**Communication & Language Policy**

**Introductory Statement and Rationale:**

**Introductory Statement:**

The introduction and implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum began in 2015 when Circular 61/2015 was issued. St. Francis Special School is currently implementing all strands of the PLC.

The Primary Language Curriculum contains Learning Outcomes and associated Progression Continua. The Learning Outcomes describe the expected language learning and development for children at the end of a two-year period.

The Progression Continua break down the learning outcomes across a number of milestones, from ‘early a’ to ‘h’, mapping out the journey that children of a wide range of abilities will take on their way towards a learning outcome.

Children with severe and profound difficulties may be at the ‘early a’ milestone. Children with moderate difficulties may be between ‘early a’ to ‘d’. The wide stretch of milestones reflects the wide range of children’s needs at this level.

The Special Educational Needs Pathways or SEN Pathways consist of seven pathways which describe, in broad terms, learning and development for children with more complex needs. These pathways are beneficial to teachers of children with more complex needs whose progress may be slow and otherwise difficult to recognise. They can be used together with the Primary Language Progression Continua to support teachers in recognising and supporting such children’s progress within a progression milestone or a progression step. The SEN pathways are designed to take account of the incremental nature of progression among children with more complex needs. Although the SEN pathways are sequential, the complex nature of the needs of the children in question means that a child may be at an attending level in some areas of learning and at a higher or lower level in another. Progress may not be linear and some may continue at an SEN pathway in relation to a progression step for a considerable time.

**Rationale:**

Language learning enables children to understand the world around them and to communicate effectively with others.

Communication takes many forms, from the nonverbal and verbal to print based and digital texts.

Through interacting with adults in the social environment, children are initiated into, and engage in, communicative relationships through which they come to understand, interpret, construct meaning and critically appreciate the communication of others.

**Vision:**

* Our school cherishes all pupils equally and acknowledges the Communication Bill of Rights for each student (see resources).
* A total communication approach is currently being implemented and will be embedded in the school by 2021.
* Total Communication is about supporting people to understand and to be understood. It is about communicating in different ways.

This policy recommends the implementation of total communication in all areas of school and by all people in the child’s environment. (see Total Communication Standards BOCSS).

**Assessment and Planning:**

Along with the child’s individual educational plan (IEP), the SEN pathways and Progression Continua support teachers in planning the next steps in teaching, learning and assessment. The Primary Language Curriculum support teachers in preparing for and differentiating their teaching and learning.

Together, these supports along with a whole school approach and parental involvement can support a child with more complex needs to engage with appropriate, relevant and meaningful learning experiences. The Primary Language Curriculum and its supports enable every child to experience and enjoy as broad a curriculum as possible.

| SEN Paths | The child.... |
| --- | --- |
| Experiencing | Is present during a learning activity, s/he is exposed and/or awake and/or exposed to the learning environment. S/he is beginning to acclimatise to the learning environment such as objects, people, sounds and other sensory experiences. |
| Attending | Becomes attentive to and/or engaged with the learning activities presented by changing gesture, posture, vocalisation, eye gaze, movement etc. S/he is acclimatised to the learning environment. |
| Responding | Demonstrates capacity to actively or purposefully take an interest in the learning environment in the learning environment. S/he begins to indicate likes, dislikes or preferences. S/he actively responds to a learning activity with or without support. |
| Initiating | Shows curiosity about the learning environment. S/he actively and independently seeks opportunities to engage with and/or influence that environment. |
| Acquiring | Demonstrates that knowledge, a concept or a skill is being learned. S/he explores and participates in the learning. |
| Becoming  Fluent | Moves towards fluency and accuracy in familiar learning contexts. S/he independently and consistently demonstrates recall mastery of the skill/concept/knowledge learned. |
| Generalising | Transfers and applies learned skills, knowledge or concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts. |

* Teachers will have yearly school plan, using monthly themes.
* The Cuntas Míosúil will record work completed along with Portfolios, IEP’s and Checklists.
* Assessments will be carried out termly, working on targets individual to each student (see list assessment materials).
* Monthly staff review meeting on implementing Total Communication Approach.
* Programmes from Speech Language Therapist, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists will be incorporated in targets.

**Linkage and Integration:**

* St. Francis Special School follows a whole school planning theme with monthly themed activities.
* PLC will link with all other curriculum areas.

**Staff Development:**

* Teachers will engage with PDST, SESS, in implementing the PLC.
* All staff will engage with training in implementing Total Communication Approach within the school.
* Training can consist of In School Workshops, training with KIDS and WLCS, Lámh tutors etc.

**Parental Involvement:**

* Parents are informed of Primary Language Curriculum through communication diaries, parent/teacher and IEP meetings and Parent Review Meetings.
* Workshops are offered to Parents on programmes.

**Community Links for Total Communication Approach:**

* Transition Year Students engage in Lámh project with St. Francis Special School.
* Local shops and restaurants are involved in enabling our students to communicate their needs when shopping and dining out.

**Success Criteria:**

* Completed Individual Assessments.
* Total Communication Approach is embedded in the school.

**Implementation:**

The Principal will co-ordinate the progress of the plan and collaboratively work with staff to monitor and revaluate programmes.

The following will be consulted in appraising the Primary Learning Curriculum:

* Teachers and SNA’s
* Pupils and Parents
* CDNT South Kerry and WLCS
* Board of Management and Inspectorate.

# Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Francis Special School on\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every two years. Next review of this policy will occur during the school year of 2023/2024.

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



Chairperson:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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