**Special Education Policy**

**Scoil Cholmcille Junior,**

**Ballybrack**

**Roll No: 19641T**

1. **Introduction**

The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998*.* The focus of the policy is on the process the teachers may use to identify and cater for the special educational needs of individual pupils.The process moves from simple classroom based interventions to in-class support or withdrawal whereby one or more teachers are assigned to each class grouping to cater for children requiring learning support, low incidence teaching hours/resource and/or behaviour management.

1. **Rationale**

The rationale for this policy is to ensure compliance with the Education Act (1998) the Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), Disability Bill (2002), and the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004).

1. **Relationship to School Ethos**

Scoil Cholmcille Junior strives to create learning opportunities for all children and that commitment underpins all school planning and policy documents. We particularly strive to cater for the most challenged children as their presence in the school enriches the entire school community.

1. **Guiding Principles**

We want all children particularly those with disabilities to feel that they are a valued part of the school community. We do this through inclusion, which has at its core, the following principles

**4(a) Setting suitable learning challenges**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

**4(b) Responding to children’s diverse learning needs**

We aim to provide the greatest amount of educational support possible through early recognition of problem areas in a child’s learning.

**4 (c) Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children**

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements.

This Special Education Policy permeates all aspects of school life and is reflected the school’s policies, practices and activities.

Thus, the Special Education Policy underpins the following policies

* **The** **Child Protection Policy**
* **The Enrolment Policy**
* **The Health and Safety Policy**
* **The Assessment and Recording Policy**
* **The Data Protection Policy**
* **The Code of Behaviour**
* **The Anti-Bullying Policy**
* **The Parental Involvement Policy**
* **The Communication Policy**
* **The First Aid Policy**

**5. Aims and Objectives**

* To ensure all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education
* To set out the whole school approach to teaching and learning regarding pupils thus enabling all pupils with disabilities in the school to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.
* To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs
* To provide a graduated approach in order to match educational provision to children’s needs
* To develop a partnership with parents.
* To use all resources efficiently and equitably so that these children develop as learners, engage meaningfully with the curriculum and develop the skills and competencies necessary to lead an independent life.

**6. Roles and Responsibilities:**

In attempting to follow the above guiding principles and achieve the objectives, the Board of Management, Principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

**6.1 Board of Management:**

The Board of Management will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs, by ensuring

* the development, implementation and review of the Special Education Policy.
* that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for.
* adequate funds are made available for the purchase of learning support materials.
* a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of support services is available.

**6.2 Principal**

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. She will work closely with the Special Educational Team (S.E.T.) and will keep the Board of Management informed about the working of this policy.

**The Principal Teacher will:**

* Assume overall responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the school’s policies on special educational needs in co-operation with the Special Educational Team (S.E.T.) and Home/School/Community/Liaison teacher and assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating Learning Support and Special Needs services.
* Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Support and Special Needs on an ongoing basis.
* Organise meetings with S.E.T. Psychologists, Speech Therapists S.E.N.O. etc, as need arises during the school year.
* Oversee the implementation of the whole school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
* Keep teachers informed of the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals, and also to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Special Education.

**6.3 Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class including those selected for supplementary teaching.

A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated (Learning Support guidelines, p.42). This principle of differentiation is adhered to by the following:

1. Modifying presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities.
2. Placing an emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
3. Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
4. Grouping children for instruction, setting learning targets at an appropriate level.
5. Providing lower-achieving pupils with strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving.
6. Adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils, which are suitably challenging and ensure success and progress.
7. Error analysis of a pupils work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty.
8. Liaising closely with parents, Home/School/Community/Liaison and other professionals.

Central to the success of this policy is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the Special Educational Team. This will be achieved through formal timetabling once a term, and through informal consultation as the need arises.

For each pupil who is in receipt of learning support, the class teacher will collaborate with the learning support teacher in the development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme (I.P.L.P), which will identify appropriate learning targets and specify classroom activities to achieve those targets. He / She will differentiate the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities of the IPLP / IEP and maintain a record of the pupil’s progress.

