



# Indicators of Effective Practice - Section 3

## Examples - Student Support Files for Primary Schools



## Section 3

### The problem-solving process: Examples

Three examples or case studies which illustrate how the problem-solving process, outlined in Section 2, was used to identify strengths, interests and needs of three children, are documented in this section. Each example begins with an overview of the problem-solving process, summarising how concerns were identified, information gathered, and how this was used to develop a Student Support Plan.

The first example is at the level of **Classroom Support-All**, and describes the problem-solving process in the case of a child in Junior Infants. It illustrates how this process, led by the class teacher, may be used to support children with emerging or transient needs at this level of the Continuum of Support.

The second example illustrates how the problem-solving process could be implemented at the level of **School Support-Some** for a child experiencing difficulties in areas of literacy, language and numeracy. It includes a summary of the problem-solving process, followed by a detailed example of a completed Support Checklist, Student Support Plan and Review for a child in first class.

The third example illustrates the process for identification, planning and review for a child in third class, at the level of **School Support Plus-Few**. This example illustrates the holistic, collaborative and comprehensive approach to identification and response to needs required at this level. The Student Support Plan provides an example of a highly structured, individualised and multi-faceted approach to the provision of support across key areas of development.

It should be noted that the following examples are for illustrative purposes. They have been developed to illustrate the implementation of the problem-solving process at each level of the Continuum of Support. They may be used as a guide to inform and reflect on current approaches to identifying learning strengths and needs, planning and reviewing progress. They should be read in conjunction with Section Two of the Indicators for Effective Practice. Schools may wish to adapt the format or design of the Support Checklist or Student Support Plan/Review.

Each example of a Student Support File starts with a brief introduction to the child and a summary of the implementation of the problem-solving process.

This is followed by an example of a Student Support File that includes:

- Student Details
- Log of Actions
- Support Checklist
- Student Support Plan
- Student Support Plan-Review

## Example 1:

### Classroom Support Introducing Lucas

#### What is the concern?

Lucas is a 4-year-old boy in Junior Infants. He is the eldest child in his family and attended his local pre-school for a year before starting in primary school. Lucas settled well at the beginning of Junior Infants and his teacher did not notice any difficulties with the transition to primary school. Since returning to school after Christmas, Lucas' teacher observed a change in his demeanour and attitude towards school. She noticed that Lucas appeared tired and irritable in the mornings, often placing his head on the table and refusing to engage in class activities. In the last few weeks his teacher noted a change in how he was interacting with other children in the class, hitting and using bad language, which had led to complaints from some other parents of children in the class. Lucas' teacher introduced a reward system for Lucas, whereby he was awarded a star for completing tasks set by the teacher, but this did not seem to work.

#### Why is it happening

Lucas' class teacher contacted his parents to arrange a meeting in the school. At the meeting his mother informed the teacher that Lucas' granny had died over Christmas, following a brief illness, and that she had lived with them since Lucas was a baby. She told his teacher that Lucas asked a lot of questions about why she died, and seemed to be struggling to accept her death. She said that he was more tired and was becoming easily upset at home, and was not sleeping in his own bed. She said that she was unsure of how to explain death to Lucas, given his young age.

#### How can we help?

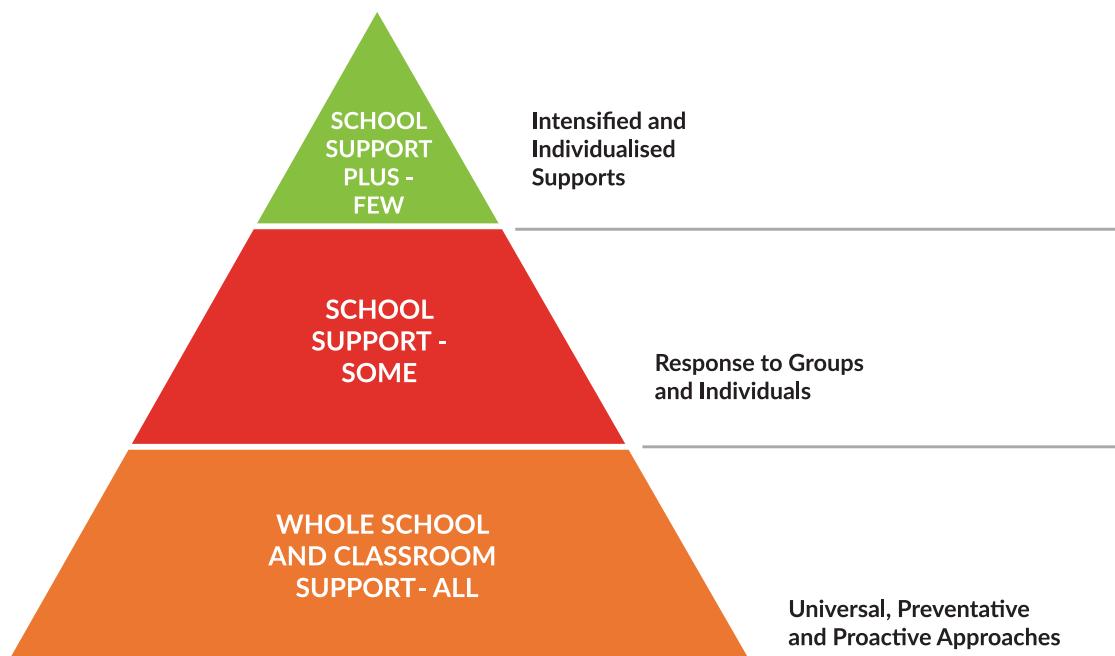
Lucas' teacher consulted the special education teacher, and other teachers in the school, for advice on supporting a young child who had experienced a bereavement of a close family member. The special education teacher also contacted the school's NEPS psychologist for advice. The NEPS psychologist sent the school some information and resources on supporting young children with bereavement, including information for parents. Lucas' teacher and parents agreed on an intervention for Lucas that would include targets for emotional regulation and task completion at school as well as some activities and simple stories explaining death in an age-appropriate way for his parents to read at home with Lucas. At school his teacher explained that she would check in with Lucas as part of the morning 'meet and greet'. She also said that she would target the development of emotional regulation and resilience through whole-class strategies including the 3 Rs and the Fun Friends programme. It was agreed that targets for Lucas would be recorded in a Classroom Support plan and Lucas' parents would receive regular updates on his progress. A date for review of the plan was agreed following a period of six weeks. All information on actions, communications, and a copy of the plan, were recorded by the class teacher in a Student Support File.

