



Scoil Ruáin

Special Education Needs Policy

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1. Introduction:

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with special educational needs (S.E.N.) takes in the school and the philosophy which underpins it. It is written in the context of The Education Act (1998) and takes cognisance of The Equal Status Act (2000), The Equality Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004). Two further publications have informed the content of this policy- "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs-Post Primary Guidelines (Department of Education & Science (DES) Inspectorate: 2007) and "Exceptionally Able Students-Draft Guidelines for Teachers" (NCCA: 2007).

The policy is revised on an annual basis and is the result of a consultative process involving staff, Parents and Board of Management.

The document should be read in conjunction with the following policies: (1) Admissions, (2) Student Support, (3) Anti-Bullying and (4) Guidance and Counselling Policy.

2. Mission:

Scoil Ruáin will provide a quality education in a caring, respectful and nurturing environment.

We will encourage the development of the complete person in keeping with our school motto "Ad Totam Personam".

The characteristic spirit of Scoil Ruáin is reflected in the caring and nurturing work environment that exists in the school community and which allows students and staff to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

We see ourselves as an inclusive community that is welcoming of all. We foster an atmosphere of learning that is holistic in approach and nurtures each individual student's personal growth and development.

Our Learning Support Programme is a tangible sign of our commitment to be an inclusive learning community. It is based directly on the needs of our students and therefore must be reviewed regularly to meet needs that may change.

3. Definitions:

- (a) Students with special educational needs are those who are restricted from participating in and benefiting 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. (EPSEN Act 2004).

4. Access to Learning Support:

A student may be selected for Learning Support in our school.

- A student who has had a psychological assessment which recommends Learning Support / Resource teaching.
- A student who has a Specific Learning Difficulty or a General Learning Difficulty.
- A student who received Learning Support in Primary School.
- A student identified during the entrance assessments.
- A student identified by their teachers as having difficulty with one or more of their subjects.
- Consideration is given to students with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- A student with traveller status.
- A student with physical difficulties.

5. Roles:

The following (a)-(c) have responsibility for managing the school response for students with Special Educational Needs.

(a) **Board of Management:**

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of a Special Needs Policy.
- Arrange for a periodic review of the range of curriculum provision within the school to ensure that suitable programmes are on offer to all students.
- Provide resources for the professional development of staff in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensure adequate accommodation and resources.
- Provide a secure facility for the storage of records.
- Ensure that the rights of parents as prescribed in legislation are upheld in the school.

(b) **Principal:**

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met.
- Works with the Board, Staff and Parents/ Guardians in the development of a whole school plan for Learning Support and Special Needs.

- Ensures that mainstream teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with special needs.
- Monitors implementation of learning support programme and selection of students for learning support.
- Consults and liaises with outside bodies and agencies.
- Provides for in-service for staff.
- Promotes the involvement of parents of students with special educational needs.
- Makes application to the D.E.S. for resource hours for incoming students with special needs.

(c) Learning Support Co-ordinator:

- To be a member of the student support team and attend a weekly timetabled meeting as part of that team.
- To assist with applications to NCSE for Resource and Assistive Technology
- To co-ordinate the Learning Support Team devising schemes of work to address specific needs.
- To co-ordinate Reasonable Accommodations at Examinations in consultation with the Guidance and Counselling Department.
- To organise and purchase department resources in consultation with management.
- To facilitate communication with the general staff on Learning Support issues.
- To inform parents if their daughter needs Learning Support and to collate consent forms.
- Record keeping of SEN data in relation to assessment, testing and reports
- Maintain a register of students with SEN
- Advise literacy and numeracy committees
- Processing of referrals and feedback to staff
- Liaise with NEPS and cooperate with other agencies (on receipt of written consent)

(d) Resource Teacher:

1. Work with the co-ordinator and Learning Support teachers.
2. Involvement in co-operative teaching in mainstream classes with mainstream teachers.
3. Withdrawing students for additional classes in particular subjects
4. Providing specific support for students with special educational needs in social skills etc.
5. Liaise with guidance counsellor and other staff members in relation to the selection and implementation of tests and other means for assessing students' achievement and progress.
6. Co-ordinate the gathering of information for Individual Education Plans for students with special educational needs from assessment reports by outside professionals and in-school assessment.
7. Be involved in the review of individual students' progress following the implementation of the individual education plan.
8. Provide advice to mainstream teachers as required.
9. Advise on Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations

10. Meet and advise parents as required.

(e) Learning Support Teacher:

1. Work with the Co-ordinator and the Resource Teacher.
2. Support and remediate the literacy and numeracy needs of students.

(f) Guidance Counsellor & HSCL Coordinator:

1. Liaising with the Primary schools and gathering information about the learning needs of students.
2. Counselling in personal, educational and career development.
3. Career information management.
4. Consultations with Special Educational Needs team, staff and parents.
5. Referrals to other professionals and agencies.

(g) Subject Teacher:

1. Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his / her class.
2. Collaborates with the Resource / Learning Support teacher in identifying pupils who may have general or specific learning difficulties.
3. Attempts, as far as possible, to differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. e.g. setting objectives at appropriate levels, modifying presentations, questioning appropriately etc.
4. Provide learning activities and materials that will ensure success.

