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# LEARNING RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### Sutton Park School Mission Statement and Philosophy:

**“ We nurture and develop the best qualities in each of our students”.**

*We are committed to fostering a sense of identity and self worth in each of our students. We are committed to developing a well-rounded individual, with skills, attitudes, sensibilities and personal initiative that will allow each to grow into mature, confident adults.*

*We are committed to developing the whole person – morally, intellectually, aesthetically, spiritually and physically in a caring, innovative, multi- denominational environment. We are committed to striving for high academic standards and in so doing we seek to challenge each of our students to achieve the best they can.*

*We are committed to ensuring that each of our students embraces the whole world, community and culture, while at the same time fostering an appreciation of Irish culture in which the school is rooted. We recognise that serving both the school (students, staff and parents) and the wider community is a cornerstone of our philosophy and we are committed to developing in each student innovative capabilities to participate in a dynamic world environment.*

This policy on Learning Support/ Resource provision for Sutton Park School was formulated, taking cognisance of directives contained in the 1998 Education Act; the Learning Support Guidelines (2000); the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004) and D.E.S. circulars SpEd Circular 02/05.

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision



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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 1. Situation

#### Rationale

Sutton Park School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which will offer equal access for all students. As a school we recognise that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs/ learning difficulties during their time at Sutton Park School must be addressed in a supportive manner. We will make every possible arrangement, within the constraints of the resources available, to provide for their individual needs while attending Sutton Park School.

Priority will be given to students who qualify for teaching support hours as defined by the National Council for Special Education (N.C.S.E.) i.e.: Students whose overall cognitive score is in the average range and their score in reading/ writing and maths is at or below the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile.

Priority will also be given to students whose achievement is at or below the tenth percentile on standardised tests of reading or mathematics in accordance with circular 02/05 DES. These students fall within the general allocation laid down by the National Council for Special Education.

Students with conditions such as Dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD, and Aspergers Syndrome who have been assessed in accordance with the Department of Education criteria will receive an individual allocation of support.

At present Sutton Park School has one full time Learning Resource coordinator, one part- time teacher of Learning Support and one part-time special needs assistant. (20 hours) The total teaching support allocation as from 6/10/10 is 57 hours in total. 22 hours are allocated to the Learning Support Co- coordinator. Of the 22 hours 19.05 hours are allocated within the Senior School and 2.50 hours are allocated within the Junior School. The remaining 31 hours are allocated to individual teachers on their timetable. It should be noted that that the teaching support hour allocation is subject to change throughout the academic year based on the needs of the students.

#### Definition

The term special educational needs can be defined as a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made. “ Learning difficulty,” means that the student has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of his or her age and / or has a disability, which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities. “ Special educational provision means educational provision which is different from, or in additional to the provision made generally for children of comparable age”.



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### 2. Aims of Learning Resource

The principal aim of the Learning Resource Department is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with specific learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in all curriculum areas.

#### 2.1 Subsidiary Aims

- To provide a broad and balanced relevant and differentiated curriculum as a right for all.
- To identify students with special educational needs as early as possible through a variety of strategies and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
- To develop positive self esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English/ Irish/ French and / or Mathematics where extra support is required
- To encourage parental involvement and co-operation between various professionals in the diagnosis and treatment of special needs students.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for pupils
- To provide experiences and opportunities, which allow pupils to develop knowledge understanding and skills, which will ensure progress, promote success and develop self-confidence.
- To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each student's performance can be monitored.
- To create a caring and supportive environment in which students can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their learning needs.
- To develop and utilise all available resources in support of students with special needs.
- To treat all students regardless of ability with respect at all times.
- To provide extra support in the form of classroom assistance where appropriate.

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all: - The Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Class Teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, (SENCO) Parents and Children. It is important that everyone contributes in the planning and implementation of our school plan on Learning Resource Provision.

#### 4.1 Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the Learning Resource policy.
- Ensure that all pupils' special educational needs are addressed.
- Have regard for Department of Education Policy on special needs provision.
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for special needs students.