#### Did it work?

At the review meeting with Lucas' teacher and his parents, his mother reported that he had made a lovely card with photos of his granny and enjoyed the stories and talking about happy memories of his granny. She reported that he was not asking as many questions and that they were working on him sleeping in his own bed at night. At school, his teacher reported that incidents of hitting had decreased and that Lucas was interacting more positively with his peers. It was agreed that approaches would continue as part of a whole class approach to supporting children with emotional regulation but that additional targeted support for Lucas was not required, and the Classroom Support Plan would be discontinued.

Insert school logo here

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name	Lucas
Date of Birth	15-03-2019
School	Springtown NS
Date File Opened	January 2024
Date File Closed	June 2024



Developing a Classroom Support Plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the child. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

## Log of Actions

Date	Actions
January 2024	Class teacher met with Lucas' parents to discuss concerns in relation to emotional regulation, interactions with peers and engagement with classwork.
January 2024	Special education teacher contacted NEPS for advice and resources received for school and parents on supporting children who have experienced bereavement.
January 2024	Classroom Support Plan developed by Lucas' class teacher in collaboration with his parents.
April 2024	Review meeting with class teacher and Lucas' parents. Agreed that Lucas has responded well to interventions and supports and continuation of support plan not necessary at this time. Progress to be monitored by class teacher with parents.
June 2024	Classroom support plan targets achieved. Agreed with parents to close file.

## Support Checklist

Name: Lucas	Age: 4	Class: Junior Infants
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
Parents/ Guardians Consulted	Jan 31st 2024	Meetings in school between class teacher and parents. Lucas' parents informed teacher of recent family bereavement.
	April 2024	Follow up meeting with teacher and Lucas' mother. Agreed that Lucas is much more settled at school and interacting with peers.
Information from previous school/preschool gathered	N/A	Lucas' parents reported that there were no concerns before starting school.
Hearing		No concerns reported by parents.
Vision		No concerns reported by parents.
Medical Needs		None reported by parents.
Basic Needs Checklist completed	Jan 2024	Completed with Lucas' parents and added to support file – Lucas appears very tired at school since returning after Christmas.
Assessment of learning, social and emotional development:  Teacher observation; curriculum based assessment; checklists <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play and social skills</li><li>• Emotional regulation skills</li></ul>	Jan 2024	No concerns with language or learning observed.  Emerging needs in turn-taking, attention, and emotional regulation at school.  Play and social skills/emotional regulation – Lucas has difficulties with turn-taking and tends to react impulsively by lashing out when things are not going his way in play, particularly during yard time. Cries very easily and sometimes does not seem to know what has upset him. This has become more apparent since the return to school after Christmas.
Observation of learning/approach to learning	Jan 2024	Lucas enjoys hands-on play-based activities as appropriate for his age. He likes role-play but has been observed to show reluctance to engage in activities since returning to school particularly on days when he appears very tired at school.
Child's views	Jan 2024	Lucas likes playing with his friends at school. He also likes colouring and art activities and loves to draw dinosaurs.
Classroom work adapted?		Play-based learning.
Learning environment adapted?	Jan 2024	Sensory space with library books and jigsaws introduced to class to allow for breaks when Lucas is overwhelmed or tired.

Name: Lucas	Age: 4	Class: Junior Infants
<b>General Information</b>	<b>Date Checked</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yard/school environments adapted?	Jan 2024	Structured games at break times to facilitate turn-taking and sand box for calm space.
Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?	Jan 2024	Informal consultation with NEPS psychologist on supporting children who have experienced bereavement of close family member. Resources received for parents and school.
Advice given by special education teacher or other school staff?	Jan 2024	Advice on setting targets from special education teacher and on use of 3R strategy.
Other interventions put in place in school?	Jan 2024	Fun FRIENDS programme to support the development of resilience with all children in class to begin in April, as part of whole school early intervention support for all, in conjunction with special education teacher.
<b>Action needed</b>		Classroom Support

## Classroom Support Plan

### *Classroom Support - All*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name	Lucas	Age	4.08
Lead teacher	Mrs Goode	Class	J1
Start date of plan	February 2024		
Review date of plan	April 2024		

**Strengths and interests:** Lucas enjoys drawing, playing with his dinosaur figurines, Lego and hands-on learning activities. Motivators include games or activities based on dinosaurs, role-play, looking at books about dinosaurs and drawing.

#### *Priority concerns*

##### *Lucas requires support in areas of*

- Emotional regulation, play

#### *Possible reasons for concerns*

Recent death of maternal grandparent. Parents report that Lucas was very close to his grandmother and continues to ask questions related to her illness and subsequent death. Reported by parents to have regressed and to be experiencing difficulties with sleep routines.

#### **SMART Targets**

Lucas will:

- Wait his turn in simple board games and outdoor play activities.
- Take part in structured co-operative games with other children during break times.
- Identify and name emotions from pictures of faces and short video clips.
- Practise self-regulation strategies with teacher support.
- Use these strategies with support when he is upset.
- Check in with class teacher every morning as part of 'Meet and Greet'.

At home:

- Complete artwork/drawing of happy memories with his granny.
- Decorate memory box including mementos/photos of his granny with his parents.

#### *Strategies to help Lucas achieve the targets*

Cooperative games – for yard time

Visual supports for class rule reminders and prompt cards for My Turn in games with peers.

Look, Listen & Link/3 Rs strategy to support regulation.

Structured activities related to interest in dinosaurs to support on task behaviour.

Reward chart linked to specific behaviour of turn-taking.

Redirection and distraction when Lucas appears agitated.

Verbal and visual prompting to use time out card when dysregulated.

Targeted praise for play and on-task behaviours.

