



Classes for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Policy

Togher Boys N.S.

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Togher Boys' N.S. It is intended to help parents and guardians understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

School Contact Details

Principal: Kieran Kelly

Board of Management Chairperson: Oliver Blackwell

School Phone Number: 021 4964640

Address: Togher Road, Togher, Cork

Classes for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Policy

1. Introductory Statement:

The policy was formulated having been identified in a Risk Assessment as an area that required clarification. It was devised by members of a policy committee and proposed to the Board of Management for approval and ratification. The policy has been formulated in light of a number of background documents, including the Health & Safety Authority's Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work (2007) and the Equality Authority's Code of Practice, given legal effect in the Statutory Instrument entitled Employment



Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2002 (S.I. No. 78 of 2002), EPSEN Act 2004. All staff were consulted by email in the process of devising this policy.

2. Rationale

Following advice from the SENO, the decision to provide a Special Class for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Togher Boys' NS, Togher Road, Togher, Cork, was taken by the Board of Management (BOM) of the school in conjunction with the principal, staff and school community in 2012. This decision was made with a view to providing an appropriate, specialist education within a mainstream setting for children who want to attend our school. The second Special Class opened in September 2013.

The aim of the special classes is to offer a positive, meaningful educational experience which allows the child to develop to his full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability, understanding and calm.

The ASD classes also form part of the school's objective to create an inclusive whole school community.

The Classes for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Policy recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of Togher Boys' NS. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which the potential of all students is nurtured through the co-operation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote the use of positive language
- Identify the criteria for pre-enrolment and explain the procedure for enrolment to the ASD Class
- Outline the key roles and responsibilities of the Principal, ASD Class teacher, mainstream teacher, and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- Explain approaches to integration and inclusion for the children in the Special Class
- Describe approaches to teaching and learning
- Encourage participation in ASD specific Continuing Professional Development



(CPD) in order to enrich teaching in the Special Classes

- Explain the role of outside agencies
- Outline the equipment, material and resources used within the Special Classes
- Establish that all other school policies, including the Code of Behaviour, apply to all students within the school including those within the ASD class

4. Positive Language

Our ASD classes are called “Coisceim or Suaimhneas”.

Where young neuro-typical children have questions about the personality and/or behaviours of a child on the Autism spectrum we answer those questions in a matter-of-fact, positive way. Often, practical differences are explained. Sometimes, depending on the age of the children it may be appropriate to use the word “autism” if that would help avoid misunderstandings. This would be done in consultation with parents.

5. Criteria for Pre-Enrolment

Eligibility criteria for enrolment in a special class for autism:

Children must have a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV/V or ICD 10/11 and have a letter of eligibility from a SENo stating that below eligibility criteria has been met. This letter is to be submitted with application.

Any application received without this letter will be considered invalid.

Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same.

On application, all reports in operation on a child must be provided to the school for assessment by the Admission Team (outlined below).



Fulfilment of enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure admission.

Admission may be refused if:

1. Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
2. Sufficient classroom space is not available
3. The Board of Management decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child.
4. It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
5. An applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
6. The parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student;

Taking all of the above into account, the Board of Management reserves the right of admission and to refuse admission.

6. Application and enrolment in the Classes for Children with ASD

Application and enrolment in the Classes for Children with ASD:

1. Registration process begins with a referral from the a Children's Disability Network's Team (CDNT), Enable Ireland , Sonas/Shine and/or other relevant organisations, or from a telephone call/visit from the parents. Applications will only be processed on the basis of a valid diagnostic or psychological report of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (i.e. Childhood Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, mild Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified). **This must be accompanied by a letter from a SENCO stating eligibility for a special class placement. (Any applications received without this letter will be considered invalid)**
2. Applications will be accepted in line with our Admissions Policy.
3. Details of applicants are retained as per our Admissions Policy.



