate and school staff will apply this accommodation when marking his school work.	Feb 09 Daniel will be consulting with the guidance counsellor about exemption from a foreign language/ university entry requirements and subject choice. Strategies are implemented and working well.
We will know things have improved when Daniel: • Produces written work, reflecting his oral ability. • Effectively uses coping strategies and IT to compensate for his difficulties.	
Review Date: Ms Shiels will plan review in January 2009	
Signed: **Co-ordinating teacher** **Parent** **Student**	
First Review: Feb 09 Attending: Ms Shiels and Mrs O'Shea Daniel is well settled in school. He is now keeping a subject dictionary with key words. In learning support he is using Englishtype to develop his keyboard skills and it is hoped to develop his word processing skills further.	
Second Review: May 09	

Case Study

3.3. Jane (Emerging Needs)

Jane is a student whose **needs emerged** while in post-primary school. Therefore the initial response to Jane was through the Support for ALL processes, but in time she followed the processes at the level of School Support.

3.3.1 Reviewing Support for ALL processes

Jane is in 2nd year. She took part in the intake screening within a month of joining the school in first year, (having missed the main group screening). She participated in the induction programme for 1st years and settled well in school initially. Jane's primary teachers explained her home circumstances to her new teachers during the transfer meeting interview. The Home School Community Liaison Teacher (HSCLT) visited Jane's home and alerted the school to changes in Jane's home circumstances towards the end of 1st year. Jane's parents have recently separated and Jane now lives with her father, and her mother lives with her new partner. The table below outlines Jane's intake screening results.

Table 1: 1st year Intake Screening Data

Name	DOB	CA	Yr	NRIT		GRT		VMT		SWST	
				SS	Cent	SS	Cent	SS	Cent	SS	Cent
Jane	04/04/95	13yrs	1st	90, 25th		83, 13th		92, 30th		84, 14th	

In October the screening for behaviour process identified Jane as a student who was 'at risk'. Further information was gathered on an on-going basis about attendance and learning and behaviour in school. This information was collated by the form tutor and Head of Year. Given Jane's academic and behaviour profile, Jane was prioritised for the school peer reading scheme (cross-aged peer tutoring with a student in Transition Year).

From the processes of gathering information and monitoring, it emerged that a number of students in first year, including Jane, had both learning and behavioural needs and some had poor attendance. Interventions to address these students' needs are already summarised in Chapter 2, the Support for ALL Case Study.

Most children responded favourably to these interventions. However some students still needed additional supports, including Jane. At the start of second year Jane was referred to her Head of Year many times due to her aggressive outbursts, her poor academic performance and her general lack of interest. Her attendance was still poor and homework was rarely completed. Therefore, the next phase of support, **School Support** was considered appropriate.

Case Study

3.3.2 Identifying concerns and gathering information

Jane was referred for discussion at the Support Team meeting. Jane was not alone, a number of students in Class 2J were causing concern and therefore some of the processes outlined below operated at a **group** level. Additionally, her tutor invited both parents to a meeting. She met with Jane's father to discuss how best to support Jane in school.

Five of the subject teachers of the "at risk" students (including Jane) agreed to complete the Learning Environment Checklist, Sections B & C and returned it to the Head of Year. A **sample** of Section B of the LEC is reproduced below. (See **Resource Pack (p 6)** for more details).

Summary Chart Section B Classroom environment - extent to which action is needed for each area by each SUBJECT

Name of Class Group/student - JANE (2J)	1	2	3	4	5
Subject	Eng	Irish	Sci	His	CSPE
B.3 Rules routines rewards sanctions:					
3.1 Routines exist for movement around the room	2	2	2	2	2
3.2 Clearly established routines for students entering and exiting the room	1	1	1	2	2
3.3 Routines exist for distributing and collecting materials	1	1	1	1	1
3.4 Routines exist for changing activities	3	1	1	1	1
3.5 Routines exist for gaining silence or attention	1	1	1	1	2
3.6 Routines exist for clearing up	1	1	1	2	2
3.7 Rules are negotiated with and understood by students	1	1	2	1	1
3.8 Rules are few in number clearly phrased and regularly referred to	1	1	2	1	1
3.9 Rules are positively framed and reinforced	1	2	2	2	1
3.10 Rules are clearly displayed in the classroom	1	1	1	1	1
3.11 Rules and routines of positive behaviour are taught	2	2	3	2	1
3.12 Rewards are small and achievable	2	2	2	3	3
3.13 Rewards are named	2	2	3	3	3
3.14 Rewards are rewarding to class	2	2	3	3	3
3.15 Rewards are given fairly and consistently	2	2	1	3	3
3.16 Rewards are linked to a school reward system	3	3	3	2	2
3.17 Sanctions are administered fairly and consistently	2	2	3	3	2
3.18 Sanctions are understood by students	1	1	2	3	3
3.19 Sanctions are understood by parents and carers	3	3	3	3	2
3.20 Sanctions are clear and appropriate	2	2	3	3	3
3.21 Classroom procedures and rules are made clear and understood by all students and consistently applied	1	1	1	1	1

Case Study

3.3.3 Planning and intervention

A number of priorities were identified through the **Learning Environment Intervention Plan**. One trigger for aggressive outbursts was when students were called out of their mainstream class to go to Learning Support. The following actions were taken:

- Each subject teacher devised a seating plan for their class
- Three to five classroom rules were clearly defined and taught (by subject teachers and tutors)
- Rules were monitored and acknowledged through a class system of 'catching the good'.
- One rule was that students were to have their folders for each class
- Subject teachers agreed to keep folders in their rooms
- Students went straight to learning support before class started (this routine was demonstrated and rehearsed until it became automatic)

These strategies were implemented in October of second year. However, by January it was apparent that Jane still had additional needs and she was referred to the school Support Team. Following their planning meeting, further interventions were planned for Jane, which are documented on the School Support Team Consultation Form. It was agreed that the Support Team Action Plan would be circulated to all staff working with Jane and Ms O'Rourke (tutor) undertook to be the **co-ordinating teacher**.