***Staff involved and resources needed***

Staff: Ms Goode, Class Teacher

***Resources***

Fun FRIENDS programme

NEPS - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support

NEPS - Continuum of Support Guidelines: Resource Pack for Teachers

NEPS – Psychological First Aid – Guidance for Primary School Staff - Look, Listen & Link

NEPS – Self Regulation Guide – 3 Rs

NEPS – CI resources

NCSE Relate <https://ncse.ie/relate>

Co-operative games activities

Barnardos – Mind the Gap – A Guide for Parents and Carers of Bereaved School Age Children and Young People

Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)	
Signature of teacher	

## Classroom Support Plan - Review

### Classroom Support

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

<b>Name:</b> Lucas	<b>Class:</b> Junior Infants		
<b>Names of those present at review:</b> Ms Goode, Class teacher, Lucas' Mother	<b>Date of Review:</b> April 20 <sup>th</sup> 2024		
<b>What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?</b>  Lucas has made very good progress in the area of play. Enjoys co-operative games as there is no winner or loser and games are structured. Turn-taking has improved using prompt cards and these are required less. Positive experiences with peers have led to increase in participation in class activities. Responds to targeted praise. Enjoys using sensory space at library and particularly likes to hug soft toys. Lucas has told his mother that he likes meeting his teacher in the morning at "Meet and Greet" and tells her how his morning has been. Lucas enjoys the whole class regulation activities. Lucas appears happier, less tired, and more calm			
<b>Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?</b>  Lucas' parents report that they answer Lucas' questions about his granny when he asks and maintain a focus on positive memories. They report that he appears happier at school and back to himself. They note that routines were very important for Lucas and the return to routines at home had helped.			
<b>Have the child's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?</b>  Lucas has responded well to the support provided, so it was agreed a targeted intervention at classroom support level was no longer required. However, Lucas would continue to benefit from strategies as part of whole class teaching and learning approaches, when required.			
<b>Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?</b>  The Fun FRIENDS programme started with the class in March and will continue. Ms Jones, the special education teacher will support with the implementation of this programme as part of whole school proactive and preventative support for wellbeing.			
<b>Any comments from the child?</b>  When asked what he liked best about school Lucas said he liked playing with his friends and the library corner. Lucas said his favourite part of the day is when Ms. Goode gives him a big wave in the morning.			
<b>Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?</b>  Lucas' parents have reported a marked improvement in his mood at home and also that his sleep routines have improved. They reported that he enjoyed the tasks involving the memory box and artwork.			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher(s)			
<b>Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Revert to previous level of support		Progress to next level of support - School Support - Some School Support Plus - Few
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

## Example 2:

### School Support-Some Introducing Ann

#### What is the concern?

Ann is a 7 year old girl in first class. Ann has been supported at the level of Classroom Support for language, literacy and numeracy since she was in senior infants. Ann's teacher followed the Continuum of Support problem-solving process to identify Ann's strengths and needs and provided support at the level of Classroom Support-All in consultation with Ann's parents. A review of progress has indicated that Ann continues to experience difficulties, despite accommodations and supports provided in class. Ann's teacher also observed that Ann was aware of these difficulties and was becoming reluctant to participate in reading activities. It was agreed with Ann's parents that additional teaching support would be provided at the level of School Support-Some.

#### Why is it happening

The special education teacher gathered information from a range of sources to identify Ann's strengths, interests and needs. This included information from Ann's parents, class teacher and Ann. The special education teacher gathered information across a range of areas of learning including language, literacy, numeracy, social interaction, emotional regulation, and motor skills, using formal and informal assessment approaches.

The special education teacher carried out assessment of discrete literacy skills in areas of phonological processing, phonic knowledge, word identification skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension and spelling. Assessment of numeracy skills included pre-number skills, numeration and counting. Assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills was informed by teacher observation as well as the Progression Continua of both the Primary Language Curriculum and the Primary Mathematics Curriculum.

Ann completed a *My Thoughts about School* checklist with her teacher. All information was recorded in the Student Support File.

#### How can we help?

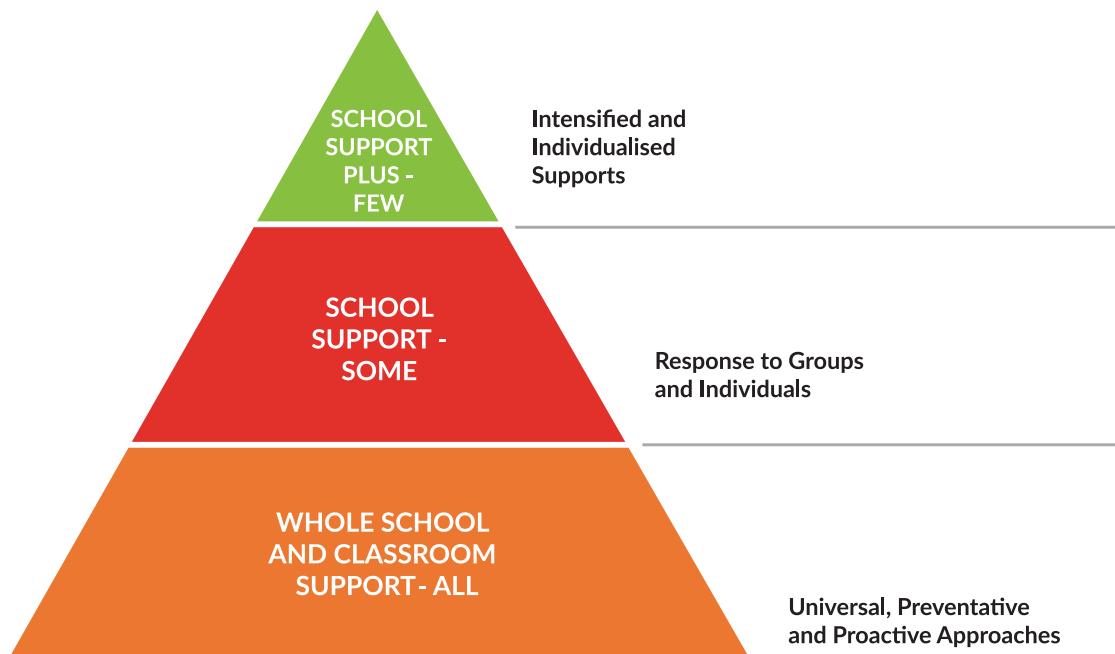
Ann's priority learning needs were identified and recorded in a Student Support Plan. SMART targets were agreed in each of the areas and evidence-informed strategies and interventions were identified to support the development of Ann's literacy and numeracy skills. The school supported Ann's parents in the completion of a referral to HSE Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Service.

#### Did it work?

Ann's response to intervention was monitored by the special education teacher in collaboration with Ann's parents and class teacher. Support was provided in class and through small group support. Targets were modified during the intervention period to match Ann's progress and pace of learning. A review of progress took place with Ann's parents and class teacher in February and June. Ann's teacher and parents reported that Ann's confidence was growing in her reading. It was agreed that Ann was responding to intervention and that support would continue at this level of the Continuum of Support.

