

# **Special Educational Needs Policy**

## **St Peter's College, Dunboyne**

### **Scope:**

Whole school

### **Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aims:**

- To pursue academic excellence while acknowledging the diversity of our student body.
- To nurture the values of inclusion and care within the school and wider community.

### **Legal Context:**

To comply with the school's obligations as outlined in the:

- Education Act 1998
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

### **Definition of Special Needs:**

"Special educational needs' means, in relation to a person, 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 the condition ... " (Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004)

Special educational needs also includes "students who are exceptionally able and talented" (Looking at our School, An aid to self evaluation in second level schools)

### **Rationale:**

- To ensure a systematic approach to the education of students with Special Educational Needs.
- To ensure "the promotion of equality of access, participation and benefit of students with Special Educational Needs. (School Development Planning Initiative Guidelines, 4: 18)

**Goals / Objectives:**

- The inclusion and full participation of all students in all aspects of school life
- To promote best practice in teaching methods with regard to the diverse needs of students.
- To promote with students and parents an appreciation of the benefits of education.
- To actively promote the self-esteem of our students.

**Policy Content:**

- St. Peter's College is willing and happy to accommodate students with Special Educational Needs. Students are identified from information obtained from Parents, Primary Schools as well as standardised testing which are carried out at various stages throughout the year. Entrance exams are carried out in January of the year leading up to entry into secondary school with additional testing carries out in September when the students have started secondary school. Based on these results students are assigned to relevant classes and may be withdrawn. In some cases students may be advised in consultation with their parents to follow a reduced timetable.
- There may be circumstances where, for the safety and welfare of students with specific special educational needs, adequate personnel and material resources will need to be allocated prior to enrolment.
- All students will study a common course and complete common house exams as far as possible. Some students may complete a differentiated exam in some subjects.
- Parents will be invited to attend meetings and encouraged to contribute their views /concerns.
- Parents will be informed of their child's SEN.
- The Diary will be used to communicate with parents.
- The practice of Team Teaching will be employed where appropriate.

- On the basis of information proffered by the primary schools and the results of standardised testing, students may be withdrawn from class.
- An Individual Educational Plan will be developed for First Year Resource students who are withdrawn.

## **Board of Management**

### **Roles and**

### **Responsibilities**

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated over time.
- To approve the policy at a meeting of the Board.
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

## **Principal, Deputy Principal and relevant Post Holders:**

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the Special Educational Needs policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that the policy is reviewed after an appropriate length of time.
- To establish lines of communication with the Special Educational Needs Organiser.

## **The Role of the Special Needs Coordinator**

The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for co-ordinating the Special Needs Team in the school and for ensuring the provision of special needs support for all pupils identified as having special needs. In particular the Co-ordinator will:

- Read, interpret and disseminate information from psychological reports as appropriate

- Work with and support where possible subject teachers who work with pupils with special needs
- Allocate additional teaching hours to pupils as appropriate
- Organise appropriate teachers for these hours as appropriate
- Organise the continued testing of pupils on an annual and individual basis where deemed necessary
- Liaise with parents, internal support groups, the relevant Ceannaire and outside bodies like NEPS, SESS, NCSE and DES as appropriate
- Source resources for use with special needs pupils
- Organise reasonable examination accommodation where appropriate
- Seek to identify students with specific learning difficulties
- Co-ordinate Individual Education Plans
- Keep all records regarding student progress in the area of special needs

**Parents are encouraged to support the school policy.**

#### **Learning Support Resource Teachers:**

- To carry out assessment on students.
- To record the results of assessments. Results are made available to Board of Management, Principal, Ceannaire, Tutor, Subject Teachers and Parents on request.
- To develop Individual Education Plans for their resource students.
- To have appropriate qualifications in teaching students with special needs where possible and that these teachers are key members of the SEN Department.
- Communicate with staff and teachers to minimise disruption when withdrawing students.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS (SNA's)**

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist pupils with disabilities in an educational context. SNA's may be involved in supporting the student both in an academic context within the classroom and in the wider sphere of their personal and social education outside of the classroom. Their duties are assigned by the Principal and Special Needs Co-ordinator. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal.

A more detailed description of the role of the SNA is available in Circular SP.ED 07/02.

**Subject Teachers:**

- To facilitate inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs in the classroom.
- To incorporate differentiated methods of teaching and learning.

**Success Criteria:**

- The goals are attained.

**Monitoring Procedures:**

- The Special Educational Needs department will monitor the procedures as outlined in the policy on a yearly basis.
- The Special Educational Needs Department will provide a written report to the Principal annually.

**Review Procedures:**

- The procedures are reviewed by the MAC Committee every three years.
- The MAC Committee will refer this policy to all partners in education.

