

C E I S T

Catholic Education
An Irish Schools Trust



Whole School Inclusion Policy

Rationale

This policy document outlines the school's provision of additional educational support for students with S.E.N. and the philosophy that underpins this provision. The policy is written in the context of the relevant legislation listed below. The policy is a working document and will be reviewed periodically. The policy is a reflection of our current practice.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all students with S.E.N. including students identified as Exceptionally Able through an educational psychological assessment. It is also intended to serve the school community including B.O.M, the Principal, the Teaching Staff, Ancillary Staff and Parents/ Guardians.

Legal framework:

Cnoc Mhuire sets out to provide education for all its students with reference to legislation regarding students with S.E.N. as listed below:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, E.P.S.E.N. (2004)
- U.N Convention on the rights of the Child (Article 1,2, 3, 7,12, 13,14, 23, 29)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- D.E.S. circular letters
- The guidelines published by the N.C.S.E.
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006.
- The guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (N.E.P.S.).
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (S.E.S.S.)

The guidelines published by

- The Equality Act (2004)

- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, E.P.S.E.N. (2004).

Special Educational Needs:

The EPSEN Act (2004), defines “special educational needs” as “*A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition*” (Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1) <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/a3004.pdf>

Inclusion:

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the N.C.S.E, has been adopted.

“Inclusion is defined as a process of: addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/ her attendance at school.”

Literature review of the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with Special Educational Needs (N.C.S.E. 2010,p.39http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/ncse_inclusion.pdf

Inclusion

Cnoc Mhuire welcomes students with Special Education Needs and in line with the E.P.S.E.N. 2004. Three major principles laid out in the EPSEN Act are:

- The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.
- students with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from appropriate Education, as do their peers.
- students with SEN, like their peers, should leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity, in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Learning support provision seeks to:

- Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success
- Set high standards for students with S.E.N. and provide them with appropriate guidance encouraging them to achieve their full potential
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner
- Ensure that S.E.N. is not viewed in isolation but in the context of the whole school community and that students with S.E.N. are educated in an inclusive environment
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area

- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with S.E.N.
- Involve parents in the support of their child's education
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents to achieve appropriate support at home
- To reflect the most recent (N.E.P.S) recommendations in the continuum of support and best practice in SEN
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with S.E.N.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of students with S.E.N. and to assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment to their child
- To outline procedures and practices that will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with S.E.N.
- Ensure that students with S.E.N. are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of the relevant partners in the education of pupils with S.E.N. (Learning Support Guidelines)

Roles and responsibilities of partners in the S.E.N. team:

The S.E.N. team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, the S.E.N. Co-ordinator, ASD coordinator, Learning Support Teacher/s, Resource Teacher/s, E.A.L. (English as an Additional Language) Teacher/s, Mainstream teachers, SNA's and the Guidance Counsellor.

The team is advised by the S.E.N.O. and N.E.P.S. psychologist as well as other agencies. The specific roles and responsibilities of personnel are as described in the D.E.S. inspectorate publication, Inclusion of Students with Special Needs, Post-Primary guidelines (2007).

Principal and Deputy Principal

- To appoint a S.E.N. Co-ordinator and liaise with the coordinator regarding needs and provisions.
- To establish a "Special Needs Support Team" in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with S.E.N.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources including the allocation of resource hours and funds.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with S.E.N.
- To promote a whole school approach to S.E.N. and to alert all staff to their responsibilities in this area
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of S.E.N. students.
- To manage the implementation of policies and practices.
- To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions.
- To assign roles and responsibilities.
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements as legislation evolves.
- To facilitate liaison with outside agencies and to encourage continuing professional development to develop capacity in S.E.N. within the school.
- To direct the work of the S.N.A's
- To update the B.O.M on S.E.N. provision in the school.

S.E.N. Co-ordinator

- To coordinate/ devise a school S.E.N. Plan.
- To create and maintain a school register of students with S.E.N. and those receiving additional support.
- To assist in the identification of students with S.E.N.
- To communicate the needs of students to teachers and to advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.
- To ensure that Student Support Plans are put in place for students with S.E.N.
- To provide R.A.C.E. during house exam where possible
- To meet with parents in order to plan and to review interventions.
- To ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents, etc.
- To obtain written parental consent for diagnostic testing other than the CAT4.
- To report annually to the B.O.M.
- To advise and collaborate with S.N.A.'s around the care needs of relevant students.
- To facilitate meetings of the S.E.N. team and collaborate on the creation of timetables for additional support..