Insert school logo here

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name	Ann
Date of Birth	15-03-2017
School	Springtown NS
Date File Opened	January 2023
Date File Closed	



Developing a Student Support Plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the child. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

## Log of Actions

Date	Actions
February 2023	Meeting with Ann's parents, class teacher and special education teacher to discuss concerns in relation to language, literacy and numeracy skills development. Agreed Classroom Support Plan. Ann's parents to join library to increase shared reading opportunities. Station teaching to commence in class in March.
June 2023	Review meeting with Ann's parents. Agreed support to continue in first class at level of School Support - Some.
September 2023	Meeting with Ann's parents, special education teacher and class teacher. Agreed targets for home and school in Student Support Plan. Library visits and bedtime reading activity to continue. Agreed to review in second term.
January 2024	Review meeting of Student Support Plan with special education teacher and Ann's parents. Parents requested reduction in written homework. Agreed with class teacher. Referral to HSE Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Service agreed with parents.
February 2024	Referral to HSE Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Service submitted by special education teacher with parental consent.
June 2024	Review of Student Support Plan. Special education teacher, class teacher and parents in attendance. Agreed that Ann is responding to intervention and support to continue in second class at level of School Support-Some.

## Support Checklist

Name:	Ann	Age:	7 06	Class:	First Class
General Information		Date Checked	Comments		
Parents/Guardians Consulted		Jan 2023 June 2023 Sept 2023 Feb 2024	Meetings in school. Ann's parents reported family history of dyslexia.		
Information from previous school/preschool gathered		N/A	Ann 's parents reported no concerns before starting school.		
Hearing			No concerns reported by parents.		
Vision			No concerns reported by parents.		
Medical Needs			None reported by parents.		
Basic Needs Checklist completed		Sept 2023			
Assessment of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language – receptive and expressive language skills (Progression Continua of Primary Language Curriculum)</li> <li>Literacy – Progression Continua of Primary Language Curriculum; York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC); Phonics and Phonological Processing Checklists</li> <li>Maths – Progression Continua Primary Maths Curriculum; Observation of structured maths activities</li> <li>Motor skills - observation</li> </ul>	Sept/Oct 2023	<p><b>Strengths in areas of</b></p> <p>Music, Visual Arts, PE and social skills</p> <p><b>Concerns in areas of</b></p> <p>Language – receptive and expressive language skills</p> <p>Literacy - phonological processing, phonic knowledge, word reading and reading comprehension</p> <p>YARC – Reading Accuracy – SS86; Reading Comprehension SS82; Reading Rate – SS84</p> <p>Maths – basic number facts; conservation of number</p>		
Observation of learning/approach to learning		Sept/Oct 23	Ann likes hands-on activity based learning activities with peers. Requires encouragement to engage in reading and written tasks.		
Observation of social and emotional development		Sept/Oct 23	Ann gets on well with peers and tries her best. Has a small group of friends she plays with.		

Name: Ann	Age: 7 06	Class: First Class
<b>General Information</b>	Date Checked	Comments
Child's views	Sept/Oct 23	Ann completed the "My Thoughts about School" checklist. She stated that she likes to run, play with her friends and draw at school.
Classroom work adapted?	Sept/Oct 23	Homework activities have been adjusted to minimise need for writing. Graded and decodable readers. Class written work adapted.
Learning environment adapted?	Sept/Oct 23	Visual supports are used in class for all children. Teaching and learning approaches adapted for all. Instructions are broken down and simplified.
Yard/school environments adapted?	Sept/Oct 23	N/A
Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?	Sept/Oct 23	Referral to HSE Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Service made by school.
Advice given by special education teacher or other school staff?	Sept/Oct 23	Targets in Support Plan followed in class.
Other interventions put in place in school?	Sept/Oct 23	Paired reading with children from 5 <sup>th</sup> class and station teaching as part of Classroom Support in Senior Infants
Action needed	Sept/Oct 23	School Support-Some

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

### *School Support-Some*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name	Ann	Age	7.06
Lead teacher	Mr Jones, SET	Class	First
Start date of plan	September 2023		
Review date of plan	February 2024; June 2024		

**Child's strengths and interests:** Ann enjoys drawing, playing with her friends, hands-on learning activities, PE and music. She interacts well with her peers and enjoys small group activities. Outside of school, Ann likes playing with her dog, Sandy, and her baby sister, Jo.

#### **Priority concerns**

##### **Ann requires support in areas of**

- receptive and expressive language
- phonological processing, phonic knowledge, and word recognition
- sight vocabulary
- number skills – counting, conservation of number, addition and subtraction

**Possible reasons for concerns** Possible underlying speech and language needs. A family history of dyslexia was reported by Ann's parents.

#### **SMART Targets**

##### **Language – Ann will**

- follow simple two step instructions with prompts from visual supports
- name, categorise and describe two properties of everyday objects from home and school
- sequence events based on stories from shared reading activities using picture cards

##### **Literacy – Ann will**

- clap the rhythm of one, two and three syllable words
- identify the odd one out in rhyming games
- generate her own rhyming words in a rhyming game
- decode CVC words (with a and i) in isolation and in sentences
- read fiction and non-fiction books from decodable readers

##### **Numeracy – Ann will**

- match numbers from 10-30 to corresponding sets of objects
- order and count numbers from 1-30, initially with the use of a hundred square
- complete simple addition and subtraction tasks between 0 and 20 using concrete objects

**Strategies to help Ann achieve the targets**

**Language** – games and activities to develop receptive and expressive language skills; visual supports; interactive book reading activities involving discussion and vocabulary activities.

**Literacy** – explicit structured and sequential instruction in phonological processing, phonics, and word identification; multicomponent intervention targeting vocabulary, comprehension and basic literacy skills - paired reading (home and school); guided reading (in class); station teaching (in class); decodable readers.

**Mathematics** - maths games using targeted language of maths – I spy; number bingo; snap. Role play – number patterns; categorising and classification boxes; board games with dice.

