

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY

CONTENT OF POLICY

1. Ethos

2. Rationale

3. Goals

4. Roles and Responsibilities

5. Content

6. Performance Criteria

7. Evaluation

1. ETHOS

MISSION STATEMENT

The school aims to provide a caring and just environment where the professionalism of the staff and individuality of the student is recognised. The School needs to be a place where the student feels at ease, affirmed, accepted and listened to. This gives hope to the student and helps her to develop into an adult who is content and happy.

The School provides a grounding in the Catholic faith inspired by Christian values and standards.

The atmosphere of the school instils in the student a love of learning and discovery which leads to academic success, to the best of each student's ability. The Curriculum prepares the student for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life which involves education for employment, unemployment and leisure time.

A happy school community which includes staff and pupils achieves fulfilment for all.

In the light of this Mission Statement, the policy will outline the school's Rationale, Goals, Strategies and Performance Criteria for students with special educational and physical needs.

2. RATIONALE

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students whose educational needs are provided for by the S.E.N. Department:

- Students who have been assessed by a psychologist and identified as having a specific learning difficulty or identified as 'exceptionally able'.
- Students who have non-specific learning difficulties and or who are identified by subject teachers as being unable to cope adequately with the demands of the curriculum.
- Students whose physical disability requires support from the S.E.N. department.

3 GOALS

- Opportunity to evaluate current practice.
- To develop a coherent approach to SEN for the school.
- To provide guidelines to school community - parents/teachers/students/BOM/ancillary staff.
- To ensure a growing awareness that SEN belongs to whole school community.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

- Responsible for implementation and monitoring of policy.
- Facilitate the provision of staff in-service as far as is practical.

PRINCIPAL & DEPUTY:

To monitor the implementation of the Policy.

YEAR HEADS:

Will inform new staff/ substitute teachers of relevant information re students with special learning needs in their year group.

TEACHING STAFF (General):

- To be aware of the need for differentiation of curriculum and methodologies
- To avail of staff professional development in the area of special needs as appropriate.
- To familiarise themselves with the details of S.E.N. students whom they teach by liaising with the S.E.N. co-ordinator.

RESOURCE AND LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF/CO-ORDINATOR OF SPECIAL NEEDS:

- Screening of incoming first years upon entry
- Liaising with subject teachers
- Liaising with Principal
- Liaising with outside agencies
- Liaising with parents
- Diagnostic Testing
- Devising I.E.P.s
- Staff training in the area of I.E.P.s
- Special Accommodation for state examinations and house exams.
- Working with students on a one to one basis or with small groups.

GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR:

Assessment prior to entry:

- Identify students who may require resource hours or students who may need
- referral to NEPS.
- One to one counselling for special needs students throughout the school as appropriate.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM:

Resource Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of RE. will form the Pastoral Care team in the school. As a team, they will support the implementation of the policy

ANCILLARY STAFF:

Caretaker, Clerical, Catering, Cleaning, Special Needs Assistants.

Role & Responsibility of S.N.A. – defined in their contract

Such staff will be aware of the needs of the individual students as appropriate.

They will accommodate as far as is practicable the special needs of such pupils.

PARENTS are responsible for:

- Informing and updating the school about their child's special educational needs.
- Providing consent to access records as appropriate and relevant.
- Actively supporting the school's programme.
- Being involved in the drawing up of the I.E.P. for their daughter.
- Being part of the implementation and review of this policy.

STUDENTS are responsible for:

Co-operating with staff and parents in the implementation of their I.E.P.

5. CONTENT

TUITION

LEARNING SUPPORT: - Short term intervention.

In cases where a period of short-term intervention is needed to address a particular difficulty a student can be withdrawn to work in a one-to-one or small group situation in the SEN department. This will happen only with the agreement of the teachers and parents involved.

RESOURCE:

Where a student has been formally identified as having learning difficulties, an Individual Education Programme (IEP) is drawn up by the SEN department. This will serve as a framework for work to be undertaken during school hours.

Where necessary, the S.E.N. department can provide parents with appropriate resource materials for the student to work on at home under parental supervision.

6. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Are communication structures in place to transfer information to all relevant members of school community?
- Is the whole school taking a co-ordinated approach to Special Needs Education?
- Is there regular feedback to staff from those involved with S.E.N. students?
- Has the implementation of the policy resulted in students with special educational needs coping better with school life?

7. EVALUATION

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

The Board of Management and the Principal, together with staff representatives will be responsible for evaluation of this policy on an ongoing basis.

The group will meet annually to review the policy.

**Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School
September, 2006**