It is accepted practice for class teacher to consult with the parents/guardians of all their pupils from time to time. In the case of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and/or a learning difficulty following administration of an appropriate screening measure, the class teacher should:

* Make parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child’s progress.
* Outline the schools practice regarding the administration of diagnostic tests by the learning support teacher and the support that is available in the school to pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

**6.4 Special Education Team**

The Special Education team is made up of the learning support teachers, the resource teachers and the special needs assistants.

**6.4(a) Learning Support Teacher**

The role of the learning support teacher is to provide teaching in literacy and numeracy to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with **the Special Education Selection Process.** (See Table 1 below)

The learning support teacher works closely with the class teacher providing in-class support for literacy and numeracy. Pupils may be withdrawn from the mainstream class for a specific purpose or for a specific length of time.

**The Learning Support Teachers will**

* Conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and / or a learning difficulty, based on results of the appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil’s individual profile and learning programme.
* Develop of an I.P.L.P for children who are selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with class teachers.
* Deliver intense early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching in English and (Maths caseload permitting). .
* Provide support to the class teacher about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties.
* Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classes and in the learning support teacher’s room.
* Collaborate with the principal teacher on issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on learning support, and to the provision of learning support.
* Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short term objectives that arise from them, and record the observation in the weekly planning and progress record.

**and where possible:**

* Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
* Co-ordinating the implementation of whole school procedures for selecting pupils for supplementary teaching.

**The learning support teacher plays an important role in co-ordinating the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching. The learning support teacher should:**

* Co-ordinate the administration by class teacher of a whole school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and /or learning difficulties in English and Maths.
* Consult with class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, taking into account the pupils scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure, agreed criteria for identifying pupils, teacher’s own views of the pupils difficulties and needs and the number of pupils to whom learning support can be provided.
* Carry out a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties and, in consultation with the class teacher and parents, identify the type and level of learning support that is needed to meet the pupil’s needs.

**6.4(b) The Resource Teacher**

The role of the resource teacher is to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. The child is taught directly by the resource teacher, in a separate room or within the mainstream if the child concerned will derive benefit from team teaching. The resource teachers have access to a sensory room known as ‘The Den’ where the children participate in active circuit training for self-regulation needs. The children can also avail of the tent in the sensory room to help them find a sense of calmness before returning to the classroom. The resource teachers in Scoil Cholmcille Junior provide social groups and fine motor skills groups.

**The Resource Teacher will:**

* Develop an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) for each child who is in receipt of resource hours, in consultation with the principal teacher, class teacher, parents/guardians and other professionals who assessed the child’s needs.
* Maintain a fortnightly planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual in receipt of resource hours.
* Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with the child’s particular and individual needs.
* Research the pupil’s specific assessed need, to become au fait with this impediment to learning.
* Liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care, and implement recommendation from them, wherever possible.
* Maintain confidential records on each of his/her pupils.
* Assess the pupils on an on-going basis, and record their progress.
* Liaise with class teachers regularly.
* Meet with parents/guardians of each pupil who is in receipt of resource hours to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
* Assess all Junior Infants with Smart Moves (gross motor skills development programme)
* Implement the Smart Moves programme for children who have poor gross motor skills.

**6.4(c) The Special Needs Assistant**

The SNA staff will provide optimum learning experiences for all special education needs children by effectively supporting the class teacher. They will participate in IEP meetings and target the specific needs of the children with Special Educational Needs.

**The special needs assistants will provide additional support commensurate with the child’s particular and individual needs, such as:**

* Supporting teacher in enabling the pupil to access the curriculum.
* Supporting the child with walking frames/ hearing aids / radio aids etc where necessary.
* Assisting teacher with home school communication book.
* Using digital camera and print photos for visual prompts.
* Photographing relevant class / support materials being used in class
* Observing child’s responses and make Teacher aware if the child is not understanding.
* Making pupil aware of all announcements and write down if necessary acting as note taker where needed.
* Linking with Resource teachers re relevant notices / class topics etc so this information can be reinforced for the pupil.
* Monitoring social / emotional wellbeing and facilitate inclusion in the yard , during breaks, group situations etc
* Flagging up concerns or need for intervention
* Supporting and extending pupil’s language development across all curricular / extra curricular areas.
* Withdraw children and accompany them to ‘The Den’ as part of movement breaks, or where the child might be distressed and needs quiet time.