**Staff involved and resources needed**

Staff: Mr Jones, special education teacher; Ms Conlon, class teacher

**Resources**

OIDE - Languages and Literacy Resources

NCCA - Primary Language Curriculum – Progression Continua and Materials for Teachers

NEPS – Activities to Develop Expressive Language Skills

NEPS – Activities to Develop Receptive Language and Comprehension Skills

NEPS – Supporting Pupils with Literacy Difficulties using the Continuum of Support

NCCA – Primary Mathematics Toolkit

NEPS – Maths Support 2020

OIDE – Number sense resources

Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)

Signature of teacher

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN-REVIEW

*School Support-Some*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name: Ann	Class:	First
Names of those present at review: Mr Jones (SET), Ms Conlon (Class teacher); Ann's mother	Date of Review: Feb 20 <sup>th</sup> 2024	
<b>What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?</b>  Feb 2024  Language – Ann has responded well to the use of visual supports in class in following direction. Ms Conlon reported that the use of colour stickers to highlight work to be completed in workbooks has been successful and that other children have asked if they could have them too.  Literacy - Ann is reading CVC words with 'a' and 'i' medial vowel sounds. She has demonstrated progress in phonemic awareness and can identify and recognise rhyming words in word games, as well as at the beginning and end of words.  Ann is enjoying the decodable readers and her parents have noticed an improvement in her confidence in reading out loud at home. She is engaging in a paired reading programme with 5 <sup>th</sup> class peers at school. Ann's mother reported that Ann enjoys trips to the library every Saturday.  Maths – Ann is adding single numbers to 20 with concrete objects independently. She can identify all numbers on her 100 square but sometimes reads lines from right to left.		
<b>Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?</b>  Feb 2024 - Ann's confidence and willingness to participate in literacy activities has improved and this has been noted by the class teacher and SET during station teaching activities. Her parents report that she is more willing to engage in reading at home.		

**Have the child's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?**

Priority areas of need have not changed. Ann requires a cumulative and sequential approach to development of literacy skills across key areas targeted. Targets to continue in the areas of expressive and receptive language and maths.

**Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?**

February 2024 - Continue with targets identified in plan. Review progress in June.

**Any comments from the child?**

Ann asks Mr Jones for a new book every day to take home.

**Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?**

Ann's parents have agreed that Ann is responding to intervention and that support should continue at this level (School Support-Some).

Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)

Signature of teacher(s)

**Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)**

	Revert to previous level of support - Classroom Support - All		Progress to next level of support - School Support Plus - Few
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

## Example 3:

### School Support Plus – Few Introducing Jack

#### What is the concern?

Jack is a nine-year-old boy in Third Class at Scoil Phádraig, a large all boys urban primary school. He has a history of intermittent school attendance since starting in Junior Infants which steadily worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic. Absences are a mixture of partial days and successive weeks, worsening following school closures. Jack's family life is complicated, and he currently lives with his grandparents. Jack enjoys a very positive relationship with the deputy principal who used to be his special education teacher. She has the role of key school contact for Jack's parents/grandparents. A School Support-Some level plan to support Jack's attendance was developed collaboratively by his special education teacher, class teacher, deputy principal and parents/grandparents. Jack was also involved in this collaborative process.

A review of progress indicated that Jack continues to experience prolonged absences despite implementation of the School Support-Some level plan. Jack did not return to school following the summer break. Jack's grandparents and class teacher expressed concern in relation to the impact of school avoidance on his learning and participation at school. His teachers expressed concern that he appeared withdrawn and reluctant to engage with class activities on days he attended. It was agreed with Jack's parents/grandparents that more specific and intensive supports would be provided at the level of School Support Plus-Few.

#### Why is it happening

Information was gathered from a range of sources including previous support plans, previous teachers, Jack's parents, grandparents, new class teacher, special education teacher, and Jack himself, with the aim of understanding the factors currently influencing school avoidance behaviour.

Resources from the NEPS publication Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour Primary School Guidance were used to gather views. This process helped identify a combination of complex factors involving school, family circumstances and underdeveloped coping skills which made regular school attendance very difficult for Jack. The special education teacher also gathered information across a range of areas of literacy, using formal and informal assessment approaches. The NEPS psychologist provided consultation and psychoeducational support as well as information on resources. All information gathered was recorded in the Student Support File.

#### How can we help?

Using the information gathered, a School Support Plus -Few level plan was co-developed with Jack, his grandparents, special education teacher, class teacher and deputy principal, incorporating practical individualised strategies to support Jack to both attend and to stay in school for increasing lengths of time over consecutive days. This was added to Jack's Student Support File. Evidence-informed strategies, interventions and skills training were informed by a combination of:

- School-based strategies contained in 'Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour (Appendix C)
- Agreed actions from the NEPS consultation which spanned home and school approaches
- Literacy interventions based on information gathered through formal and informal assessment

Referrals were also made to several services:

- HSE Primary Care Occupational Therapy Service
- Local Educational Welfare Service
- HSE Primary Care Psychology Service

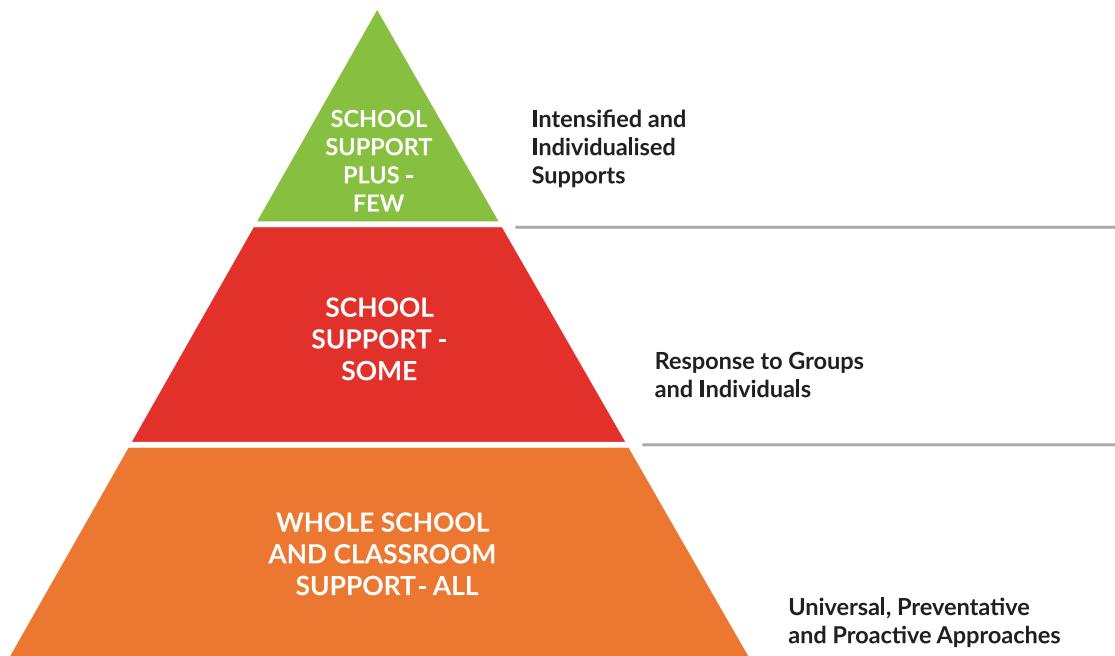
## Did it work?

