

Special Needs Policy



Policy Objectives

- *To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with special needs.*
- *To clarify roles and responsibilities of all relevant personnel.*

Specific Objectives of Special Needs Teaching

- To educate pupils with SEN with their peers wherever possible, giving due consideration to the necessity to meet the needs of all children concerned.
- To enable the pupil with SEN to function as independently as possible in society.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with SEN.
- To foster self-esteem and positive attitudes to school for pupils with SEN.
- To involve parents in supporting their children's learning through effective support programmes, and to seek their close co-operation.
- To support pupils with SEN in numeracy/literacy and social, emotional and physical development through the implementation of IEP programmes (Individual Education Plans).

SEN Categories

Individual allocation of resource hours for pupils with low incidence SEN is made through the Special Educational Resource process (individual

applications supported by relevant professional reports). Pupils assessed with high incidence SEN (mild general learning disability and borderline mild general disability) are supported in the Special Class. Pupils assessed with high incidence SEN, dyslexia are supported in learning support.

The categories of SEN as per Circular SP Ed02/05 are as follows:

Disability	Disability Code	Resource hrs allocated (less 15%)
Physical disability	1	3
Hearing impairment	2	4
Visual impairment	3	3.5
Emotional disturbance	4	3.5
Severe emotional disturbance	5	5
Mild general learning disability	6	Special Class – high incidence
Moderate general learning disability	7	3.5
Severe/profound general learning disability	8	5
Borderline general learning disability	9	Special Class – high incidence
Autism/ Autism spectrum disorders	10	5
Specific learning disability	11	Learning support – high incidence
	12	5
Assessed syndrome	13	3 to 5
Specific speech and language disorder	14	4
Multiple disabilities	15	5
Exceptionally Able pupils		

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management, Principal, SENCo, teachers, SNAs, parents and pupils share responsibility for meeting the needs of a child with SEN.

The Role of the Board of Management

- The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with SEN.
- To oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN.
- To endeavour that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for all teachers.
- To support the professional development of teachers and SNAs.

The Role of the Principal

- To assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on special needs.
- To liaise with SENCo.
- To liaise with all outside agencies in conjunction with the SENCo (for e.g. psychologist, social workers, speech therapists, SENO etc.)
- To facilitate renewing and updating resources.
- To provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of support teaching.
- To facilitate in-service training for teachers and SNAs in the area of SEN.
- To report to the BOM on any matters concerning SEN.

The Role of the SENCo

- To liaise with the Principal, parents, teachers, psychologists and other relevant professional/agencies with regard to pupils who may have/have special needs.
- To ensure all paperwork (referral forms, applications for resource hours, assistive technology, NCSE documents etc) is complete and signed off by the Principal where necessary.
- To consult with the Principal to ensure that each resource teacher has responsibility for a specific cohort and is reviewed during the year/annually.
- To maintain a file for each child with SEN, to include professional report(s).
- To organise regular meetings with the SEN team and SNAs.
- To keep a copy of all SNAs and Resource teacher timetables and IEPs.
- To contribute to staff meetings and keep all teachers informed on any relevant in-service and developments in the area of SEN.
- To advise the Principal, in consultation with the SEN team with regard to the purchase of appropriate resource materials.
- To inform parents when resource hours/SNA support is sanctioned/discontinued.

The Role of the Class Teacher

- To assume primary responsibility for the education of children with SEN.
- To complete relevant SEN documentation that pertain to any child.
- To facilitate pupil observation by psychologist or other professional personnel if required.
- To be available to meet psychologist or other professional personnel to discuss assessment and recommendations after child is assessed.
- To endeavour that all reports and relevant documentation are read prior to teaching a child with SEN.

- To support and collaborate with the resource teacher in developing, implementing and reviewing an IEP.
- To endeavour to differentiate the class curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils.
- To consult and liaise with the resource teacher and SENCo.

The Role of the Resource Teacher

- To be available for and to encourage both parents/legal guardians to attend IEP/ parent-teacher meetings.
- To liaise with class teachers with regard to the progress of individual pupils.
- To support class teachers with regard to employing differentiated teaching methods and resources.
- To meet the needs of pupils with SEN by the most efficient use of all available resources.
- To have the flexibility to work with individuals, small groups or whole class grouping, where deemed appropriate for eg. circle time, small language groups, collaborative teaching and cookery, in collaboration with the class teacher.
- To consult with the Principal/SENCo on issues arising in relation to children with SEN.
- To identify ways in which the pupil's learning can continue to be supported at school and at home if resource hours/SNA support are discontinued.
- To support parents with their child's development in all areas.

The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

- To follow guidelines as outlined in the SNA policy.

The Role of the Parents

- To inform the Principal if their child has an assessed SEN on enrolment.
- To meet with relevant personnel if requested to do so.
- To collaborate with the resource teacher and class teacher in drawing up, implementing and reviewing the I.E.P. for their child.
- To support the work of the school and implement suggested home based activities.
- To update the school with relevant contact details for both parents/legal guardians.

Record Keeping

- A file containing all the relevant information pertaining to the pupil with special needs will be kept securely in a cabinet in the SENCo's room.
- The Principal, Class Teacher, Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Psychologist, Inspector, and parents/guardians of child will have access to this file.
- Teachers may not make copies of professional reports but may take notes.
- An IEP will be stored in the pupil's file for ten years after pupil leaves the school.

Outside Agencies

The Principal, SENCo, Resource teachers, Class teachers and SNAs liaise with the following outside agencies in order to maximise the support for pupils with SEN:

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Visiting teacher for children who are hearing impaired
- H.S.E

- The Special Educational Section of the Department of Education and Science
- The inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science.
- Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHs), Ballard House
- N.Y.P. (National Youth Project)
- Westside Family Services

Procedure for acquiring an Exemption from Irish

- Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate (Circular 12/96)
- The BOM will consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the pupil's parents and a copy of a psychological report not more than two years old or other supporting documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular 12/96).