It should be noted that the Learning Environment Intervention Plan was not specific to Jane (for example, she did not attend learning support), but was a group intervention, which aimed to address the needs of a number of vulnerable and challenging second year students. The Support Team Consultation Meeting is specific to Jane, although typically a number of students might be discussed during a Support Team meeting.

Copies of the forms referred to here, can be found in the **resource pack**. The Learning Environment Intervention Plan is on page 19, while a template for Student Support Team Meetings can be found on page 52 with a Support Team Action Plan template on page 53.

Learning Environment Intervention Plan

Checklist completed by: *Science, English, Irish, History, CSPE teachers*   **Date:**

Focus of intervention: (please tick) – **Whole school support Classroom support √**
Priority areas: Whole school environment Classroom environment √ Social/people environment √

Factors within priority area/s requiring action (identified from the checklist):
Section B -Physical factors – seating arrangements
Section B – Rules & routines

	Actions	Action possible yes/no	If yes how:
1	Seating plan	yes	• Each subject teacher to devise seating plan for class
2	Classroom rules	yes	• 3-5 classroom rules clearly defined across subjects, • rules taught specifically to students, • monitored & acknowledged through a class system of "catching the good" (Jenny Mosley sheet).
3	Transition to Learning Support		• Agreed with the Learning Support teacher that students would go straight to learning support before mainstream class period commences
4	Classroom folders		• Students to have folders for each class. • Teachers agreed to keep folders in their rooms.

Review Date:
Signed:

Case Study

3.3.4 Monitoring and review

Ms O'Rourke, had undertaken to be the co-ordinating teacher who would ensure the implementation of the Support Team Plan and would coordinate information about Jane's progress. A review meeting in March during a Support Team Meeting noted that concerns had lessened regarding Jane's behaviour (with only 2 discipline points earned in the last 6 weeks) and academically she was beginning to improve. Attendance was better, with just two days missed in the last 2 months. Most subject teachers expect that she will pass her Summer tests. It was agreed that continued **School Support** was still required, although group counselling sessions had come to an end and Jane is now being offered one to one sessions every three weeks. The HSCL teacher was pleased to report that Jane joined the after-school dance club and she is enjoying this and hoping to take part in the St Patrick's Day parade. This is an example of an intervention that was not specifically planned initially, but emerged during the course of the intervention period (a collaboration between the guidance counsellor, PE teacher and HSCL) and since it has been important in engaging Jane in school life, it is worth documenting. Jane will be further reviewed at the end of the next term.

The guidance counsellor has worked with Jane to help her set her own targets for success. While Jane did not attend the March review meeting, she knew about it and contributed her views through the guidance counsellor. Jane reported that she felt she was 'best at' home economics and liked the practical assessments. She is aware of getting on better in school. Afterwards, the guidance counsellor and Ms O'Rourke (tutor) met with Jane to discuss her progress and next steps.

> Please note that Jane does not have an Individual Support Plan, as Daniel had. This is because the two elements, the **group** Learning Environment Plan and the **individual** Support Team Consultation make up her supports. It is not necessarily helpful or a good use of time for teachers to be involved in completing separate forms, unless such records clearly contribute to effective planning and intervention. As long as records are kept, they do not need to conform to any particular structure, but consistent use and application of school structures among users is advisable.

Case Study

Support Team Meeting Record

Date of consultation: 17.01.09
Present: 2J Tutor, Head of 2nd Year, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL, D. Principal
Student's name: Jane

Concerns/issues:
- Aggressive outbursts
- No homework, books, copies
- No interest in school
- Attendance

What are the student's positive abilities and strengths?
- Seems to want boundaries and stability
- Tries her best in maths
- Can be better behaved, even pleasant
- Very responsible and helpful in home economics

What strategies currently work?
- Care team discussion
- Seating plan in class
- Class rules
- Folders in class

Action Plan

What actions?	How?	By who?
Group counselling, to address personal responsibility and allow Jane to talk about her feelings, with 3 others.	Weekly group counselling, during history time on Thursday	Guidance counsellor
Teach Jane organisational skills	Tutor will check with Jane at beginning of the day. Consider checking if friend (Sarah?) could operate as a buddy in this regard	Tutor Friend
Offer Jane responsibility for simple tasks in class.	Ask to give out copies, to tidy materials, to take a message etc	Subject teachers
Engage Jane is setting her own targets, for academic and behavioural success (shared and self evaluation)	Involve Jane in planning what she will achieve within a lesson/ topic or until half-term	Subject teachers Tutor

Co-ordinating teacher: Ms O'Rourke (tutor)
To be reviewed: 05.03.09, Support Team Meeting

Case Study

> **Review of Support Team Action Plan**
>
> **File Note for: Jane**   **Date of Discussion: 05.03.09**
>
> Jane has responded well to planned interventions. She particularly enjoys responsibilities and has been encouraged to join the dance group and take charge of the music/ DVD player. Attendance and attitude are much improved and subject teachers (except French and maybe Business?) feel Jane will pass summer tests. The buddy system for organising self lasted only 2 weeks, but seemed to get Jane back on track, but she disliked having someone 'checking' on her. Jane engaged well with group counselling. These sessions have now come to an end, but Jane will continue to avail of individual sessions, every 3 weeks.
>
> Signed:
>
> Ms O'Rourke, Tutor.

