

## Pobalscoil Chiarán/St. Ciarán's Community School

### Special Education Needs Department Policy

#### **Mission Statement**

*Our school supports and encourages the academic, spiritual, moral and physical development of all students.*

*We strive to create and maintain a strong work ethic and an ethos of co-operation and mutual respect in a caring and inclusive environment.*

#### **Special Education Needs Policy**

Pobalscoil Chiarán / St. Ciarán's Community School's Special Education Needs Department provides specialised teaching where teachers develop their own specific programmes to support the identified educational needs of some students within the curriculum and in accordance with the Education of Person's with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004).

Once identified, a student will be supported in his/her learning to the greatest extent possible within the resources available to the school. In as far as is practicable a student will remain in his/her base class and will only be withdrawn where it is deemed necessary.

#### **Provision of Support for Students with Special Educational Needs**

The SEN department provides

- Additional Teaching Support (ATS) for students named by the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO).
- Learning Support for students at or below the 15th percentile as identified in psychological reports and/or psychometric assessment subject to resources.
- Learning support for students with a reduced timetable.
- Literacy, Numeracy and Social Skills training to students who need it subject to resources.
- Support to students referred to the SEN department by mainstream teachers subject to resources.
- Support to students who are in possession of a written Irish exemption subject to needs and resources.
- Support to students of the Leaving Cert. Applied Programme subject to resources.

#### **Access to Support**

Students can access support in one or more of the following ways,

Withdrawal: (one to one and small groups)

All withdrawals are in consultation with subject teachers/parents/guardians and SEN Department (see appendix letter A).

Team Teaching: depending on needs and resources

Learning Support Class: a year group in the Junior Cycle may have a learning support class for core subjects depending on numbers.

### **Identification of Students with Special Educational Needs**

**The Procedures for the identification of students with special educational needs includes the following**

- Information from parents/guardians  
Parents/guardians have, an obligation, on enrolment, to make known to the school authorities details of any previously diagnosed disability, or special educational need and to make available previous school reports, results of state examinations and/or previous assessment tests.  
Consultation with individual parents/guardians who express concern is an important way to gather information to assist in the identification process. Opportunities for this arise at the annual Open Night, at Parent/Teacher Meetings and by appointment with parents.
- Liaison with the primary school/other second level school  
Parents/guardians of students are required to sanction the release of any relevant information from the Primary School on transfer.  
Members of the SEN team will visit the “feeder” Primary Schools in May to discuss the learning needs of students identified during the entrance assessment.  
Parents/Guardians transferring a student from another second level school are required to sanction the release of any relevant information to this school on transfer.
- Enrolling students are required to take initial assessments for the purpose of profiling. Pre- entry psychometric tests are compulsory for all students. Tests are as recommended by the Department of Education and Skills and are not disclosed under the guidelines for ethical testing. These group tests may be supplemented by literacy, spelling and numeracy assessments for all students with an educational psychological report or other professional report following entry into the school in the first term. Students with learning difficulties may be referred by staff to the SEN department during the school year if difficulties arise and no professional report exists. They may then be tested using appropriate tests and/or referred to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).
- Staff referrals are an important means of identification. The professional judgement of staff members working on a daily basis with students is an essential method of identification (see appendix B)
- Consultation with NEPS and appropriate support agencies. Relevant information may be available from other sources that will assist the school in the identifying learning needs and making appropriate provision, subject to resources.

## **Key Members of the SEN team**

- The Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Learning Support Teachers in various subject areas
- Guidance Counsellor
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

## **The Role of the SEN Department**

The role of the SEN Department includes

- Timetabling and review of students receiving learning support
- Liaising with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO)
- Liaising with the psychologist and other agencies
- Screening of incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years
- Monitoring academic progress of students
- Applying for relevant grants
- Application for reasonable accommodations at Junior Cert and Leaving Cert level
- Liaising with parents, teachers, the pastoral care team, tutors, year heads and other appropriate personnel as necessary.