(h) Special Needs Assistant

1. Special Needs Assistants make a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with special educational needs. The duties of the Special Needs Assistant are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management and are outlined in Circular SNA 30/14.
2. When the SNA is engaged in assisting a student or a group of students in relation to a particular learning task, this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.
3. An SNA is expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in school as strictly confidential.

(i) Parents:

Scoil Ruáin recognises the right of parents / guardians of students with special educational needs to be involved in and consulted about the programme of education available to their child. Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling are conducted, parents are consulted. When an individual learning plan is being developed, parents will be

consulted and will receive a copy of the plan. This plan will be reviewed annually and parents will receive a copy of the report.

(j) Students:

We welcome the involvement of students with special educational needs in planning for their own learning. They are encouraged to contribute to the learning targets as set out in the Individual Education Plan.

6. Procedures for identifying a student with S.E.N.

- (a) Parents may indicate on the student information form on enrolling in the school of special needs that were identified in Primary school. The Principal meets parents in February of the year of entry to review psychological reports and to complete applications for D.E.S. hours where appropriate.
- (b) The HSCL Teacher consults with Primary teachers when visiting feeder Primary schools in May.
- (c) Standardised tests are administered to all First Years in September and the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support.
- (d) A class teacher, tutor and /or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN Department. Referral forms are available in the marked tray in the staff room. This allows the SEN team to consult with the Student Support team and class teachers to ascertain the nature of the SEN and to design a response strategy.
- (e) When a parent notifies the Principal that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the Principal initiates a process of formal and informal assessment to be conducted by the S.E.N. team. Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:
- Observations from mainstream teachers
 - Consultations with parents
 - Student Journal
 - Meeting with pupil.
- Formal assessment may involve some or all of the following:
- Review of entrance tests
 - Review of in-house exams and reports
 - Behavioural record if appropriate
 - Consultation with Guidance Counsellors
- (f) Following this profiling stage, decisions are made as to the appropriate support warranted. It may be decided that:
- There is no need for further action.
 - There is a need for monitoring and support in a mainstream setting.
 - Purposeful withdrawal is desirable.

- Further investigation is required and parents will be advised in relation to assessments.

7. When a student is identified with Special Educational Needs:

- (a) In a situation where a student is identified as needing additional support, an Individual Education Plan is drawn up in consultation with parents, staff and the student herself. Priority learning needs are identified and a time frame for the attainment of targets is included. Targets are set for each priority learning need and strategies and resources required are identified. A date is set of the review of the IEP.
- (b) The format of this plan is listed in Appendix A.
- (c) A scheme of work is developed and a review of progress with the student takes place every 6-8 weeks. This review may take into account the perspectives of both parents and staff.
- (d) All records pertaining to the student will be retained on the student file.

8. Organisation of Class Groups:

In First Year, a mixed ability policy is in place. In Second and Third Year, classes are banded for Maths with regular class reviews taking place. Transition Year operates a mixed ability policy, as is senior cycle for all subjects with the exception of Irish, English and Maths.

9. Organisation of Learning Support:

Currently, we have a mixed model of Learning Support in operation.

- Individual Withdrawal
- Small Group Withdrawal
- Group Withdrawal
- Reduced Timetable
- Team Teaching

10. Other Issues:

(a) Withdrawals:

The SEN Department may withdraw students from subjects in consultation with the respective teachers and with parents. In some cases, students with S.E.N. may be on reduced timetables to facilitate their particular needs.

(b) Irish Exemptions:

Irish exemptions will only be granted when the criteria outlined in Circular M 10/94 are met. All students who have an Irish exemption at Junior Cycle will be offered as much support teaching at this time as our resources allow. This allocation may vary from year to year.

(c) Information:

In September, teachers receive a register of all pupils with S.E.N. The register includes:

- Name of pupil
- Category of difficulty

(e) House and Mock Examinations:

Every effort is made to offer Reasonable Accommodations to students in receipt of them for school examinations.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation:

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year by the Principal and Deputy Principal, Special Education Needs Co-ordinator and the Resource Teacher.

APPENDIX A

***School use**

only:

Scoil Ruáin
Individual Educational Plan

Student Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Parent/Guardian Name/s _____

Address

Contact Telephone # _____

Class Group _____

***Date of IEP** _____

***Review Date** _____

***Record of Attendance**

(*School use only)

Subject	Level (as appropriate)	Teacher

Summary of Information from Parents, Student and Teachers

*** (Note: Parents complete these sections as deemed appropriate/relevant to your daughter's abilities and needs).

Category	***Parent	Student (if appropriate)
Language and Communication		
Literacy Skills		
Mathematical Skills		
Motor Skills		
Learning Style		
Interests and Hobbies		
Language and Communication		
ICT		
Self-Management Skills		
Motivation		
Attendance		
Any other comments		

Please Note: This Section will only be completed at the Educational Planning Meeting.

Student's Priority Learning Needs	Personnel Involved/Resources Required	Progress ~ = emerging α = achieved

Evaluation

Any other information

Signed:

Parent/Guardian:

Student:

Teacher/s:

SNA:

Visiting Teacher:

Date: **Review Date:**