Jack's response to intervention was carefully reviewed and monitored by the special education teacher and deputy principal in collaboration with Jack, his grandparents, parents, class teacher, and SNA. The review process was continuous and involved peer to peer discussion, advice from NEPS, grandparent/parent meetings and formal review with all parties involved.

Intervention was highly individualised and offered in both one-to-one and within-class formats. Targets were responsive to Jack's progress and modified during the intervention period to match his capacity to stay in school for consistent days and for longer periods of time each day. Intervention was also responsive to the family's capacity to support Jack to attend school. A formal meeting to review progress with all parties involved occurred in February. It was agreed that Jack was responding to intervention (albeit at a slower pace than adults hoped for) and that support would need to continue at the level of School Support Plus-Few of the Continuum of Support.

Insert school logo here

<b>STUDENT SUPPORT FILE</b>	
Name	Jack
Date of Birth	23-09-2014
School	Springtown NS
Date File Opened	September 2018
Date File Closed	



Developing a Student Support Plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the child.

We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

## Log of Actions

Date	Actions
07/09/2023	Deputy principal contacted Jack's parents and grandparents to arrange a meeting to discuss attendance. Jack has not yet returned to school. Deputy principal called local EWO to update him of the situation as Jack was known to him.
11/09/2023	Meeting in school regarding Jack's attendance involving Jack's grandparents, Jack's mother, class teacher, special education teacher and deputy principal. Reviewed last term's School Support Plan which was informed by advice from the NCSE advisory service. Agreed special education teacher to seek further advice from NEPS psychologist.
11/09/2023	Deputy principal contacted NEPS psychologist, agreed to discuss Jack's needs at upcoming NEPS school planning meeting.
21/09/2023	Meeting with NEPS. Agreed to prioritise Jack for direct casework. Deputy principal contacted Jack's parents as part of the informed consent process for NEPS involvement in direct casework. NEPS recommended school staff familiarise themselves with the new guidance document: <i>Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour: A Good Practice Guide for Primary Schools</i> and adopt a trauma informed approach. Plan to focus on a gradual reintegration to school starting with shortened days.
22/09/2023	Deputy principal met with Jack's parents in school to complete the NEPS Request for Involvement form. Jack's parents are happy for his grandparents to be directly involved as Jack currently lives with them. Deputy principal completed and emailed Reduced School Day Notification Form to parents. Provided paper copies of completed form to parents and information regarding TESS support.
25/09/2023	Deputy principal posted completed Request for Involvement form to NEPS.
02/10/2023	Date (10/10/2023) agreed for initial consultation with Jack's teacher, special education teacher, deputy principal, parents and for his grandparents. Invite sent by email to parents and grandparents with follow up telephone call. Admin to send reminder text 5/10/2024.
10/10/2023	Consultation meeting with NEPS psychologist. In attendance: class teacher, deputy principal, special education teacher, Jack's mother and grandparents. Reviewed Appendix A of <i>Managing Reluctant School Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour</i> . Actions: school to review Jack's literacy skills and complete Appendix B: <i>My Views About School</i> .
12/10/2023	Special education teacher administered YARC, completed Appendix B: <i>My Views About School</i> with Jack.

Date	Actions
24/10/2023	<p>Meeting to review all data and formulate support plan at School Support Plus-Few level of Continuum of Support. In attendance: deputy principal, special education teacher, class teacher, grandparents, NEPS psychologist, (parents invited but did not attend). Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement gradual attendance plan, based on views shared by Jack in meeting 12.10.24</li> <li>• deputy principal to go through plan with Jack and include his views in plan</li> <li>• deputy principal to call parents and update them</li> <li>• special education teacher to liaise with grandparents in order to develop a visual schedule for home morning routine', to include an emphasis on time for breakfast</li> </ul> <p>NEPS psychologist reviewed guidance from the Stress Factor on emotional arousal cycle and anxiety with the special education teaching team and grandparents. Deputy principal in consultation with parents to make referral to HSE Primary Care Occupational Therapy and HSE Primary Care Psychology. Deputy principal to explore support available through local family resource centre.</p>
08/11/2023	Deputy principal met with Jack's mum to sign OT referral form and provide information about Parents Plus programme at local family resource centre.
28/11/2023	Deputy principal contacted NEPS psychologist for informal check in on extended school time and attendance plan.
12/12/2023	Deputy principal linked with NEPS psychologist for informal check in on extended school time and attendance plan. Deputy principal and special education teacher met to plan Jack's transition back to school after Christmas break.
02/02/2024	<p>Meeting to review Student Support Plan. In attendance: deputy principal, special education teacher, class teacher, grandparents, and NEPS psychologist. Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with current level of supports and continue to gradually extend school day.</li> <li>• Deputy principal to follow-up with OT referral and HSE Primary Care Psychology referral.</li> </ul>

## Support Checklist

Name: Jack	Age: 9:8	Class: 3rd
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
Parents/ Guardians Consulted	Sept 2023	Jack's family life is complex. He is currently living with his grandparents. Parents are happy for Jack's grandparents to be fully involved in planning to support Jack's school attendance. Meetings in school with Jack's parents/grandparents regarding school attendance.
Information from previous school/preschool gathered	Sept 2023	School reluctance evident in Junior and Senior Infant classes.
Hearing	Jan 2020	No concerns reported following HSE School Health Screening.
Vision	Jan 2020	No concerns reported following HSE School Health Screening.
Medical Needs	Sept 2020	Intermittent toileting difficulties - addressed by home.
Basic Needs Checklist completed	Sept 2023	Has recently stopped eating snack and lunch when in school. Sleep pattern has been disrupted since moving in with grandparents.
Assessment of learning	Sept/Oct 2023	<p><b>Strengths in areas of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progression Continua of Primary Language Curriculum: receptive &amp; expressive language skills</li> <li>• Phonological processing, phonic knowledge - checklists</li> <li>• YARC: Reading Accuracy; Reading Comprehension; Reading Rate,</li> <li>• SWST - spelling</li> </ul>