#### 4.2 Role of Head Teacher

*"The principal Teacher has overall responsibility for the school's Learning Resource programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs." (Learning Support Guidelines, p 38)*

The Head Teacher should:

- Keep the Board of Management informed about Special Educational Needs issues.
- Work closely on partnership with the SENCO
- Where necessary liaise with parents and external support agencies
- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on Learning Resource and special needs in co-operation with the Learning Resource Coordinator.
- Work with Teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on Learning Resource and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Resource and special needs on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Oversee the implementation of a 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 about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
- Help Teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of Learning Resource.
- Liaise regularly with the Learning Resource Coordinator. *"In order to support the implementation of school policy on learning support as outlined in the school plan, the principal Teacher should arrange a meeting with the Learning Resource Coordinator at least once each school term to discuss*

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*the implementation of the school plan on learning support" (Learning - Support Guidelines, p. 40).*

- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating Learning Resource services.
- This specifically includes allocation of teaching support hours to individual teachers based on the allocation specified by the N.C.S.E.



## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4.3 Role of Class Teacher

- The *Learning Support Guidelines* (2000) advocate a significant change in the role of the Class Teacher in terms of increasing emphasis on consultation with the Learning Resource Coordinator and with parents.
- The Class Teacher has primary responsibility *for* the progress of all pupils in her / his 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 Resource Guidelines, p. 42)
- The class teacher is responsible for gathering information through informal assessment/ observation.
- The class teacher should complete a referral form (copy available in workroom) if they have concerns regarding any students' progress.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, the Class Teacher should collaborate with the Learning Resource Coordinator in the development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- Group teaching
  - Modifying presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
  - Placing an emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
  - Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
  - Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
  - Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
  - Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty, for particular attention in subsequent lessons.
- A key role of successful Learning Resource is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Learning Resource Coordinator. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes.



## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4.4 Role of Learning Resource Co-Coordinator

The activities of the Learning Resource Co-Coordinator should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. According to the Learning-Support Guidelines (2000), *“The particular balance that the learning-support teacher achieves between supplementary teaching and consultative activities will depend on the specific circumstances of the school”* (p.32).

The Learning Resource Co-Coordinator’s activities are:

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- Co-ordinate the day-to-day provision of the school’s SEN Policy.
- Development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching as identified by the N.C.S.E. in consultation with class teachers and parents.
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching where appropriate.
- Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, giving due consideration to:
  - The selection criteria specified in this Learning Resource Policy
  - Teachers' professional observations
  - Input from parents
- Contributing to the development of policy on Learning Resource at the whole-school level
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
  - Individual pupil assessment
  - Programme planning
  - Curriculum differentiation
  - Approaches to language development
  - Approaches to reading
  - Approaches to spelling
  - Approaches to writing
- Contributing at the 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 classrooms and in the Learning Resource Coordinator’s room.
- Liaising with external agencies such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists etc. to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Collaborate with the Head of School and Principals of the Intermediate and Junior School, meet with them at least once each school term to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Resource, and to the provision of Learning Resource. This is to be formalised as part of staff meeting timetable
- Meetings with Learning Support Team once a term as part of whole school staff meetings.



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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

- The Learning Resource Coordinator should work closely with Class Teachers to implement school policies on helping to remediate learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching and other forms of Learning Resource, where it is deemed necessary.
- The Learning Resource Coordinator is responsible for organising Reasonable Accommodations in all State Examinations and where possible house exams.
- The Learning Resource Coordinator also attends a weekly student support meeting with Guidance Counsellor, and Deputy Head

### 4.5 In the Primary Division of the School:

- The Learning Resource Coordinator plays an important role in co-ordinating the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching. The Learning Resource Coordinator will where feasible
  - 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 within the junior and intermediate school, agree criteria for identifying pupils, teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs and the number of pupils to whom Learning Resource 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 Resource that is needed to meet the pupil's needs.
- In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the Learning Resource Coordinator is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. The Learning Resource Coordinator 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 an appropriate screening measure, and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme.
  - 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 observations in the weekly Planning and Progress Record, or equivalent.
  - Review the progress of each pupil the end of an instructional term and record it on the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme.
  - I.E.P. 's should only be completed for students whom have been allocated hours as specified by the N.C.S.E.



## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4.5 Role of Parents

*"Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programmes"* (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.52). Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling begins.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
  - To participate and encourage and support their child's efforts to meet their targets and all homework assignments.
  - To give consent when considered necessary by the school to make a request for a further stage of support for the child e.g.: Educational Psychologists to cooperate with any arrangements made with out of school professionals to provide support.
- To participate and encourage and support their student's efforts to meet their targets.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in their child's Individual Profile and Learning Programme and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home. If, following diagnostic assessment, the child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, the parents should attend a meeting with the Learning Resource Coordinator to discuss:
  - The results of the assessment
  - The learning targets in the child's Individual Profile and Learning programme
  - The actions to be taken by the school to meet those targets
  - The ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
- Where a child is in receipt of supplementary teaching from the Learning Resource Coordinator, the parents should:
- Provide the class teacher and the SENCO with any information which may be relevant- students health, early development
  - Discuss their child's progress with the Learning Resource Coordinator at the end of each instructional term, and, in cases where supplementary teaching is to be continued, discuss the revised learning targets and activities in their child's Individual Profile and Learning Programme

At the discontinuation of supplementary teaching, discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home

- Participate in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4.6 Role of Pupils

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Become familiar with the medium and short-term learning targets that have been set for them and they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of such targets.
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills in order to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

*"The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle underlining effective supplementary teaching"* (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.54).

### 4.7 Role of the Special Needs Assistant

- The role of the S.N.A. will be in keeping with the criteria set out in circular SNA 12/05.
- The S.N.A. is employed for 20 hours per week for one particular student diagnosed with Downs Syndrome.
- The duties of the S.N.A. are of a non-teaching nature.
- The S.N.A. is employed to look after the physical needs of the student.

### 5.3 Screening, Assessment and Permissions

#### Policy for Learning-Support Provision

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

The Policy for Learning-Support Provision has been developing and evolving since the creation of Learning Resource Department.

### Strategies used for Identification:

Students in need of Learning Support within the Junior and Intermediate schools are identified using standardised testing and teacher observation .

Students in need of Learning Support within the Senior School are identified using the standardised CAT screening test in the first term in first year. Students are again monitored in Transition year with the administration of the DAT test by the Guidance Department.

#### 1. Initial Screening

Class teachers will provide the initial feedback to the Learning Resource Coordinator in the event of noticeable difficulties arising in the areas of literacy or numeracy.

Parents also make referrals at any time. The students referred are assessed and interventions are put in place if it is deemed advantageous to do so.

#### 2. Diagnostic Assessment

The Learning Resource Coordinator will discuss feedback results with the staff and carry out further screening tests and /or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary.

The Learning Resource Coordinator may recommend that a student have a full educational psychological assessment.

The Learning Resource Coordinator then makes application for senior school students to the National Council for Special Education for additional resource teaching hours or special needs assistant hours for students who have been appropriately assessed and whom meet the relevant criteria for Special Education as defined by Circular 08/02.

On some occasions it may be appropriate to include information from doctors, health visitors, social workers and relevant personnel.

#### 3. Parental Permissions

1. Written parental permissions are required for children to attend the Learning Resource Department.
2. Written parental permissions are also required for the learning support teacher to undertake individual diagnostic testing.



## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### 4. Strategies to Meet the needs of students with Special Education Needs

- Careful planning, curricular modifications, activity based teaching methodologies, the identification of appropriate learning outcomes, the adaptation of teaching materials and the use of assessment procedures which build on a students strengths are essential .The assistance of SNA and in class support will further facilitate the learning environment within the mainstream class.
- Students may need, in addition, certain accommodations such as hearing aids, computers and other assistive technology.

### 5. Procedure for Acquiring an Exemption from Irish

- Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate within the senior school (Circular M 10/94)
- The school will consider granting an exemption from Irish when a written request is made by the students parents and the school is furnished with a psychological report not more than two years old and supporting documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular M 10/94)
- Formal exemptions are only granted within the senior school, as Junior and Middle school do not come under the auspices of the Department of Education.
- If a student meets the criteria as laid down in Cir M 10/94 within the Junior and Middle School a temporary exemption which is formalised on entry into the Senior School.

### 6. Curricular Modifications

- Exemptions from French / German are considered on an individual basis on consultation with parents, class teachers, learning resource coordinator, guidance counsellor and the Head Teacher.
- Other curricular modifications are considered for individual students where deemed absolutely necessary. Consultation with all relevant parties is deemed essential when making decisions.

**The timetabled periods which become available due to such curricular modifications will be used where possible, to implement individual learningsupport.**

### **6. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching**

- An instructional term is generally taken to mean 13-20 weeks of instruction.
- Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and the pupil (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the criteria for receiving learning resource.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with pupils who have made satisfactory progress.
- Should parents decide that they wish their child to discontinue with

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supplementary teaching a letter of request should be made to the school, a copy of which will be kept on the students file within the Learning Resource Department.