This is not an exhaustive list. In reference to Circular 30/2014 a comprehensive list of safety and care duties is to be found in Appendix 1

**6.5 The Parents/Guardians:**

Scoil Cholmcille Junior endeavours to encourage and facilitate a pro-active role for parents in their children’s learning in keeping with the ethos of Scoil Cholmcille Junior, which recognise parents as the primary educators of their children. The role of parents supporting the educational needs of their children is vital to its success.

Parents contribute through regular communication with the class teacher and Special Education team. Please refer to

* Parental Involvement Policy Communication Policy

**Attendance**

It is the school’s policy to monitor all pupils’ attendance. Particular attention is drawn to parents of children who attend learning support, that places in learning support are limited and if a child has persistent and unexplained absence, the place in learning support may be forfeited and offered to another child.

**6.6 The Pupil:**

Pupils are encouraged to be proactive in their own learning. They are encouraged to participate fully in the activities and to behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. They are also expected to complete homework given by the learning support/resource teacher.

**6.7 Other Professionals**

The school staff welcome the contributions of other professionals, such as Educational Psychologists, Speech and language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Therapists, Visiting Teachers etc., and they may be involved indirectly, offering consultation and advice in relation to appropriate approaches for pupils presenting with early difficulties.

**7. The Policy in Action: Special Education Selection Process**

##### In Keeping with best practice, as a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:

* The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
* Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
* The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths, e.g. our whole school approach to the teaching of Mental Maths
* Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the provision of the Tips for Parents booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of regular school emails/newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parent’ Association.

It is the policy of Scoil Cholmcille Junior that a **staged approach** to assessment, identification and programme planning be implemented*.* The school’s Assessment and Recording policy identifies all the assessment and testing conducted in the school for all children. However the following Special Education selection process occurs when a class teacher identifies a child with learning difficulties despite a differentiated class curriculum.

The triggers for further intervention could be;

* The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
* The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
* Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
* Has sensory or physical difficulties
* Has communication and / or relationship difficulties.

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| **A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with**  **Special Educational Needs** | | |
| **Observation** | **Process** | **Personnel Involved** |
| **Stage 1 Classroom Support**  Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil‟s academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development | Class teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil’s identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents. | * ***Class teacher*** * ***Parent***   ***Additional Supports Available***   * ***SEN Teacher*** * ***NEPS Psychologist*** |
| ***If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2, School Support*** | | |
| **Stage 2 School Support**  Child is referred to learning support teacher, for further diagnostic testing. | If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil’s learning plan. | * ***Class teacher*** * ***Parent*** * ***SEN Teacher***   ***Additional Supports Available***   * ***Visiting Teacher*** * ***NEPS Psychologist*** * ***Other Support Staff /Speech Therapist*** |
| ***If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3 School Plus Support*** | | |
| **Stage 3**  School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school. | A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary. | * ***Class teacher*** * ***Parent*** * ***Learning Support Teacher*** * ***Resource Teacher (if available)*** * ***Relevant Specialist***   **Additional Supports Available** |
| * ***NEPS Psychologist*** * ***Scheme for*** * ***Commissioning Psychological Assessments*** * ***Speech and Language*** * ***Therapist*** * ***Occupational*** * ***Therapist*** * ***Psychiatrist*** * ***Audiologist*** * ***Paediatrician*** |

**7.1 Classroom support:**

Access to the school’s broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher identifies a child with learning difficulties the class teacher may consult with the Special education team for advice on and interventions that are additional to those provided as part of the school’s usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher. At this stage the teacher can begin a Student Support File (NEPS) to record the differentiated support in class. The Class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child’s parents and will complete and monitor the Student Profile form. If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage.

# 7.2 School Support:

Essentially School Support level involves all the components from the Classroom Support level plus additional support and focussed teaching time from SEN teacher which may include in-class support or withdrawal to SEN room.