3.3.5 Solution Orientated Framework

Solution Orientated Framework

What is the concern? What factors are contributing to the concern? • Concerns about behaviour (aggressive outbursts), attitude to school and poor attendance. These were identified through data collected through school-wide monitoring (attendance, intake screening) and through referral to the tutor by various subject teachers • Information was gathered by completing the Learning Environment Checklist (sections B & C), consulting with her father and sharing information at a Care Team Meeting	Identifying concerns & gathering information
What is working? & How can we help? • Interventions included developing a group response to issues, using the Learning Environment Checklist as a planning tool • The Care Team also consulted and planned interventions, with a range of strategies for subject teachers and tutor • Group counselling was offered in school	Planning and intervention
Did it work? What do we need to do next? • Jane did settle better and responded to this level of support • Attendance improved and Jane enjoyed more academic success • The review meeting identified the need for some on-going monitoring and individual counselling	Monitoring and review

CHAPTER 4

School Support Plus (for a Few)

School Support Plus (for a Few)

Introduction

This chapter looks at how schools might support students with more complex or enduring needs. Again, the solution orientated framework is used. There are two case studies, which demonstrate the use of various resources and templates (which can be found in the **resource pack**.) Aoife's case, includes an Information Gathering Checklist, and Individual Educational Plan (IEP), which is EPSEN compliant. John's case study illustrates the use of a Subject Teacher Survey Form, and the My Thoughts about School Checklist. John has a Positive Behaviour Plan (with Student Target Sheet and sample of Review Meeting).

4.1 Overview of Support for a FEW

The School Support Plus processes will generally require more intensive and individualised supports and may involve external professionals and support services. School Support Plus applies to students whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress was considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions at the previous levels. In post-primary schools, many of these students will have been enrolled with this level of support already identified, having <u>known and documented needs</u>. Other students may have needs that only emerge during the course of their post-primary education.

> Some students who have their needs met through the School Support Plus process may also fall under the terms of the **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004.** Equally, some students at this level, will not necessarily be covered by the terms of EPSEN, but will benefit from School Support Plus level of intervention. This group may include students with High Incidence and Low Incidence Disabilities as defined by the Department of Education and Science in Special Education Circular 09/04.
>
> Where reference is made to the requirements of EPSEN, this will be highlighted.

Again, the structures of the solution orientated framework are useful and are outlined below.

4.1.1 Identifying concerns and gathering information

- A co-ordinating teacher will usually take on the role of coordinating planning, monitoring and reviewing at School Support Plus.
- Where needs are known and documented, information available at the time of transfer/ enrolment should help determine whether the student will be placed at School Support Plus or not.
- For those students with emerging needs, information gathered through the Support for ALL and School Support processes will be helpful.

The Information Gathering Checklist (**Resource Pack, p32**) may be helpful to schools in ensuring comprehensive information is available. Additionally, section 2.1 of the NCSE guidelines on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process has a suggested checklist for gathering information. As part of the information gathering, the co-ordinating teacher may, with parental consent, request the involvement of appropriate external professionals (e.g. Visiting Teachers, Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists etc).

Educational Psychologists can play a key role in the solution orientated process at this level. NEPS psychologists work in collaboration with teachers, parents and students in clarifying problems, through consultation and further joint assessment. Based on the information gathered they collaborate with teachers and parents and students in planning and monitoring interventions which take account of the student's strengths and address the identified needs.

For students with complex needs, the processes of identifying concerns and gathering information may require very particular assessment. For example, a student with Autistic Spectrum Disorder may demonstrate a range of learning and behavioural difficulties. Understanding behaviour may involve trying to appreciate the function of that behaviour for the student (functional analysis) and may require structured observations and analysis of antecedents and consequences of behaviour.

4.1.2 Planning and intervention

Some kind of individualised plan is usually needed at this point. This may take a number of forms, but they are most likely to reflect the good practice set out in the Guidelines on the Individual Educational Planning Process issued by the NCSE in 2006, which specify:

Content of an Individual Education Plan (IEP): (as per EPSEN)
- The nature and degree of the student's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the student's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the student
- The special educational needs of the student
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the student to enable the student to benefit from education
- The goals which the student is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months e.g.
    The student's priority learning needs
    Long and short term targets to be achieved
- Monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

Professionals external to school may be involved in working with the student directly or they may act in an advisory capacity, supporting the subject teachers and learning support/resource teacher in implementing the plan.

The student's parents and the student (in an age-appropriate manner), should be involved in the development, implementation and review of the IEP.

> When the EPSEN Act 2004 is fully implemented the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) will be consulted in relation to the preparation of the IEP for students who come under the terms of the Act and will receive a copy of this plan.

Whatever format the IEP takes, it is helpful to be aware that it is a working document and may need amendment and review during the period of implementation.