### 7. Monitoring and Reviewing of Policy

- Monitoring of the Learning-Support Policy is an ongoing and developmental process. A meeting will be held in the last term of each school year in order to review this Policy. The Head Teachers and the Learning Resource Coordinator will attend.
- The Learning Resource Committee will review this Policy on an annual basis. This will be overseen by the BOM.

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### List of Appendices

#### Appendix 1:

List of Assessments available in the Learning Resource Department.

#### Appendix 2:

Draft Letter seeking Parental Permission for the Learning Resource Coordinator to administer Diagnostic Assessments.

#### Appendix 3:

Draft Letter Seeking Parental Permission for their child to Attend Learning-Support.

#### Appendix 4:

Inventory of Resources Maintained by the Learning Resource Coordinator.

#### Appendix 5:

Inventory of Resources Available to the Learning Resource Coordinator in this School.

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### Appendix 1:

List of Assessments available in the Learning Resource Department.

Quantity	Description
	Conner's Rating Scales
	British Picture Vocabulary Scales
	Neal Analysis of Reading Ability
	Suffolk Reading Test
	Edinburgh Standard Achievement Test
	Special Needs Assessment Profile
	Group Reading Test WRAT test Cognitive Abilities Test
	Bangor Dyslexia Test
	Aston Index (for screening and diagnosis of language difficulties)
	Secondary Screening Profiles)



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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### Appendix 2:

Draft Letter seeking Parental Permission for the Learning Resource Coordinator to administer Diagnostic Assessments.

Date:

Reference:

For the attention of the Parents of  in  Class

Dear Parents,

Following feedback conducted here in school, we believe that your child would benefit from some further assessments. Therefore, we would like your permission for our Learning Resource Coordinator to administer further diagnostic assessments on your child, as explained to you by your child's class teacher.

Following the completion of these assessments, you will be offered an opportunity to discuss them with our Learning Resource Coordinator. If you require any further clarification on this matter, you are more than welcome to call to the school at any time. It would be best to make an appointment with the Head Teacher, in person or by telephone, so that we can offer you uninterrupted time.

Please complete the form below and return it to the school as soon as possible.

Thanking you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

(Head Teacher)

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### **For the attention of the Head Teacher**

Name of child:  in  Class

We give our permission for the Learning Resource Coordinator to carry out diagnostic assessments with our child.

Signed:  Date   
Parent

OR

We do not give our permission for the Learning Resource Coordinator to carry out diagnostic assessments with our child.

Signed:  Date   
Parent

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

### Appendix 3:

Draft Letter Seeking Parental Permission for their child to Attend Learning-Support.

Date:

Reference:

For the attention of the Parents of  in  Class

Dear Parents,

Following screening tests and diagnostic assessments conducted here in school, we believe that your child would benefit from a period of supplementary teaching in the area of literacy, provided by our Learning Resource Coordinator, as explained to you by your child's class teacher.

We are pleased to inform you that we can offer your child a place on the Learning Resource Coordinator's caseload, and would like your permission for your child to attend learning-support. If you require any further clarification on this matter, you are more than welcome to call to the school at any time. It would be best to make an appointment with the principal teacher in advance, in person or by telephone, so that we can offer you uninterrupted time.

Please complete the form below and return it to the school as soon as possible.

Thanking you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

(Head Teacher).

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### **For the attention of the Head Teacher**

Name of child:  in  Class

We give our permission for our child to attend the Learning Resource Coordinator.

Signed:  Date   
Parent

OR

We do not give our permission for our child to attend the Learning Resource Coordinator.

Signed:  Date

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## Whole School Policy for Learning Resource Provision

Parent

### Appendix 4:

Inventory of Resources Maintained by the Learning Resource Coordinator.

Quantity	Description
	A selection of Prim Ed. Resource Books
	Roll and Write
	Stile Trays/and Graded Books
	Selection of board games
	Alpha to Omega Activity Packs/ Computer Software
	Exam Papers Senior School
	English Text Books (Junior Cert/ Leaving Cert)
	Flash Cards
	Wooden Letters
	Vocabulary Cards
	Selection of Software/ Reading Pen
	Selection of Reference Books for teacher info



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### Bibliography

Department of Education Circular 02/05

Learning Support Guidelines Department of Education and Science

Education Act (1998)

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

SP Ed Circular 12/05