**7.3 School Support Plus**:

This process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem solving to help the pupil. School Support Plus applies to those pupils whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions in Classroom Support and School Support.

**Students with Low Incidence Disabilities have their needs met automatically through the School Support Plus process**.

The triggers for intervention for **School Support Plus** could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child

* + Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
  + Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
  + Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
  + Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child’s learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and IEP
  + Has sensory and/ or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
  + Has ongoing communication or relationship difficulties that prevent social development, and act as a barrier to learning.

When the special educational needs of the child have been confirmed by the psychologist an application for resource hours will be forwarded to the SENO. The SENO will determine whether the child falls into the category of Lower Incidence or High Incidence. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child is not coping in the classroom setting, a special needs assistant may be applied for.

An Individual Education Plan is drawn up based on the assessment gathered

The I.E.P. will describe:

* The nature and degree of the pupil’s special educational needs and how these affect educational development
* The present level of educational performance of the pupil
* The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from education including:
* intervention programmes (small group or individual)
* Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
* Specific equipment/materials and /or IT supports needed to support learning and access to the curriculum
* SNA support if required

The management of I.E.P‟s. is the responsibility of class teachers and support teachers. Parents are invited to participate in meeting with class teacher, support teacher as well as any other relevant professionals. A review is conducted twice yearly. If a child is reaching targets consistently he/she may revert to a classroom setting and no longer requires support at School Support Plus level. It may then be decided that the child’s needs may be met by having a School Support plan put in place.

### 7.4 Exceptionally Able Pupils

We are committed to providing an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential and this clearly must include students who display some sort of exceptional ability. Students who are exceptionally able belong on a continuum of students with specific educational requirements.

Approximately 5% of the school population may be exceptionally able and may demonstrate very high levels of attainment in one or more of the following areas:

* general intellectual ability or talent
* specific academic aptitude or talent
* visual and performing arts and sports
* leadership ability
* creative and productive thinking
* mechanical ingenuity
* special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation

We are aware that unnecessary repetition of work is de-motivating and de-motivated students will not always demonstrate potential. Therefore opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into all our schemes of work. We aim to

* Encourage all students to be independent learners
* Adopt high expectations
* Recognise achievement
* Always provide work at an appropriate level and design tasks to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
* Plan extension opportunities or open-ended tasks
* Provide opportunities for all students to work with like-minded peers.

**8. Provision of Resources**

* Resources for the provision of SEN teaching include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use, which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment tests.
* Following consultation between the Special Education Team, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided from funding that may be available through the Board of Management
* Learning support resources will be primarily be used in the learning support room. These resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the learning support teacher

**9. Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that “A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs”. Parents are required to notify the school of their child’s special needs in advance of enrolment through the Home School liaison teacher. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child’s medical or psychological report. No child can be refused admission solely on the grounds that he/she has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

**10. Timetabling**

Timetabling for Resource and Learning Support is done through a collaborative approach between Class teachers, Support teachers and Principal. Every effort is made to ensure that children are not removed from the same curricular area each day. Due recognition is taken of the specific needs of each child.

# 11. Communication

A copy of this policy will be made available to teachers, parents of SEN pupils and other parents on request. It is also available on school website

**12. Success Criteria**

* The school’s wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:
* Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil’s individual learning programme
* Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of SEN teaching based on positive assessment results
* Positive inclusion practices
* Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child’s learning needs
* Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil’s progress

**13. Implementation and Review**

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the principal and the Special Education Team.

Following staff reviews of the policy, a report will be issued to the Board of Management to confirm that the actions/measures set down under the policy are being implemented.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated every two years. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the N.C.S.E and Department of Education and Skills) and from feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

Signed: …………………………………………………………………….. Date: ……………………………………

*For and on behalf of Board of Management*

Appendix 1

**Special Needs Assistants Safety and Care Duties**

* Assistance with feeding: where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
* Administration of medicine: where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
* Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: (including catheterisation) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
* Assistance with mobility and orientation: on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)
* Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision
* Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
* Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
* Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
* Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs (See also section 9) and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.
* Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.
* Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
* Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
* Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal
* Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel1, including class teachers or support teachers.
* Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.