Enrolment Criteria for the Classes for Children with ASD

The maximum class size is six pupils. Pupils will be enrolled using the following criteria in order of priority;

- a) Children with an ASD diagnosis currently enrolled within the school and a recommendation for a space in an ASD Class.
- b) Brothers of existing pupils in the school – priority to oldest class level.
- c) Children living within the parish – priority to oldest class level.
- d) Children living in Togher catchment area – priority to oldest class level.
- e) Children whose home address is closest to the school (as measured by a straight line on an OS map).
- f) Chronological order of application.
- g) When considering an application, the age and class level of the child must be appropriate to the space/resources which is available within the ASD and mainstream classes to ensure that that all pupils within the school receive an appropriate education.

If no places are available a waiting list be created for the Academic Year using the above criteria.

Should your child or young person be placed on a waiting list for a place, their personal data may be shared with the National Council for Special Education for the purposes of planning for the provision of special education placements.

7. Admissions Team for Classes for Children with ASD

Each application will be considered by the Admissions Team in consultation with ASD class teachers. The team will include:

- The school Principal
- Assistant Principal

A recommendation will be made in relation to each application to the Board of Management (BOM) of the school. The BOM has the right to endorse or overrule any decision made by the Admissions Team.

8. Discharge from the Classes for Children with ASD

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the ASD classes once they have completed 6th class or have turned 14 years of age before the first day of the first term of the new school year.



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Discharge for the purposes of full integration into the mainstream class may also be recommended at the end of any given school year, following consultation with the parents/guardians and relevant professionals.

9. Appeal

If a decision is communicated by Togher Boys N.S. to a parent indicating that the school is unable to accept their child, that parent may request a copy of the enrolment policy and enquire as to what section/sections of the policy justify the refusal.

If unhappy with the explanation the parent may appeal the decision, in writing, directly to the Board of Management (BOM).

The BOM then considers the appeal and advises the parent, in writing, of its decision.

If the parent is dissatisfied with the outcome, the parent may then make an appeal to the Secretary General under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision was notified to the parent. This policy document has an appendix that contains prototypes of all the standard letters and forms from the school relating to the enrolment procedure.

(Appendix 1)

All parents are reminded that it is their responsibility to keep the enrolment officer informed of any change of address or contact numbers. This applies even when there is a sibling enrolled at the school.

10. Key Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the principal includes:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the



policy in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children

- Monitor the implementation of the policy on an ongoing basis
- Keep relevant teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in relation to referrals within the ASD Class setting
- Support teachers & SNAs to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of ASD through CPD where possible
- Being a member of the admissions team
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate
- Ensure that all ASD class staff are aware of the school's code of behaviour and child protection

The roles and responsibilities of the ASD Class teacher includes;

- Being the main point of contact for the child's parents/guardians
- Involving parents in the educational process, eg. Individual Education Plans (IEPS)
- Maintain records of student's reports/ assessments and communication with parents/ outside agencies on Aladdin in accordance with the school's meeting policy.
- Preparing new pupils IEP within the first term of the school year in consultation with parents, and in liaison with other staff working with the child.
- Initiating a review of that IEP each term and organising venue, date and time to consult with parents, mainstream class teacher and SNAs
- Planning and implementing educational provision for children enrolled in the ASD class. IEPs being used as long-term planning, fortnightly plans for short-term planning and 1-1 folders are used to enable progression over time (Appendices 2-4)
- Co-ordinating the supporting work of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) on an ongoing basis
- Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate
 - Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify and implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate

The roles and responsibilities of the mainstream class teacher include;

- Working with the ASD class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate



- Working with the ASD class teacher and SNAs to implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible

The roles and responsibilities of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) include;

- Assisting with the care/safety/supervision needs of the children – in the classrooms and around the school, on the playground and on school trips
- Assisting with behavioural management programmes
- Guiding the child through tasks and activities designed by the ASD class teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Data collection/reporting on progress as determined by the ASD class teacher or Principal
- Providing special assistance to children as necessary
 - Assisting with the implementation of sensory regulatory programs
- Preparing materials/resources for the children, under the guidance of the ASD class teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible

11. Integration and Inclusion

Integration in inclusive mainstream classroom environments, in so far as possible, is the school's aim. The nature of all integration shall be determined by the ASD Class teacher following reviews at appropriate intervals and in consultation with the parents, mainstream class teacher, Principal and SNAs.

