

## Special Educational Needs Policy

The special needs team comprises learning support teachers, resource teachers, guidance counsellor and special needs coordinator supplemented by Special Needs Assistants (to be known as Resource Assistants) appointed on an annual basis as approved by Department of Education.

### **Belief Statements:**

- Students within a wide range of academic ability are accepted
- Endeavours are made to meet individual educational needs within an inclusive curriculum
- Teaching methods and programmes of work include differentiation by task and by outcome
- Development of self-esteem and of values such as kindness, integrity and respect are paramount and students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities.

### **Aims:**

- To integrate all students socially and academically
- To ensure all students maximize their individual potential

### **Assessment: prior to entry, the team**

- Facilitates parents wishing to discuss the needs of their child
  - » Identifies, from the application process, students with special needs
- Discusses with parents the requirements of such students and indicates the parameters of facilities available in the light of current provision by the Department of Education
- Applies for appropriate resources from the Department of Education
- Administers diagnostic tests
- Uses test results and information from the Counsellor and Year Head to form mixed ability classes

### **Selection of students for learning support:**

#### **English**

- Retest approximately 25 students with lowest scores in diagnostic tests. Parents of this group are contacted prior to retesting and again after retesting to inform them of our recommendations. Support continues throughout junior cycle and in special circumstances in senior cycle.

#### **Mathematics**

- Identify, from information from primary schools and from diagnostic test, students with low scores in mathematics.

Parents of students in this group are contacted and offered the opportunity of placement in a small ordinary level group with learning support. This support continues for students throughout junior and senior cycle.

**In both English and Mathematics** further students may be identified by their subject teachers. After consultation with teacher, parents and students they may join the appropriate learning support group.

**Other Educational Needs:**

Students with diagnosed educational needs e.g. dyspraxia, autistic spectrum disorder, dyslexia, ADD have their needs considered by the team using information from psychological reports, parents, primary school and the level of resources previously sanctioned by the Department of Education. Appropriate applications are prepared for the Department of Education for assistance such as resource hours, special needs assistant, laptop computer, note taker, radio aids.

**Model of organization for learning support:**

**English:** Withdrawal model is used

**Mathematics:** Special group formed, which is facilitated by the fact that Maths is set from Year 1

**Learning Support and Resource Staff**

- Arrange timetabling for resource and learning support within the framework of the school timetable. (This may be support in the classroom or withdrawal for individual work or work in a group.)
- May recommend reduction in number of subjects studied
- Liaise with staff for specific curricular needs of a student.
- Report to team, staff and parents as appropriate
- Arrange for support by Resource Assistant where necessary, but the responsibility for the education of the student remains with classroom teacher and learning support/resource teacher. Duties of assistant may involve supervising special needs students when not in classroom; supporting in classroom under direction of classroom teacher; using materials prepared by classroom teacher, learning support or resource teacher; preparing special materials for individual students as deemed necessary. Reporting
  - Records of all tests are kept by Learning Support Teacher and Guidance Counsellor
  - Psychological reports are kept in Principal's office. A copy is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Guidance Counsellor's office to be accessed only by the Special Needs team.
  - Written report from learning support is included in the regular school report

Members of the Special Needs team are available for Parent Teacher meetings and by appointment during school hours.

Resource Teacher liaises with parents weekly, by the most appropriate method, e.g., by e-mail, text, fax, etc.

Circulate to all teaching staff a list of students with psychological reports and those who currently receive learning support or resource teaching. On the request of individual staff members, appropriate information on a student is made available, with the consent of the parents. Programme overseen and coordinated by special needs coordinator

**Reasonable Accommodation:**

- Identify students who need reasonable accommodation in school and state examinations
- Act on recommendations made in Psychological reports regarding exams

- Provide facilities recommended for specific students in school and state exams
- Identify students who would benefit from using non-standard format for class work or homework
  
- « Consider provision of in-house certification to acknowledge achievement not recognized by state exams

**Links with Outside Agencies and Services:**

- Make available relevant videos, books and information for all staff to borrow
- Liaise with Department visiting teachers for Special Needs eg teacher of deaf
- Circulate information on appropriate courses to staff
- Seek advice, as necessary, from external agencies, including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Hearing Impairment and Sight Impairment specialists and support agencies for specific needs (for example, The Dyspraxia Association, The National Association for the Deaf).
- Maintain contact with Access departments of third level educational institutions and organizations, such as AHEAD.
- Participate in on-going training appropriate to needs of students
- Liaise with Special Needs Organiser from National Council for Special Education to facilitate implementation of Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004.