



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY



*Presentation Secondary School,
Miltown, Co. Kerry*

MISSION STATEMENT

'Our school is a Catholic school which aspires to the full development of all its members according to Christian Principles. Every effort is made to ensure that each student develops according to his/her talents and potential: physically, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually. We aim to develop fully integrated people who are aware of their own dignity as persons, who have Christian values, who are reliable, trustworthy, honest, truthful, caring, prayerful, devoted to duty, lovers of God and of neighbour; people who are prepared to reach out to those less fortunate than themselves.'

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

A core value of our school, and our policies, is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed an inclusive and equitable educational experience. Presentation Secondary School will strive to create a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating community in which everyone is valued and in which every student is encouraged to achieve to the highest degree possible within his/her potential.

POLICY RATIONALE

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that:-

- An accurate and appropriate assessment of the needs of students with special educational needs is carried out, monitored and reviewed.
- The school identifies and attempts to secure and implement the necessary resources required to meet these needs.

This policy is based on the CEIST Core Values and the founding intentions of Nano Nagle and Blessed Edmund Rice, as well as seeking to implement the legislative requirements of the Education Act (1998), Education Welfare Act (2000), Equal Status Act (2000), and the Education for People with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN 2004 – on implementation).

POLICY AIMS

Presentation Secondary School seeks to ensure that all students are provided, as far as is possible, with an educational experience which is accessible, inclusive and appropriate to their individual needs.

Within the constraints of available resources all students with special educational needs, who are admitted to the school, shall have access to participate in and benefit from an education suitable to their needs.

The school shall actively seek adequate resources, equipment, staff, expertise and accommodation from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Department of Education & Science and other relevant agencies.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To provide opportunities for students to acquire the basic personal skills, social skills, literacy skills and numeracy skills needed for them to reach their full potential in life.
- To identify the special educational needs of all incoming students and to continually attempt to identify student needs throughout their school career.
- To monitor and review these needs regularly.
- To seek to provide appropriate resources and facilities to address these needs.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management of recognised schools “shall provide for education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, are identified and provided for.”

The Education Act (1998) section 15 states that the Board of Management shall publish “the policy of the school concerning admissions to and participation in the school and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to the school of the parents’ choice are respected.”

The Board shall also “within the resources provided to the school in accordance with section 12, make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with special educational needs.”

Role of the Principal

- To ensure that a suitable and effective Special Educational Needs Policy is in place that reflects the ethos and nature of the school mission as well as legislative requirements.
- To ensure that this policy is monitored, reviewed and amended in order to address changes in legislation and the needs of students in our care.
- To ensure that adequate resources/facilities are sought and provided, well maintained and appropriately used.
- To keep teachers informed of new developments relating to SEN/LS and to provide staff training and development in areas relating to special educational needs.
- To respond to appeals by parents with respect to decisions made at this level.

Role of Teaching Staff

- To implement this policy taking into account the special educational needs of students.
- To co-operate with the school procedures for identifying and addressing the special educational needs of students and to attend training/staff development provided in this area.
- To consider the needs of all students in the way they select teaching resources, plan and teach lessons and conduct assessments.
- To be familiar with and implement recommendations identified in students’ education plans and if necessary to seek advice when addressing students with special educational needs.
- To attempt to integrate students with special education needs/learning difficulties into regular class as much as possible and to accommodate their withdrawal (where necessary) by assisting them with any necessary notes/activities missed.
- To foster students' positive self-esteem by giving genuine praise whenever possible and promoting achievable activities which yield success.
- To bring to the attention of the Learning Support Co-ordinator or Principal concerns about students who may be experiencing difficulties.

Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

- The SENCO assists the Principal/Deputy Principal in coordinating the schools response to students who have special educational needs and/or learning difficulties.
- To assess the nature and extent of the learning difficulties experienced by students.
- In conjunction with the Principal/Deputy Principal, parents, students and other relevant agencies, to compile, monitor and review student education plans.
- To disseminate this information and recommended teaching strategies to staff.
- To make referrals/applications to the National Educational Psychological Service, NCSE, DES, SEC and other relevant agencies.
- To advise the Principal/Deputy Principal on issues relating to assessment, admissions and provision for students with special educational needs/learning difficulties.
- To assist the Principal/Deputy Principal in devising a programme/timetable which addresses the needs identified through allocated 'Resource' hours, learning support classes and other provisions which are required to need specific needs.
- To advise parents on other strategies available to them and to consult them with regard to ensuring effective measures at home and at school complement each other.
- To ensure that applications are submitted on behalf of students who require reasonable accommodations for State Examinations.