Learning Support/ Resource/ E.A.L. Teacher/ ASD coordinator

- Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention
- Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student.
- Providing direct teaching to students with S.E.N./ EAL/ ASD to reinforce the subject teaching or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum.
- To engage with team teaching/ co- teaching
- To contribute at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate.
- To collect and analyse school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records, gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff
- To advise S.N.A.'s around the needs of relevant students.

Guidance Counsellor

- To work with the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with S.E.N. and their inclusion in the school.
- To provide counselling in personal, educational and career development for students with additional needs.
- To coordinate diagnostic assessments eg CAT4
- To present at the Senior Cycle Options Information Evening for parents/guardians
- To advise students and parents/guardians on subject choice and subject load
- To consult with parents/guardians and staff.

- To facilitate individual appointments for students
- To liaise with students, parents/guardians and the S.E.N, team in relation to D.A.R.E. and H.E.A.R. applications.

SNAs

- To provide assistance to named students who have care needs.
- To recognise their role in the health and safety of the student
- To assist / escort students on school trips
- To liaise directly with parents/guardians of students in their care in relation to minor issues e.g. illness, trips away, equipment required for class etc.
- To give assistance as necessary for students in their social, emotional and educational development without developing a culture of dependency.
- To assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- To accompany individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. An S.N.A. should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the S.E.N Team and Principal, where teachers and parents have been informed.
- To give general assistance to the subject teacher, as directed by the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. The S.N.A. may not act as either a substitute or temporary teacher
- To undertake other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The S.N.A. may be reassigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- S.N.A.'s are expected to provide and update timetables during the school year.

Mainstream Teachers

- To be aware of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with students with S.E.N and to ensure all students' needs are met.
- To seek advice from the S.E.N. Team regarding S.E.N. students and to familiarise themselves with Log of Actions/ updating SSP's etc.
- To participate in C.P.D. in the area of S.E.N
- To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students
- To consider the needs of students with S.E.N. in all aspects of classroom planning
- To assess/ monitor progress and give feedback to all students.
- To inform SENCO of additional students who display signs of learning difficulties in class e.g. progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with other students.
- To complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, Log of Actions, SSP's etc as required by the S.E.N. team.

- To inform parents of the progress of students through Parent-Teacher meetings and school reports.

Parents/ Guardians

“The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child’s education”

Cnoc Mhuire provides support to Parents/Guardians by:

- Liaising with parents prior to transfer where necessary
- Informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first-year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate.
- Actively encouraging parents to contact the S.E.N Co-ordinator
- Parents/Guardians are consulted regarding all interventions and contact/ referrals to outside support agencies.

Parents and the transmission of information

The parents of a child with S.E.N. can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child’s learning difficulties, learning differences and learning preferences. The S.E.N. team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with S.E.N. upon enrolment. Copies of Professional Assessment Reports or student support plans are also requested from their previous school.

Parents

The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child.

- The school journal is used for weekly/ daily home-school communication, parent/teacher meetings are held once a year for face to face communication.
- Students receive a written school report twice in the school year (at Christmas and Summer)
- Special arrangements may be made with the parents/guardians in relation to the homework that each individual student with S.E.N. is expected to undertake.
- Regular communication is available through meetings on request.
- Parents can help the school by keeping teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties they observe in their child’s learning. This should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school.

Students

The S.E.N department involves students in discussions around their learning needs.

- Students have input into their learning targets
- Students are involved in the planning of their Student Support Plan.
- Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self monitor.

**The school believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.*

Provision and the Continuum of Support

The model of assessment and intervention recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEPS Continuum of Support.

Student Support Plans are compiled if a student is in receipt of Learning Support/ Resource hours. The SENCO, subject teacher, outside agencies, the student and the parents are involved in the development of the plan at the start of the academic year. Monitoring and assessing is the responsibility of S.E.N Team, class teacher and Learning Support Teacher. Reviewing the plan and targets is undertaken throughout the year.

The Student Support plans are saved in the SEN shared Google drive. Professional reports e.g. Psychological Assessments, Speech and Language Assessments, Occupational Therapists reports, Audiology Reports etc. will be held on the student file in a locked cabinet in the SEN room. No duplication is permitted.