Note: The NCCA is in the process of developing a draft Curriculum Framework for those junior cycle students with special educational needs who might not proceed to Junior Certificate examinations. To support the teaching and learning of students with special educational needs, guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities and exceptionally able students are available. For more details, see www.ncca.ie/inclusion

4.1.3 Monitoring and review

At School Support Plus the co-ordinating teacher should organise the review process. Parents should be invited to contribute to this review. Outside professionals and the area Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) should be involved, as appropriate or necessary.

The review process should focus on:
- Progress towards targets made by the student (If the student's progress has been satisfactory, an updated IEP may be drawn up. If the IEP is considered to need adjustment, a new, or adapted, plan should be drawn up.)
- Any new information and/or assessment results
- The effectiveness of the strategies/methodologies used
- The effectiveness of the materials/equipment provided
- The effectiveness of the supports(individual, group, class) provided
- Future action

If the student's progress remains satisfactory following review, all concerned may decide to increase gradually the periods between reviews. Where the student's needs have changed, it may be that all concerned decide that the student no longer needs the intensive level of support being provided at School Support Plus and could have his/ her needs appropriately met through the School Support structures.

Case Study

4.2 Case Study- Aoife (known and documented needs)

Aoife is a student who has known and documented needs and for whom the individual planning process has been in place over a number of years. This example also appears in the NCSE Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process and the content of the IEP is therefore compatible with Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act.

4.2.1 Introducing Aoife

In the case of Aoife, a sample of a completed Information Gathering Checklist is included, to demonstrate that process. Aoife is sixteen and has severe congenital scoliosis. She is in fifth year in her local post-primary school. Aoife lives with her mother and younger sister. She enjoys reading and watching documentaries on television. She is very well informed about current affairs and has strong views about issues relating to equality and social justice. Following the IEP planning meeting, Aoife wrote the section dealing with targets and strategies with the assistance of Susan Kelly, Career Guidance Counsellor.

Aoife also participates in a scheme whereby fifth year students are matched with new first year students and they provided mentoring support. Aoife was trained in mentoring skills as part of her Transition Year programme. Details of this are not included in the IEP as this is part of the Support for ALL programmes in Aoife's school.

Gathering Information Checklist

NAME: Aoife O'Sullivan   DOB 21.10.89   CLASS 5th Year   DATE 26.09.05

GENERAL INFORMATION	CHECKED (YES/NO)	SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
Parents consulted	✔	Margaret O'Sullivan met with Ms Burke to discuss plans for this year. She feels that Aoife gained a lot of confidence during Transition Year. She is still only beginning to be aware of the world of work and needs help to think through career options.
Post-Primary Transfer Profile	N/A	
Information from previous school, or previous teachers gathered		See school reports from last year.
Hearing/ Vision	N/A	
Motor Skills/ Co-ordination, movement		Aoife can move about the school independently. However, she gets tired easily and her posture can be poor. Aoife continues to need to use a computer to produce written work, as she has a slow processing speed.
Communication skills/ oral language/ listening		Aoife is articulate and expresses herself clearly and with conviction. Although she can follow instructions with ease, she may need to develop more sympathetic listening skills.
Medical Needs		Aoife missed 57 days of school last year, due to medical treatment. She is under review with Dr Walsh, Crumlin Children's Hospital, but further surgery is not anticipated in the next 2 years.
Intake screening information	N/A	

School Support Plus (for a Few)

GENERAL INFORMATION cont…	CHECKED (YES/NO)	SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
Diagnostic testing/ further assessments		DATS* done last year, and indicated that Aoife is above average in verbal and abstract reasoning and average in numerical and spatial reasoning.
Observation of learning style/approach to learning		Subject teachers note that Aoife has a rather casual attitude to school work and often fails to complete homework.
Observation of behaviour		Aoife is noted to have strong opinions and sometimes is unwilling to listen to the views of others.
Interview with student		Aoife will be meeting with the guidance counsellor about setting targets.
Exemption from Irish	N/A	
Reduced Subject Load		Agreed that Aoife would do 6 subjects for Leaving Certificate and use other class time for study and targeted support
Special Curriculum		
Differentiation in Class		Aoife needs to have space for her supports and IT equipment.
Adaptations to learning environment		Aoife needs a foot block and backrest in class.
Yard/school environments adapted		
Consultation with outside professionals		Enable Ireland have been asked to advise on participation in PE.
Other interventions in place in school		
ACTION NEEDED		New IEP to be developed & discussed by parent, tutor, resource & guidance teacher.
ACTIONS AGREED WITH PARENTS AND RELEVANT STAFF		IEP planning meeting to be held in December.

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* Differential Aptitude Tests for Schools

Case Study

<u>INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN</u>

Name of Student; Aoife O'Sullivan   **Date of Birth**: 21-10-1989   **Class**: 5U   **Year**: 5th

Address: 16, Summerhill   **Name of parent/s**: Margaret O'Sullivan

Class Tutor: Mark McCarthy   **Year Head**: Anne Breen

Resource Teacher: Eileen Burke   **Career Guidance Counsellor**: Susan Kelly

SENO: Martin Purcell

Date of IEP Meeting: 06-12-05

In attendance: Aoife & Margaret O'Sullivan, Susan Kelly, Eileen Burke & Mark McCarthy

IEP Co-ordinator: Susan Kelly

Commencement Date: 16-01-2006   **Review Date**: 08-05-06

Signed: **Date**:

<u>Nature of SEN & Impact on Educational Development</u>

Aoife has severe congenital scoliosis. Last year she had corrective surgery and was absent from school for several months. While this reduced the curve in her spine, postural stress continues to cause her to slump when seated. As a result, she finds it difficult to concentrate and perform fine motor tasks. She presents as a bright and intelligent young person. However, her attainments in all academic subjects fall well below her potential.