Special Needs Assistants

The duties and responsibilities of special needs assistants involve tasks of a non-teaching nature and are based on care needs. For example:

- Assisting students coming to school/going home (where necessary).
- Providing special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties including helping the student to organise books, equipment, bag etc
- Assisting with activities outside the classroom where needed.

A special needs assistant's role is to assist the student(s) with their care needs which may hinder them in accessing the curriculum, under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

Each student is exceptional and the duties of the special needs assistant will be modified to support the particular needs of the student concerned.

Role of the Parents

- To consult with and share relevant information with the school which may help to enhance the student's educational experience.
- To support the procedures and programmes put in place by the school to address the needs of their son/daughter.
- To bring to the attention of school authorities any concerns they may have in relation to the school's provision for the special educational needs of students.
- To participate in compiling and reviewing their son/daughters education plan and /or other programmes, facilities, resources put in place to address specific needs.

Role of the Students

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementation of their education plan and /or other programmes, facilities, resources put in place to address their specific needs.
- To regularly attend Resource hours, learning support classes and/or other programmes/resources put in place to provide for their special education needs/learning difficulties.
- To participate in discussions and reviews of education plans/other programmes and inform the SENCO of areas in which they continue to have difficulties.

Types of Additional Support

Resource Hours

Resource hours are allocated by the Department of Education & Science (DES) based on psychological assessments.

Students identified by staff or parents as having difficulties may be assessed through the school. However, the number of assessments available to the school in any given year is limited. On occasion the Principal and/or Learning Support Coordinator may suggest parents have student assessed privately, alternatively students will be placed on a waiting list for a school assessment.

An education plan/programme will be devised for Resource students who will avail of literacy and/or numeracy support.

Learning Support

The function of Learning Support is to ensure that students who struggle with basic literacy and numeracy are identified and provided with the supports they require to confidently meet the challenges of the curriculum.

The provision of this support is determined by the time allocation made available by the Dept of Education and Science and the resources available within the school.

Priority will be given to students who have fallen three years or more behind their chronological age level in the areas of literacy or numeracy, as identified on standardised tests.

Priority will also be given to those identified by a psychological report as having a specific learning difficulty, but who have not been allocated Resource Hours by the DES.

Outside of the above priorities we will seek to provide additional support for any student who has specific needs impacting on their being able to access the curriculum, whether identified by parents, teachers and/or the student themselves.

PROVISIONS & PROCEEDRES

Presentation Secondary School will seek appropriate resources/facilities from NCSE, Department of Education and Science and other relevant agencies to meet the needs of all our students.

Types of Special Educational Needs:-

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional or behaviour disorder e.g ADD/ ADHD
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder - Including Asperger Syndrome
- Assessed Syndromes
- Specific Speech /Language Disorder
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- General Learning Difficulties
- Exceptional Able
- Multiple Disabilities

Identification of Needs

Where possible students who have provisions allocated to them in National School will continue to have similar provisions in Presentation Secondary School. Parents are asked to provide all relevant information at enrolment in order to allow school authorities to apply to the NCSE and/or Department of Education and Science for resources/facilities.

Students whose needs are identified on admission or whilst enrolled in the school will have applications made on their behalf for appropriate hours, resources, facilities as soon as is possible. This will happen in consultation with the students, their parents, teachers and other relevant parties.

All incoming first years students are assessed through standardised literacy and numeracy tests and teacher based observations/assessments.

Inclusive In-Class Support and Team Teaching

Students with special education needs and/or learning difficulties are generally supported within an inclusive whole-class environment. Subject teachers are kept informed of students with education plans and special educational needs. Teachers are familiar with teaching and learning strategies which enable effective differentiation and accessibility of the curricula for all students.

Where possible SEN/LS hours will be utilised to provide team teaching and small class provision in a range of subjects in order to support students in accessing the curriculum.

Withdrawal Policy

Students who are identified as having special educational needs will be met by the SENCO and an education plan or support programme put in place for them *(in consultation with parents)*.

In some cases students may be advised to reduce the number of subjects studied in order to address their needs effectively. Where possible students will be timetabled for withdrawal assistance (resource hours /learning support classes) during the classes of subjects they do not study. However, due to a number of constraints, this is not always possible. In such cases students and parents will be consulted and informed of the classes they will be withdrawn from.