The Student Support Plan process involves:

1. Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
2. Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details.
3. Assessment reports/ information obtained from parents.
4. Priority Need.
5. Setting targets for each priority learning need.
6. Identifying the strategies and resources required.
7. A review occurs bi-annually.

Enrolment

The school's admissions policy outlines the procedures with regard to the enrolment of students with S.E.N.

Provision for students with known and documented needs

The transfer of information from primary to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. Following acceptance of a place in the school, parents of incoming first years are invited to attend an information meeting outlining practical supports, guidance supports and pastoral care structures.

The Special Needs Coordinator will also:

- Liaise with the Guidance Counsellor regarding information collected from the feeder Primary Schools.
- Liaise with Primary School and parents/guardians of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school.
- Meet with the parent/ guardian of incoming students with S.E.N.
- Establish communication with the primary school resource/ learning support teacher.

- Liaise with the Principal in the application process for Resource Teaching Hours/S.N.A. support/ Assistive Technology

After accepting a place in Cnoc Mhuire:

- All incoming first year students take a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT 4) to identify strengths/ weaknesses. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including exceptionally able students.
- At the start of each academic year, students on the S.E.N. Register are reviewed individually in terms of the type of support needed and curriculum load.

Students transferring into other Year Groups

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information may be requested from their previous school (NEPS Report, School Reports, attendance, etc.) by the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Any relevant information is then passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Provision for students with emerging needs

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT4, in class assessment, informal observation, parental concern). Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural) Parental consent is obtained before diagnostic tests are administered.

Models of S.E.N./ EAL/ ASD provision

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context, the following options are considered:

- Curricular differentiation
- Team Teaching/Co-operative Teaching
- In-class support/Differentiation
- Inclusion of S.N.A. in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Organisation and Life Skills lessons
- L2LP provision
- Curricular reduction in exceptional cases

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is varied and is reviewed throughout the intervention. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum. All decisions in this regard

are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers, the student, principal and guidance counsellor.

Reasonable Accommodations for State (R.A.C.E.) and In House Examinations

In conjunction with the SEN team, applications are made for R.A.C.E. provision for SEN students sitting State Examinations. A range of accommodations are available to the students as per circular criteria laid down by the S.E.C. Further details available at www.examinations.ie. Where resources permit, reasonable accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations at mock exams and in-house exams.

Communication

S.E.N. Team

- The SENCO and SEN team will meet regularly and formally. Informal meetings occur on a daily basis.
- Members of the S.E.N team can meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the year between the mainstream teachers and S.E.N team with regards to incoming first year students with S.E.N. and updated information on students in other year groups.
- At the end of each year, the S.E.N team may collect relevant student information to use as reference for the following school year

Mainstream Teachers

- At the beginning of each school year, the S.E.N. Coordinator updates a register of information including the incoming first years with S.E.N. This information is shared with teachers at the start of each school year and is accessible on Google Drive.
- S.E.N is on the agenda at every staff meeting.
- Information is also communicated via the Year Head and student support structures such as the Pastoral Care Team.

Parents

Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:

- School Open Night
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Letters to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone Calls
- Text message
- Email
- Meetings with the S.E.N. Coordinator and Principal/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head where relevant.

Record-Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept on the individual students file in the SEN Room in a locked cabinet. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Exemptions from Irish

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted by parents/ guardians with the enrolment application.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular M10/94).
http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/ActiveCirculars/ppc10_94.pdf
- Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support/ Resource is arranged for students with S.E.N. who do not study Irish. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability.

Link to other School Policies

- Data Protection Policies
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Wellbeing Policy

Priority areas for development

- Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff in the area of special education.
- Raising teacher awareness of, and expertise in differentiated teaching methodologies.
- Raising student awareness around inclusivity

Consultation

This policy was formulated in accordance with circular 0014/2017 and in consultation with the teaching staff and management of Cnoc Mhuire, parents of students with special educational needs (S.E.N.), the board of management (B.O.M.), special needs assistants (S.N.A.'s),

Review, Assessment and Evaluation

- A review is given to the Board of Management at the end of each year.
- An evaluation of the S.E.N. provision in the school will be carried out at the end of each school year.

Ratified by Board 23/10/2023

Chairperson

Secretary