<u>Special Education and Related Support Services</u>

Aoife receives three hours of support teaching weekly. She has been referred to *Enable Ireland* for assessment with a view to devising a suitable P.E. programme.

<u>Examinations/Assessment</u>

Aoife will take English, French and History at higher level and Maths, Irish and Biology at ordinary level in the Leaving Certificate examination in 2007.

Accommodations Required: Special centre, 30 mins. additional time, use of laptop (in-house and State exams).

Case Study

Present Performance Levels

On the verbal scale of the *WISC III* (Nov. 2004), Aoife scored in the high average range. Her score was in the average range on the performance scale. During testing, slow speed of processing on all tasks was observed. Problems with persistence and staying on task were also noted.

Aoife's performance on the *Differential Aptitude Tests for Schools (DATS)* in Dec. placed her in the above average range for verbal and abstract reasoning and the average range for numerical and spatial reasoning.

Aoife's favourite subjects are French and English. In her mid-term tests (Nov. 2005), she passed these subjects. She got an E grade in Maths, History & Biology and F in Irish. Her teachers report that she lacks motivation and frequently fails to complete and hand in homework assignments.

Aoife is eager to communicate and engage with her peers. She needs to learn to participate as a team member and to listen to and take on board the point of views of others during class discussions.

She uses a laptop for class and homework and can type at a rate of 15 words a minute. To help to correct her poor posture, she uses a backrest and footblock when seated at her desk.

Aoife's dream is to graduate from college with a qualification in legal studies and work with a third world development agency.

Abilities, Skills and Talents	To help Aoife to work towards achieving her personal goals she needs to:
Cheerful with good sense of humour	Improve her grades in all examination subjects
Intelligent	Obtain points for non-standard entry to college
Articulate	Hand in completed homework assignments on time
Independent	
Determined	Acquire study skills
Sense of justice and fairness	Make a plan for transition
Interest in social issues and current affairs	Develop awareness of her strengths and difference through counselling
	Enhance her social communication skills
Priority Learning Needs: Study skills; Social Communication skills (teamwork and perspective taking); Transition plan; Self-Awareness through counselling.	

School Support Plus (for a Few)

Targets	Strategies	Who will help	Start/Review Dates Progress
Study Skills I will: Make a time-management plan	Select subjects from homework diary; allocate time and record on planner, putting vocabulary and grammar (Irish & French) first & reviewing these at end.	Ms. Kelly (CGC)	Start Jan. Week 2 Weekly review.
Attend supervised study four evenings a week	Consult planner; use SQ3R; read text; highlight key points; record on mind-map (using software); complete written assignments; review relevant exam questions	Mr. Tobin (Support Teacher School Completion Programme)	Start Jan. Week 2 Weekly review.
Counselling: Self-Awareness I will: Identify the strengths and talents which will help me to live my life fully and independently	Make inventory; explore ways of using both strengths and difference to reach my potential; identify and discuss role models; use visualisation & breathing techniques.	Ms. Kelly	Start Jan. Week 3 Review beginning of May.
Transition Plan I will: Short-list possible third level courses and careers in law	Carry out career investigation using *Careers Directions*, *Qualifax* and related websites; complete *Occupational Interests Inventory*.	Ms. Kelly	Start March Week 1 Review March Week 4
Meet Joan Fleming, Disability Officer, Institute of Technology	Prepare for visit by listing my needs in terms of non-standard entry requirements, financial and learning support available.	Ms. Kelly will help me to prepare. My mum will accompany me on the visit.	Start first week after Easter holidays. Review beginning of May.
	Following visit, list entry requirements; identify subjects where possible to achieve points; discuss options, set targets to achieve grades in L .Cert. subjects.	Ms. Kelly.	
Social Communication Skills I will: Plan, organise and undertake fund-raising for Trocaire as a member of a team from my Religion class	Engage in team-building exercises; explore & identify: attributes necessary for teamwork; roles and responsibilities of team members.	Ms. Burke (Resource teacher) Ms. O'Brien (Religion teacher)	Start: Feb. Week 2 Review: March Week 4
Listen to and take on board the point of view of others during discussions relating to issues of Social Justice in Religion class	Assist with making posters; preparing Powerpoint presentation for first years; organising first year discussion groups and second year quiz.	Ms. Burke Ms. O'Brien	Start: March Week 2 Review: May Week 2
	Role-play; discuss and list rules for contributing to discussions and turn-taking.		

Case Study

4.3 Case Study- John (emerging needs)

John is a student who has emerging needs and therefore, his history in school involved moving from Support for ALL to School Support and ultimately to School Support Plus. This history is briefly outlined here.