<p>Assessment of factors associated with school attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School &amp; Parent/Guardian Checklists from <i>Managing Reluctant Attendance &amp; School Avoidance Behaviours</i> (Appendix A)</li></ul>		<p><b>Concerns in areas of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spelling: 18<sup>th</sup> percentile; Difficulty with suffixes (ion) and silent letters (kn/gn) and irregular spelling patterns (e.g. ign).</li><li>• Reading Accuracy – 16<sup>th</sup> percentile. Reads known words fluently. Sounds out or substitutes unknown words in reading passages. Lacks confidence in reading and is reluctant to attempt new words.</li><li>• Reading Comprehension: 21<sup>st</sup> percentile – uses context. Can answer literal and inferential questions.</li><li>• Finds writing tasks difficult – lacks confidence and has difficulty with task initiation and completion</li><li>• Numeracy – does not know all multiplication tables but has good grasp of concept. Finds problem-solving tasks difficult due to lack of confidence.</li></ul> <p><b>Barriers to attendance:</b></p> <p>Home factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• change to living arrangements</li><li>• death of family pet</li><li>• long-term toileting issues which are managed at home</li><li>• sleep pattern has been disrupted by house move</li><li>• difficulties with morning routine/transition into school</li><li>• complains of headaches and feeling sick</li></ul> <p>School factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• inconsistent attendance</li><li>• reluctance to engage with writing activities</li><li>• reluctance to engage in play with peers</li><li>• does not complete homework</li></ul> <p><i>(See completed Appendix A Checklists from Managing Reluctant Attendance &amp; School Avoidance Behaviours on file.)</i></p>
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Observation of learning/approach to learning	Sept/Oct 2023	Reluctance to engage with literacy tasks. Attention span is very short. Finds it difficult to persist with new tasks or tasks unrelated to preferred interests.
Observation of social and emotional development	Sept/Oct 2023	Can appear withdrawn and shut down at times. Does not have any close friendships at school.
Child's view	Sept/Oct 2023	Jack completed the <i>My Thoughts about School</i> (NEPS) and <i>My Views about School: Managing Reluctant Attendance &amp; School Avoidance Behaviours Appendix B</i> .
Classroom work adapted?	Sept/Oct Ongoing	Yes - literacy homework given by special education teacher aligned to target areas. Work completion is supported by teacher prompting and visual supports in class time. Instructions are regularly repeated.
Learning environment adapted?	Sept/Oct Ongoing	Yes - completed Appendix G: <i>Learning Environment Checklist from Managing Reluctant Attendance &amp; School Avoidance Behaviours</i> . Areas for adaptation highlighted and addressed. Referred to NCSE <i>Sensory Spaces in Schools</i> to set up a calm-space in the classroom.
Yard/school environments adapted?		N/A
Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?	Oct 2023 Ongoing	At School Support Plus-Few level, EWO and NEPS involvement was requested. NEPS Psychologist provided initial consultation and was available for deputy principal to check in with regarding intermittent progress of the plan.
Advice given by special education teacher or other school staff?	Oct 2023	Information gathered from previous special educational teacher, class teacher and support plans 2021-2022 which were informed by NCSE advisory service.  Deputy principal supported implementation of the plan for gradual return to full attendance at school in collaboration with Jack's grandparents and advised class teacher, special education teacher, school secretary, and relevant SNAs of Jack's support plan including:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visual schedule to support morning routine at home</li> <li>- Preferred 'job' to support Jack's transition from the car</li> <li>- Key staff member to meet Jack on arrival</li> <li>- Focus on relationship building/nurture approach</li> <li>- Supporting regulation activities when required</li> <li>- Access to movement activities and preferred activities at regular intervals</li> <li>- Supporting Jack to identify and use his preferred coping strategies</li> <li>- Increase opportunities for play and physical activities</li> <li>- Tasks to be set up for success, clear instructions, regular teacher check-in/encouragement</li> <li>- <i>Appendix F: Advice for All School Staff from Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour</i> shared with all staff involved</li> </ul>
Other interventions put in place in school?	Oct 2023 Ongoing	Number of adaptations to school day based on <i>Managing Reluctant Attendance &amp; School Avoidance Behaviours</i> , Appendix C: School Based Strategies, including increasing structure and predictability, reducing sensory 'clutter', providing frequent opportunities for movement, using objects/activities to support transitions.
Action needed		Deputy principal to follow up with referral to Primary Care OT and discuss Family Support options with Jack's parents. Deputy principal to maintain a record of attendance and increase Jack's day as appropriate.

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

### *School Support Plus-Few*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name	Jack	Age	9:8
Lead teacher	Deputy principal	Class	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Start date of plan	September 2023		
Review date of plan	February 2024; June 2024		
<b><i>Student's strengths and interests</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Positive relationship with all school staff and deputy principal in particular.</li><li>Enjoys construction activities especially Lego.</li><li>Loves nature, animals, cycling and being outdoors in general.</li><li>Excellent oral language skills, when in school will contribute regularly to class discussion.</li><li>Works hard at maths.</li></ul>			
<b><i>Priority concerns</i></b>			
<b><i>Jack requires support in areas of</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School attendance</li><li>Literacy – comprehension, reading fluency, word recognition, writing skills.</li><li>Regulation – reported to become very distressed/dysregulated in the morning when travelling to school. Can be withdrawn and tearful in class and frequently complains of stomach and headaches. Has more recently stopped eating his snack when in school.</li></ul>			
<b><i>Possible reasons for concerns</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Disruption to living arrangements and changes in family life</li><li>Jack's difficulties with classwork are compounded by inconsistent attendance, leading to feelings of frustration and failure</li><li>Recent disruption to family life has impacted Jack's sleep and exacerbated toileting difficulties</li><li>Stress and anxiety leading to Jack feeling sick and reporting headaches</li><li>Jack has described sensory sensitivities to the school environment – noise, smell, crowds</li></ul>			

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

*School Support Plus-Few*

### **SMART Targets**

#### **1. Attendance** – Jack will:

- successfully attend school from 9.10 until 11.30 five days a week for a period of two weeks.
- increase the length of his day by ten minutes each week.
- engage in activity he enjoys (initially lego) during his two hours in school.

To support Jack's transition back to school after holidays, the time increment will remain the same as it was for the week leading up to the holidays.

#### **2. Self-regulation** – Jack will:

- use two different calming strategies - deep breathing and progressive relaxation exercises.
- practise using alternate prompt sheets at the beginning and end of each lesson with special education teacher.
- recognise negative thoughts when he is feeling anxious and will record these in his thought journal supported by the special education teacher.
- co-create personalised stepped coping plans supported by special education teacher.

#### **3. Literacy**

Word recognition – Jack will:

- use decoding strategies to break down unknown words.

Reading comprehension – Jack will:

- sequence and summarise up to three key events in a short story on a topic of interest e.g. cats.
- select and read one book weekly from class library on different animals, with support from special education teacher

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

### *School Support Plus-Few*

#### **Strategies to help Jack achieve the targets**

##### **Increasing Attendance**

Complete *My Being In School Plan Template* with Jack (Appendix D) *Managing Reluctant Attendance & School Avoidance Behaviours*.