“Partial Integration” will take the form of contact during specific situations or curricular areas, where particular skills and interests and/or learning can be advanced.

“Increasing Integration” will be put in place for children who are successful in the integrated setting. Success criteria will be based on the level of meaningful learning and functioning within the setting.

“Reverse Integration” will be put in place for children where integration in the integrated setting is not appropriate. It can be used as a stepping stone to and/or in conjunction with Partial Integration. The focus of “Reverse Integration” will be on social



and play skills only.

The minimum level of integration and inclusion for all pupils, where appropriate, will include some lunch times, some group activities and some playground breaks.

12. Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The children will access a curriculum based on the Primary School Curriculum (1999) and Language Curriculum 2019 that is matched to their needs and capabilities, through carefully planned IEPs and through the use of differentiation strategies. Subject areas include; English, Maths, Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Physical Education and Ethical Education. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities will be used to augment the implementation of the curriculum.

In the case of pupils in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools, and in recognising the authority devolved to the management authorities in decision making concerning the Irish language learning needs of the pupils concerned, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required. Pupils in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption. In line with the Department's policy above however, schools are expected and encouraged to provide all pupils, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs. (circular 52/2019).

An eclectic approach to teaching shall be used within the ASD classes, that is, a range of approaches (including those used in the school's mainstream classes) shall be employed, based on the individual needs of the children.

The recently published *Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools* (Department of Education, 2022) is a regularly used resource to plan effectively and respond to the needs of the pupils in the ASD classes, in line with the most up to date research and recommendations.

The main approaches are as follows, but are not limited to; play, language through play, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Treatment and Education of Autism and Related Communication – Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Intensive Interaction & Relationship Development, Floortime, Lámh, Colourful Semantics and Social Stories.



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The assessment tools in use in the ASD classes are, but are not limited to; Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Programme (VB-MAPP), Psychoeducational Profile – Third Edition (PEP-3), Schonell reading and spelling assessments.

The implementation of the primary school curriculum will be enhanced through a programme of trips to local places, designed to help further prepare the children for successful living in our community (playground visits, coffee shop, shopping tasks, post office, swimming, etc.). Neuro-typical peers may also participate in elements of this programme.

The school may run a July Education Programme. This programme will be funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

13. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The BOM will support the accessing of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by staff. Relevant specialist training is accessed via the National Council for Special Education

All teachers will be expected to complete the following CPD within the first year of teaching in the multi-class setting;

- Two day TEACCH
- Contemporary Applied Behavioural Analysis (C-ABA)
- An Introduction to ASD (Primary)

A list of other courses available from the NCSE are displayed on the NCSE website, <http://www.sess.ie/professional-development/calendar/asd>

14. The Role of Outside Services

The school recognises the crucial role of the following outside services in supporting students fulfilling their potential (Supporting Students with SEN 2017): Health Service Executive (HSE), Enable Ireland, Children's Disability Network Teams , the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), etc.

The school welcomes collaboration with these outside services as a vital support to



the teaching & learning in the ASD Classes.

No HSE therapies, such as Occupational Therapy or Speech & Language Therapy are provided at the school. However, where a child has access to such supports in a local clinic, health centre or in a private capacity, those professionals will liaise with the ASD class teachers and/or visit the school from time to time.

15. Equipment and Resources

The children in the ASD classes will have access to equipment and resources which are recommended in their psychological reports, occupational therapy reports and speech & language therapy reports, where possible. When a recommendation is made for a child for a specific piece of equipment, the school will collaborate with the parents of the child and the Department of Education to purchase such equipment. Resources such as therapy, therabands, fine motor equipment and gross motor equipment will be, where possible, provided by the school. Children in the ASD classes will have access to the Sensory Room and the OT room when needed.