4.3.1 Summary of history of support

John had the benefit of Support for ALL. This consisted of the following:

- Induction programme for 1st years
- Transfer consultation with primary school
- Home School Community Liaison 1st year parents' induction programme
- In-take screening
- Screening of behaviour in first year
- Completion of the Learning Environment Checklist, Section A

Table 1: 1st year Intake Screening Data

Name	DOB	CA	Yr	NRIT	GRT	VMT	SWST
				SS Cent	SS Cent	SS Cent	SS Cent
John	8.10.95	12yr	1st	93, 32nd	84, 15th	92, 30th	72, 3rd

Screening for Behaviour, completed in October of First Year: At Risk

From these screening processes it emerged that a number of students, including John, had both learning and behavioural needs. Interventions to address these students' needs included:

- In service training for whole staff on differentiation
- Whole staff review of rewards and sanctions for homework completion
- Implementation of a reward system to encourage good attendance
- A reminder letter to parents about expected behaviour (attendance and homework) and the relevant rewards and sanctions.

John also received the benefit of the **group support plan**. Strategies included:
- having a seating plan
- teaching classroom rules explicitly
- having procedures for attending learning support (which did not apply to John) an agreed way of storing work folders in certain subjects

Case Study

Summary of School Support
At the beginning of second year John was referred to the learning support team, because of concerns about his written work and he was offered learning support. Additionally, the school support team were considering a range of concerns. It was intended that all teachers would use positive praise and reinforcement techniques and a teacher mentor was appointed, Mr Murphy. However, before the processes were complete, John's behaviour difficulties escalated, warranting more specialist and individualised supports.

4.3.2 Identifying the concern and gathering information

Although John was responding to attendance and work organisation strategies, his behaviour became increasingly difficult to manage. Subsequently, John was moved to School Support Plus, due to 5 suspensions in quick succession. His behaviour had included using threatening and insulting language with teachers, knocking over furniture and books and storming out of school.

Further information was gathered as follows:
- The Head of Year collected detailed information about John's behaviour from each subject teacher, using the Subject Teacher Survey. This helped to identify John's difficulties, as well as his successes.
- The involvement of additional professional input from the NEPS psychologist was requested, starting with a consultation in the school. The psychologist made a number of suggestions for possible interventions in the area of behaviour.
- School staff consulted with John's parents.
- The Head of Year did an in-depth interview with John to try to understand why he was behaving aggressively, using the *Myself as a Learner* format.

(A sample of the Subject Teacher Survey and a copy of John's *Myself as a Learner* are reproduced in the following pages. They are also reproduced in the **resource pack**, as blank templates, see pages 29 and 30-31).

School Support Plus (for a Few)

Subject Teacher Survey (for student with learning or behavioural difficulties)

Student *John McGrath*	Teacher *Ms Doyle*	Subject *History*

This section is to record factors that may affect a child's ability to learn. The number circled allow for comparisons over time.

Area of Concern	Scoring Criteria	Comments
Attitude towards staff	Negative ----------Positive and appropriate 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	*John is usually rude and dismissive. He gets angry very quickly when corrected*
Co-operation with peers	Unable to share --------------Enjoys group with others play/work 1 2 3 (4) 5 6	*Likes to work with others, but needs close supervision*
Motivation	Very little --------------------Self motivated will motivate 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	*Shows no interest in this subject*
Participation and oral response	Withdrawn --------------- Keen to take part or shy 1 2 3 (4) 5 6	
Enthusiasm for written work	Seldom wants ------------ Works hard most to work pride in work 1 2 (3) 4 5 6	*Doesn't mind copying*
Presentation of work	Takes little ------------------- Always takes care of work pride in work 1 2 (3) 4 5 6	
Following verbal instructions	Needs further --------------------- Can work direction alone 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	*Ignores instructions and when corrected gets aggressive*
Following written instructions	Unable to work ------------------- Can work alone alone 1 2 3 4 (5) 6	*Able, but not motivated*
Group size required	Needs constant --------------- Can function one to one in any group 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	
Behaviour in class	Disruptive ------------------- Never disrupts most lessons 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	*Highly disruptive. Teaching is sometimes impossible*
General progress	No progress -------------- Skills/knowledge Increasing 1 2 (3) 4 5 6	
Creativity and innovation	Shows little -------------------- Creative and imagination innovation 1 2 3 (4) 5 6	
Aggressive towards Staff and peers	Assertive and Passive fair (1) 2 3 4 5 6	*Not aggressive to peers, but very insulting and challenging with me*
Tantrums / Sulks	Copes with failure Depressed Appropriately and withdrawn 1 (2) 3 4 5 6	*Cannot take correction*

Please return to: Mr Phelan   By: Friday 9th November

Case Study

My Thoughts about School Checklist

NAME   John   CLASS   2J   DATE October 2009

The things I like best at school are:
PE, breaktimes and home time.

The things I don't like about school are:
Boring work, especially religion and business studies

The things that I am good at are:
Nothing

The things I find hard are:
Maths, history and business studies

I am happy in class when:
I know the answer. I get all my work right

I am happy during break and lunch times when:
I'm with my friends and we go to the shop and have a laugh

My friends are:
Paul, Declan, Hassan and my friends in transition year, Kyle and Jamie

I need help with:
Doing fractions and homework

Teachers in school can help me by:
Explaining the work. Showing me what to do. Not giving so much homework!!

Teachers would describe me as:
Bold. A messer.