Complete stepped plan approach template (Appendix E: *Managing Reluctant Attendance & School Avoidance Behaviours*)

- By 9:10 yard should be empty. Upper bus parking bay to be kept clear as this allows for the closest point of entry to school building.
- Heavy box of class materials to help support Jack's transition around the school. Weight may also help support his regulation. (noting this depends on how Jack is feeling on the day).
- Deputy principal to bring the school copy of his visual schedule for Jack to see when he arrives in the car, so predictability of his day is secured.
- Give Jack time to leave the car, less talk seems to help him at this stage.
- Have Connect Four game set up in special education teacher's room.
- First task in special education teacher's room is always easy to complete. Choice of animal project to be offered.
- Liaison with special education teacher and class teacher re: maths lesson.
- Jack supported to connect with buddy when in yard.
- SNA offers option to start eating his snack on walk back to class.
- Jack reviews plan, self-ticks attendance on reward sheet, says goodbye to teacher and peers before leaving.
- Daily contact between deputy principal with parents/grandparents over the phone or email.

##### **Self-regulation: Practice, model and reinforcement**

- Incorporate exercises into special education teacher time – at start and end of lesson.
- Use visual CALM posters to guide Jack.
- Model exercises to support Jack to engage in each step.
- Praise Jack for completion of exercises.
- Use FRIENDS framework to introduce CBT triangle.
- Co-develop a thought journal to write a thought into each day.
- Identify manageable challenges in the first instance.
- Use visual steps to support comprehension of staged problem-solving process.
- Provide a safe space in the classroom/school for Jack should he need a break.

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

*School Support Plus-Few*

### **Literacy –**

- Structured, systematic and multisensory approaches to teaching of phonics and sight vocabulary.
- Word games.
- Gradual release in responsibility approaches to teaching comprehension.
- Guided reading in small group and reading with grandparents.

### ***Staff involved and resources needed***

Special education teacher, deputy principal, class teacher, SNA, EWO, NEPS.

### **Resources**

- NEPS: *Managing Reluctance Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour, A Good Practice Guide for Primary Schools.*
- NEPS: *Supporting your Child when they are Reluctant to Attend School: Guidance for Parents and Guardians of Primary School Children.*
- NCSE: *Sensory Spaces in Schools.*
- NCSE: *Relate* <https://ncse.ie/relate>
- DE & Tusla: *The Use of Reduced School Days: Guidelines for Schools on Recording and Notification of Reduced School Days.*
- FRIENDS for Life programme.
- The Stress Factor, Getting the Balance Right A NEPS e-Learning Course for Schools.
- NEPS: *Supporting Pupil with Literacy Difficulties Using the Continuum of Support.*
- DE: *Primary Language Curriculum – Progression Continua and Support Materials.*
- OIDE: <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Reading%20Booklet%20-%20to%20circulate.pdf>
- OIDE: *Language and Literacy.*

Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)

Signature of teacher

## STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN-REVIEW

*School Support Plus-Few*

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

Name: Jack	Class:	3 <sup>rd</sup> class
<b>Names of those present at review:</b> grandparents, deputy principal, class teacher, special education teacher, SNA, EWO.	Date of Review February 2024	
<b>What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?</b>		
<b>Attendance:</b>  Review of steps at two-week intervals has allowed time in school to be increased or kept steady – it has not decreased. Jack now stays in school until just before lunch time 12:20.  Taking a stepped approach to ensuring Jack has time to regulate himself before joining mainstream class is working.  He is happy to move from the special education teacher's room, goes straight to his desk and is ready to work through his maths with his class teacher. He enjoys the individual teacher time.  Jack will choose to start eating his snack on the way back from yard so reduced attention to his eating seems to be working.  Enjoys setting up the yard equipment for others. Class buddy in yard – playing well for the five minutes max. Works well with this same buddy in small groups in class time.  Likes to complete attendance tick sheet and says a 'loud' goodbye to all the class.		
<b>Literacy:</b>  Jack's reading confidence is improving. He enjoys choosing books to bring home and his grandparents report that he will read aloud with them. He also reads aloud in a small group with the special education teacher but prefers not to read aloud in class. Jack can correctly sequence events in a short story using cut up scripts but has difficulty with recall of events without prompting.		
<b>Emotion Regulation:</b>  Jack is distressed in the home setting on most mornings. His emotional literacy skills are developing but he seems uncomfortable doing some relaxation exercises e.g. milkshake breathing.		

*Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?*

School interventions are flexible and once the home-school transition has happened, Jack seems to be able to better engage in his school day. He likes to bargain his time so having the template about his school plan updated on a weekly basis helps keep him on track. Getting him into the car in the morning continues to be very difficult. Home now connects more difficult days to ongoing wider family complexities.

Jack is waitlisted for local HSE Primary Care OT and Psychology services. Grandparents have explored local counselling services for Jack and are hopeful that he will start attending soon.

**Have the child's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so, how?**

Now that Jack's emotional literacy is expanding, he seems better able or more open to talking about his thoughts and feelings. He frequently reports feeling sad. This seems to be largely in relation to family difficulties. Staff have also observed at times a more pronounced sadness in his demeanour and some lethargy. This is particularly obvious at the start of the week.

**Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?**

Deputy principal to continue with stepped plan and review process. Successive attendance for lunch time is the next goal. Lego club at lunchtime option to be explored. Introduce SNA into first transition from car to school building as deputy principal will shortly be on leave of absence in three weeks.

Review Monday morning special education teaching lesson content with Jack so that he can have greater choice over initial activities. Jack's special education teacher to continue to collect data about attendance patterns and complete handover with deputy principal prior to her absence. Deputy principal to connect with EWO regarding status of plan prior to completion of third Notification of Reduced School Day. Deputy principal explored local service options for family supports and is awaiting parent consent to support a course application. Special education teacher to update targets in Student Support Plan. Organise date for review meeting again in June.

**Any comments from the child?**

Jack likes playing Connect Four with his SNA and likes taking his cat in the car to school. He likes to pet her on the drive. He would like to go to school more. He likes to know how long he will be in school each day.

**Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?** Grandparents report it is becoming easier to read whether Jack will go into school each morning. They can see that he is in better form on the days he goes to school, and he talks more positively about what is going on in school in general.

Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)

Signature of teacher(s)

**Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)**

	Revert to previous level of support - Classroom Support - All School Support - Some		Progress to next level of support - School Support - Some School Support Plus - Few
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals



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