Resource Classes

Students are generally allocated resource hours timetabled in literacy, numeracy and support strategies based on their needs.

Where needs are of a more specific nature (eg. ASD, social anxiety) we will work with the student and parents to determine how best to utilise this support time.

Learning Support Classes

Students may be identified through the standardised testing carried out in Sept, from primary school information, parental concern and/or concerns by teachers.

Learning support students will be offered the opportunity to attend Literacy and/or Numeracy classes base on their individual needs and the type of support required.

Physical Accommodation / Facilities

Where students' physical difficulties are not catered for by our current accommodation funding and facilities will be sought from the Department of Education & Science in order to provide adequately for these needs.

In some cases in the interest of Health & Safety admission may be deferred until these facilities are in place.

Procedures for Acquiring an Exemption in Irish

Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate in strict accordance with DES Circular 12/96.

The school will consider granting an exemption for Irish in the following circumstances;

- A request is made by a student's parents/guardian or recommendation made by member of staff.
- The school is furnished with a copy of a psychological report not more than two years old or other supporting evidence is provided/obtained (eg. standardised assessment scores)
- The Learning Support Coordinator, Guidance Counsellor and relevant teachers have discussed the decision to exempt and the consequent implications with both the student and parent/guardian.

Curricular Modification

Exemptions from modern languages are considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents, class teachers, SENCO, Guidance Counsellor and the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Other curricular modifications are considered for individual pupils where deemed absolutely necessary. Consultation between all relevant parties is deemed essential when making such decisions.

The timetabled periods which become available due to such curricular modifications will be used, where possible, to implement individual resource interventions and/or learning support. However, due to timetabling constraints this is not always possible. In such cases students will be supervised in a classroom and are encouraged to avail of extra study time for their remaining subjects.

Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations

Applications are made for all students identified as being in need of Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations (RASE).

The procedures of the Department of Education and Science and the Examinations Board will be strictly adhered to.

Leaving Certificate students, for whom an application for Reasonable Accommodations is made, will be assessed by a NEPS psychologist prior to the allocation of such accommodations.

In the case of Junior Certificate students accommodations will be based on their most recent psychological assessment providing it is not more than three years old.

Where resources allow provision will also be made to assist students during in-house and mock exams in keeping with State Examination provisions.

** Pilot scheme imminent.*

Monitoring & Review Procedures

Education plans and other support programmes will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Monitoring will occur throughout the school year through consultation with the students, teachers and parents and also through both formative and summative assessments.

Scheduled reviews will also take place and education plans/programmes/facilities will be evaluated as identified and agreed by those involved in the consultation review process. (Student, parents, teachers, Learning Support Coordinator, Principal, other relevant agencies)

The SENCO will meet regularly with the Guidance Counsellor, Principal & Deputy as well as with teachers of resource/learning support and team teaching to ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of SEN provision occurs.

Success Criteria

- Students with special educational needs are identified, assessed and receive appropriate provision.
- Suitable programmes are in place for individual students and for groups of students at both Junior & Senior cycle.
- Targets are set and recommendations made for each student.
- Student progress is measured and assessed through a variety of means appropriate to each individual and the targets set.

Future Development

- The SEN model for our school will be reviewed over the next two years.
- Having engaged external SEN advice and support from the inspectorate Team Teaching will be piloted 2014-15 in an attempt to broaden support and reduce withdrawal where possible.
- Longer term it is hoped to reduce the number of teachers involved in offering resources (withdrawal) and where possible ensuring that these are SEN qualified.
- New pilot RASE procedures will be looked into in preparation for them coming on-stream.

Reviewed - October 2014

Next Review Date - *October 2017*

Appendix 1

Legislative Framework Summary

Education Act 1998

Section 9:

- A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs ... it shall as far as resources permit
- ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special needs, are identified and provided for.
- Establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility

Section 15:

The BOM shall publish... the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that... principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected.

Education Welfare Act 2000

Section 19:

“The Board of Management of a recognised school shall not refuse to admit as a student in such school a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the policy of the recognised school concerned published under section 15(2)d of the Education Act 1998.”

Equal Status Act 2000

- Identifies the school as a service provider
- The school cannot discriminate on the grounds of disability (one of nine grounds – inc disabilities)
- This refers not only to admission but also to access to any course, facility or benefit provided

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs 2004 *(pending full implementation)*

Key Principles:

- Special Needs students have same rights as their peers
- School should be an inclusive environment
- Greater involvement of parents
- Individual Education Plans
- National Council for Special Education