My parents would describe me as:
Don't know

Case Study

The following questions can be used if students have an emotional and behaviour difficulty in school:

Adults I get on best with in school are: *Mr Daly and Ms O'Shea*
I get into trouble in school when: *Teachers go on at me about my work and give out to me.*
The things I do that make my teachers feel unhappy are: *Being cheeky, not doing my work, messing and talking back*
The things my teachers do that make me feel unhappy are: *Not explaining things, giving out and shouting*
I make my teachers happy when: *Never*
The things my teachers do that make me feel happy are: *Help me with the work or just leave me alone*
The class rules are: *Do your work and behave. Don't hurt anyone.*
If someone breaks the rules: *They get in trouble with Mrs Byrne and get suspended*
Rewards I like best are: *Money, going out with my friends, no homework*
The things that I need to change are *Not getting so mad and using bad language and going off. Not being in trouble with teachers.*

Case Study

4.3.3 Planning and intervention

With regard to concerns around behaviour, it was agreed an IEP would be implemented straight away. At the planning meeting, strengths and priority targets were identified. A positive behaviour plan was considered most appropriate for John. This involved all teachers implementing particular strategies. John was involved in monitoring his own behaviour, using a Student Target Sheet. Copies of the IEP (Positive Behaviour Plan) and of the Student Target Sheet are reproduced on the following pages (and blank templates are reproduced in the **resource pack**, pages 54 and 57). The NEPS psychologist recommended use of the 'Retracking Programme' (Jenny Bates, 1996), and it was agreed that this would be implemented by the resource teacher.

4.3.4 Monitoring and review

It was also agreed that a formal review would take place after one month. In the meantime informal reviews took place, with John meeting his mentor daily to review the Student Target Sheet and meeting with the school principal every Friday.

When John's progress was reviewed after one month, it was felt that he was responding well to the IEP. Teachers felt that he continued to need this level of input. It was agreed to continue with the current plan for another two months. Please see the copy of the Review Meeting on the following pages. (A blank format can be found in the **resource pack**, page 55).

It was agreed that an individual psychological assessment would be helpful and this was carried out in the following weeks. The assessment process brought new information to light about possible child protection issues, as well as clarifying John's general level of ability. It was found that:

- John was of good average general ability, but had some specific learning difficulties, with particular weakness in the area of spelling.
- John had a marked weakness in auditory sequential memory, which affected his ability to follow verbal instructions in the classroom and to retain memorised material.
- John would benefit from the waiver of spelling and grammar at Junior Certificate.

The NEPS psychologist referred John to the HSE social work team and to HSE clinical services, so that underlying child protection and emotional issues could be addressed.

School Support Plus (for a Few)

Individual Education Plan- Positive Behaviour Target Sheet

Name: John   **Parent(s)/Guardian(s) consent obtained**: Yes __√__ No____

Class: 2J   **Parent(s)/Guardian(s) attended**: Yes____ No____

Behaviours causing concern:
- Acts impulsively and aggressively, has violent outbursts
- Negative attitude to school and learning
- Attention-seeking behaviour

Student's strengths:
- Responds positively to praise
- Articulate
- Creative

Priority Goals:
For John to develop a positive attitude to school and positive relationships with his teachers
For John to increase his awareness of his feelings, triggers and responses to situations
For John to build his confidence and positive self image, thus decreasing attention seeking behaviours

Targets:	Strategies;
1. For John to be able to talk about one strength/ achievement. For John to be able to identify his strengths and competencies.	Student Target Sheet –to be used with John over the next month. Teachers would be asked to rate John's behaviour and only comment if they had a positive comment to note. The importance of rewards for any improvement was stressed.
2. For John to be able to accept praise/ positive feedback from teachers	Teachers to praise John and use 'praise-at-the-point –of-performance' approach
	Mentor: to discuss John's progress with him daily.
3. For John to have no aggressive outbursts/ suspensions in the next four weeks	Self and shared evaluation – i.e. use of teacher comments from report card and John's own self evaluation of his behaviour
	John to attend formal meeting with the Principal every Friday afternoon until the end of term to discuss the week's progress.
	Parents to be telephoned at one in every three of these meetings with specific positive feedback about John
4. For John to be able to identify the thoughts and feelings that trigger angry responses	The Learning Support Teacher to log qualitative record of observed positive behaviour.
	Retracking programme (1996, Jenny Bates). The resource teacher will offer John weekly individual sessions.

	Date:	Review Date:
Signed by student:		
Signed by parent(s)/guardian(s):		
Signed by co-ordinating teacher:		

Case Study

Student Target Sheet

Name: John McGrath   **Class:** 2J   **Date:**

My 3 priority targets are:

1. To say what I am good at

2. To know when I'm getting angry and stop myself

3. To be polite to teachers

Signed by student: _____

Signed by co-ordinating teacher: _____

Teachers are requested to indicate student's progress in relation to priority targets, and add positive comment where possible					G = good, well within target T = on target T- = target almost achieved U = serious difficulties	
Class period	G	T	T -	U	Teacher's signature	Positive Comment
1.	✗					*Tried hard*
2.	✗					
3.		✗				
4.		✗				*Helpful to new student*
5.			✗			
6.	✗					
7.		✗				*Very fast with division problems today. Well done!*
8.			✗			
9.		✗				
10.		✗				

School Support Plus (for a Few)

IEP (Positive Behaviour) Review Meeting   Date:

Attended by:

Student: John

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Mrs Mc Grath

Teacher: Ms O'Shea (learning support) Mr Phelan (Head of Year)

Priority Targets	Progress
1. Talk about strengths/ achievements	*John has collected some very encouraging and positive comments and has been able to identify successes in PE, English and science*
2. Accept praise	*John is responding well to meeting his mentor and Friday meetings with the principal.*
3. Identify triggers for anger	*John has covered key sections in Retracking and has a much better understanding of what triggers angry feelings (thoughts as well as bodily sensations). He is managing much better*

Student's view of what went well:
John thinks things are better because he has only had one (internal) suspension and his Mum is pleased with him.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) view of what went well:
Mrs McGrath is very happy with what the school is doing to help John. She feels the student target sheet was very helpful and she appreciated the phone call from the principal.