Resources and Assessment Kits, for example the VB-MAPP kit, PEP-3 kit, ABLLS and Board Maker CD-ROM, will remain in the ASD class storeroom and can be loaned to resource teachers and mainstream teachers, where needed.

Resources are cared for by all staff.

16. Reference to Other Policies

All school policies also apply to the Classes for Children with ASD which include but are not limited to:

- i) The Code of Behaviour Policy
- ii) Admissions Policy
- iii) Child Protection Policy
- iv) Special Educational Needs Policy

17. Summary

This policy has covered the use of positive language, the criteria for pre-enrolment and enrolment in the Classes for Children with ASD, it also discusses the criteria for



discharge from the classes. It outlines the roles and responsibilities for the main stakeholders involved. It explains approaches to integration and inclusion, teaching and learning and Continuing Professional Development. The policy has determined equipment, materials and resources made available to the multi-classes. All other school policies apply to ASD classes.

18. Success Criteria

Our Classes for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Policy will be seen to be working well when;

- The child has a positive engagement and participation in their own education
- Academic and social outcomes are enhanced
- We receive positive feedback from staff members and parents
- All staff are made aware of and are committed to the principles that are outlined in this policy
- A quality driven, appropriate educational service is provided to all children in the ASD classes, within the requirements of all recent legislation pertaining to Special Needs Education
- All efforts are made to ensure the integration and inclusion of children in the ASD Classes into mainstream education, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability for such integration
- The aims set out at the beginning of this policy are achieved

19. Roles and Responsibility

All staff of the school, under the positive and supportive leadership of the Board of Management and Principal, have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the policy committee through feedback from members of the school community.

The Board of Management have a duty of care to all staff members.

20. Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented in _____. Amendments will be implemented



immediately.

21. Timetable for Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually on an ongoing basis.

22. Ratification and Communication

The amended policy will be communicated to members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting of the BOM on _____. Parents will be made aware in the next school communication that the policy is available for viewing by appointment in the school.

Date of ratification: _____

Signed: _____ *Date:* _____
CHAIRPERSON OF BOM

Signed: _____ *Date:* _____
Principal



Appendix 1: Appeals Application Form



SECTION 29

APPEALS APPLICATION FORM

*This form should be used for the making of an appeal to the
Secretary General
of the
Department of Education & Skills
(as provided for under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998)*

We are currently unable to accept forms by post

**COMPLETED FORMS MUST BE SIGNED BY
PARENT/GUARDIAN AND SCANNED TO
section29@education.gov.ie**

**FOR ALL REFUSED ENROLMENTS: PLEASE ENSURE
YOU INCLUDE YOUR LETTER OF REFUSAL SIGNED
ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

If the appeal is in relation to an Education & Training Board (ETB) School or a Community College, this form should not be used in the first instance. Forms for appeals to an ETB should be obtained directly from the school or ETB concerned.

**IN GENERAL APPEALS MUST BE MADE WITHIN 42
CALENDAR DAYS OF RECEIPT OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S DECISION**



APPEAL APPLICATION

(PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK PRINT)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL CONTACT DETAILS:

MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER:

NAME OF STUDENT (If under 18 years of age):

DATE OF BIRTH:

R/CLASS OF STUDENT:

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE APPEAL IS MADE:

HAS YOUR CHILD ANY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS REQUIREMENT?

IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:

NATURE OF DECISION: (Please tick one category only)



Refusal to enrol	
Suspension *	
Permanent exclusion/ Expulsion	

** Please note that an appeal may only be made in respect of a suspension which results in 20 school days or more of suspension for that student in any one school year.*

DATE WHEN YOU WERE NOTIFIED OF THE DECISION BY THE SCHOOL:

DAY

MONTH

YEAR

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, designed for drawing or sketching.

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DETAILS OF PROCEEDINGS AT LOCAL LEVEL:

Please give details below of any appeal or review proceedings that have taken place at local level in this case, either to the Board of Management, the school patron or, in the case of an ETB School, the ETB.

Please state the outcome of these proceedings.

(Extra pages may be added)

GROUND ON WHICH THE DECISION IS BEING APPEALED:

Please state clearly the grounds on which the decision is being appealed.



