

Revised Special Educational Needs Policy Portmarnock Community School

Context – The Special Educational Needs policy was first written in 2007. This policy was written with the expectation that the EPSEN Act (Education for People with Special Education Needs 2004) would be commenced. The Department of Education (DES) and Science MLL inspection in January 2011 advised that the learning support policy should be revised in the context of the non commencement of the EPSEN Act. This policy presents what is currently happening in the school.

AIMS - The school adopts an inclusive policy for students with special needs. This means we aim to help all students reach their individual potential.

MODEL OF ORGANISATION

All students and in particular students designated as having special needs are supported by the mainstream subject teacher. Depending on the learning needs of the student, he/she may also be supported by small group support, team teaching, a resource teacher and special needs assistant. The allocation of the above is dependent upon the National Council of Special Needs (NCSE) and the DES. The Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) is responsible for the allocation of resources hours to the school.

This model of organisation includes consultation with the following;

- Students and parents
- Mainstream subject teacher
- Year head/class tutor
- Guidance counsellor
- Deputy Principal and Principal
- Feeder primary schools
- National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) and other relevant professional agencies if appropriate
- Special Needs Assistants

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Management's role is to

- Ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated.
- Approve the policy
- Consider reports from the principal for the implementation of the policy.

Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head's role is to

- Establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
- Implement a policy of inclusiveness.
- Pastoral care personnel will monitor the effects of the policy and help to identify students requiring learning support.

The Subject teacher's role is to

- to differentiate their teaching practice

Parents are encouraged to

- Support the school policy
- Meet with teachers, learning support team (Core team of Learning Support and Resource teachers), pastoral care team (as defined in Pastoral Care Policy)
- To provide support for homework and learning

Students are encouraged to

- Support school policy

- Participate in their learning in a group or class setting in a positive manner.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

- The learning support team, year head / guidance contacts and feeder national schools to help identify students who may need learning support.
- Applications are made to the Special Education Needs (SENO) for resource hours.
- The learning support team tries to identify students who may need support by examining the results of assessment tests.
- Further testing takes place in September to identify first year students with learning difficulties.
- The learning support team compiles a register of students with special needs which is given to all subject teachers. Gifted students are included on this register.
- Team teaching and small learning support groups are assigned where appropriate. A learning programme is developed by the teacher to help meet the student's needs.
- The resource teacher / (and /or) SNA is assigned to specific students depending on the allocation granted by SENO.
- Individual appointments are arranged for testing for Reasonable Accommodation for Certified Examinations (RACE).
- Applications are processed with the assistance of the school exam secretary.
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is consulted on an on-going basis.
- Each subject department has developed guidelines on the provision for special needs in their subject area.
- The learning support team offers advice on learning and teaching strategies for students with special needs. The team have compiled a staff resource library which provides literature, strategies and advice for all staff.

MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

- The learning support team meet the Principal and the management team on a regular basis to discuss issues.
- The learning support team meet on a weekly basis to discuss relevant issues.
- Applications for special educational resources takes place on an on- going basis with the SENO.
- Meetings with parents take place for students with special needs to collaborate and agree on individual education plans.
- Consultations take place with NEPS psychologist on a regular basis.

Throughout this document the term learning support and resource are used interchangeably. The learning support teacher teaches mainstream classes and provides individual/small group learning, while the resource teacher for the main part provides individual/ small group and team teaching.

SENO – Special Education Needs Officer

RACE –Reasonable Accommodation in Certified Examinations

NEPS – National Educational Psychological Services

SNA – Special Needs Assistant

This policy was revised by the Learning Support Department Portmarnock Community School

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 15 November 2011 and will review it in five years.