Teacher's view of what went well:
Mr Daly has found the Retracking programme very helpful and would like to continue this work with John (and another student).

Outcome of Review:
Continue with current targets: **Yes**/No
Draw up new targets: Yes/**No**
Targets achieved: Yes/No *making good progress, need to keep it up*

Next Review Date:

Signed by Student:	Date:
Signed by Parent(s)/Guardian(s):	
Signed by Co-ordinating Teacher:	

Case Study

4.3.5 Solution Orientated Framework

Solution Orientated Framework

What is the concern? What factors are contributing to the concern? • John is reported to be impulsive and aggressive, with violent outbursts. He is attention-seeking and has a poor attitude to school • Information already collected at the Levels of Support for ALL and School Support • Additional information was collected through the school-wide record keeping for discipline, including details of 5 serious incidents and 5 suspensions • John was interviewed by his Head of Year and completed, *My Thoughts about School* • Information was gathered from subject teachers, using the Subject Teacher Survey • School staff consulted with John's parents	**Identifying concerns & gathering information**
What is working? & How can we help? • Interventions included a referral to the NEPS psychologist, who advised on intervention strategies • A positive behaviour plan (IEP) was developed and John was given a Student Target Sheet to monitor his behaviour • Weekly individual support with a resource teacher delivering the Retracking programme • Liaison between home and school was established • John's progress was monitored both by a mentor and by the school principal	**Planning and intervention**
Did it work? What do we need to do next? • John was reviewed within one month, due to the serious nature of his difficulties • John's behaviour became more stable, although it was felt that he needed on-going support • John is having a psychological assessment and findings will inform the next planning period • The review meeting identified the need for liaison with HSE social work department • The behavioural plan will continue to be implemented until the end of term, when another review will be held	**Monitoring and review**

Conclusion

This continuum of support outlines a process by which schools can meet the needs of all students, including those with additional needs. The Continuum is built on the principles of effective learning for all, with a preventative, early-intervention approach. For that reason, special attention is paid to the Support for ALL stage, which includes school-wide screening, the monitoring of student progress and the use of evidence-based interventions.

The Continuum document builds on the good practice already in evidence in many post-primary schools and aims to share examples of creative and reflective practice. While this document is presented as coherent guidelines for use in schools, it is not based on any one school model or school experience, but rather draws on the many examples of excellent practice which NEPS psychologists encounter in their work. Therefore we wish to thank the teachers, parents and students who have contributed in so many ways to these guidelines.

The solution-orientated framework is intended to give schools a systematic way of identifying needs, planning interventions and reviewing progress. This framework can be implemented for systemic or whole-school responses as well as for responses to individual students or groups of students.

It is hoped that schools will find this guidance helpful and will draw on the various materials and suggestions presented in the supporting resource pack. Teachers will use their expertise and professional judgement in deciding how best to implement aspects of the Continuum in their own context.

As the educational, economic and social landscape changes, so this document will need to be revised and updated. Therefore, although published in its present form, it is also available on the web; www.education.ie. This electronic version will be revised and updated, as needed.

Glossary

Glossary of Acronyms

CAT 3	Cognitive Abilities Test (third edition)
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
GRT	Group Reading Test
HSCLT	Home School Community Liaison Teacher
HSE	Health Service Executive Teacher
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
IPLP	Individual Profile and Learning Plan
JCSP	Junior Certificate Schools Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LEC	Learning Environment Checklist
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Education and Welfare Board
NRIT	Non-Reading Intelligence Test
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organiser
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SWST	Single Word Spelling Test
VMT	Vernon Maths Test
WRAT 4	Wide Range Achievement Test- fourth edition

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Please refer to the separate RESOURCE PACK, for templates and supporting materials. The Contents of the resource pack are:

Creating Positive Learning Environments

Understanding Adolescence
Completion of Learning Environment Checklist (LEC) - Notes
The Learning Environment Checklist (LEC) Post-Primary
Completion of the LEC Summary Chart
LEC Summary Chart
Learning Environment Intervention Plan
Positive classroom rules- examples
Guideposts to providing a positive climate

Gathering Information

Post-Primary Transfer Review
Sample Parental Consent Form
Subject Teacher Survey
My Thoughts about School Checklist
Gathering Information Checklist
Guidance for Gathering Information Checklist
Understanding psychological reports

In-school Screening and Assessment

Guidelines for Intake Screening
Guidance on Diagnostic/ Individual Tests and Tests for Older Students
Screening for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
The Screening for Behaviour Framework
Screening for Behaviour Form
Screening for Behaviour Summary Chart

Planning, Monitoring and Reviewing

Support for SOME Individual Plan
Student Support Team Meeting Record
Student Support Team Action Plan
IEP- Positive behaviour target sheet
IEP- Positive behaviour review meeting
Guidelines for positive behaviour target meetings
Student target sheet

Effective Interventions

Effective Interventions for Students with Literacy Difficulties
Effective Interventions for Teaching Maths Skills
Effective Interventions for Students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

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