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(Extra pages may be added)

**PLEASE ENCLOSE COPY OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION, IF AVAILABLE.
IF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION IS NOT AVAILABLE, PLEASE EXPLAIN
WHY NOT.**

APPEAL HEARING

Details concerning a date, time, and venue for the hearing will be notified to you as soon as possible .

**PLEASE ENCLOSE COPIES OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SCHOOL IN RELATION
TO THIS MATTER**

**YOU MAY ALSO ENCLOSE ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF
YOUR CASE**



Data Protection Privacy Statement

The Department of Education and Skills, as far as practicable and having regard to the resources available, provides for education and training for people resident in the State at a level appropriate to meet the needs and abilities of those people. The **main purpose** for which the Department requires the personal data provided by you is to conduct a section 29 appeal. The personal data provided may be exchanged with the following agencies/people:

- the school you are taking the appeal against – to ensure they have full details of the case you will be making in respect of your appeal,
- the Educational Welfare Service, as this agency have responsibility for monitoring school attendance
- the National Council for Special Education, if your child has special needs,
- the facilitator who may be appointed to seek a resolution to this appeal, to assist him/her in facilitating this appeal
- and the three person appeal committee who will hear and determine your appeal, to ensure they have all the correspondence received from both parties to the appeal to allow them to determine the appeal.

The privacy notice outlining further information in relation to this form can be found at the following link on the Department of Education and Skills website

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/gdpr/parents-children/privacy-notice-section-29-appeals-process.pdf>

Full details of the Department's data protection policy setting out how we will use your personal data or that of your child's data as well as information regarding your rights as a data subject are available at <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/>. Details of this policy and privacy notice are also available in hard copy from the address below upon request.

I certify that the information given above is true. I understand and authorise that all documentation considered relevant may be accessed as part of this appeal process, and that contact may be made for this purpose with relevant bodies such as the National Educational Psychological Service. In making this application I consent to the disclosure of information in relation to this application by the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child & Family Agency and/or the National Council for Special Education. I understand that all documentation provided by me in relation to this appeal, including this application form will be released to the school in question prior to an appeal hearing taking place and may be made available to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child & Family Agency and/or the National Council for Special Education.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return completed application form to:
section29@education.gov.ie

we are currently unable to accept forms by



If the appeal is in relation to an ETB School or a Community College, this form should not be used in the first instance. Forms for appeals to an ETB should be obtained directly from the school or ETB concerned.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WHEN SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION FORM YOU SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IN QUESTION OF THE APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS, AND THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT IS MADE. A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS FORM MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

DATE OF RECEIPT:

FILE REF:



Appendix 2: Fortnightly/ Cuntas Miosuil Template

Pupil:		Learning Objectives		Approaches /Methodologies		Resources		Assessment		Notes	
Subject-Strand – Strand Unit	Strand Unit	Learning Objectives	Strand Unit	Approaches /Methodologies	Strand Unit	Resources	Strand Unit	Assessment	Strand Unit	Notes	
English	•										
Maths	•										
SPIHE	•										
Geography	•										
History	•										
Science	•										
PE	•										

Legend for Cuntas Miosuil

Green	Fully achieved
Yellow	Needs to be revised/consolidated
Pink	Not achieved



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Appendix 3: 1-to-1 Folder Template



Student Name:	Subject:
Strand- Strand Unit:	Dates:
Long term objective:	<i>Observations amongst staff regarding to objective, work completed, progress made.</i>
Short term objective	
	Monday
	Tuesday
	Wednesday
	Thursday
	Friday
	Notes
Date: Notes;	Date: Notes;
	Date: Notes;



Appendix 4: IEP Template



Individual Education Plan

Name: **Class/Year:**
D.O.B.: **ASD Class Teacher:**
C.A.: **Mainstream Teacher:**

Date:
Date of Review:

Priority Learning Needs:

Targets	Strategies/Methodologies	Personnel and Responsibilities	Evaluation of Targets

[+]



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