## **The Role of the SNA in the SEN Department**

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs.

- The primary role is to support and assist the inclusion of students with special educational needs
- In this support they are seeking to maximise the student's potential and to promote his/her participation in class and school activities under the direction of the teacher and in accordance with the school mission statement.
- Regular verbal and written reports are given to the principal and filed
- An SNA may be assigned to an individual or to a number of students.
- Included in the role of the SNA are the following tasks:

## In class

- To assist and motivate the student(s) to stay on task and to re-focus where necessary.
- To help organise the student(s) in terms of homework journal, books and materials for class.
- May be required to take notes from the board or read for the student.
- In practical classes the SNA will assist the student(s) in following the safety rules.
- Participate in reasonable accommodations for in-house exams for student(s)
- To attend one to one assessments.
- Attend one to one teaching if necessary.

## Beyond the classroom

- To organise the student(s) before class
- To accompany the student(s) where necessary during breaks from class
- To assist students at break-times.
- The SNA has a unique insight into the difficulties experienced by the student(s). They make this information available to the mainstream teachers, resource team and the management of the school to assist in future planning for these students.

## **The Role of parents/guardians**

Parents and guardians are welcome to meet by appointment with members of the SEN department. The SEN department recognise that they have a key role in their child's progress in our school. This role includes

- Providing information in the form of assessments and Primary school reports.
- Communicating with the SEN team to advise and consult on the nature of their child's needs.

It is the policy of the SEN department to contact and consult with parents. Consent is sought before assessment or withdrawal of students.

## **The Role of the student**

- To attend regularly and punctually and with all the necessary equipment
- To engage as fully as possible in their mainstream and support classes
- To be involved, where appropriate, in setting learning targets with their support teachers

## **Storage of Information**

Taking into account confidentiality - profiles, reports and house exam results are stored in a locked cabinet in room 13a. This is the base room of the SEN department. After the student has left the school the files are moved to the school archive where they are stored for 3 years. Any member of the teaching staff may have access to this information if the need arises.

Relevant educational information will be provided in a password protected file on the staff network accessible to all members of the teaching staff. This is to facilitate lesson planning, incorporate differentiation within lessons and ensure inclusion of all students in order that they may achieve their highest potential.

## **Bullying**

In accordance with our school anti-bullying policy and cognisant of the vulnerability of some students with educational needs as well as the concerns of parents around this issue the SEN department provides support and social skills training, subject to resources

## **Planning**

Planning is a prerequisite for all effective teaching and is especially so for students with special educational needs.

- The SEN department is timetabled for a weekly meeting to plan and discuss relevant issues.
- All learning support teachers have an individual timetable which is structured around the needs of our students.
- Teachers involved in learning support are required to furnish timetables to the Deputy Principal by the end of October each year. Timetables are subject to change throughout the school year depending on needs and resources.
- Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.s) will be prepared for students, subject to resources, post entry.

## **Professional Development**

All members of the SEN department will be encouraged to avail of in-service training as it arises.

## **Participation in School**

The academic success of our students with Special Educational Needs is a priority in Pobalscoil Chiaráin / St. Ciarán's Community School. We strive to ensure that every student is prepared fully to play a full and confident role in their future life. Students with special education needs are actively encouraged to take a full part in extra curricular activities. Inclusion in school activities is seen as a key element in fostering self-esteem and personal growth.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A**

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Private, Confidential and without Prejudice

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Teachers are available to give support in the numeracy and literacy areas to students. We are of the opinion that \_\_\_\_\_ would benefit from numeracy and/or literacy support during this academic year (subject to review)/

If you have any questions or would like to speak to me at any time regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact me or make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Francis Lafferty,  
PRINCIPAL

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Please complete and return.

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to receive support as above.

I \_\_\_\_\_ do not give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to receive support as above.

**Appendix B**

**Special Education Needs (SEN) Staff Referral Form**

Dear Colleague,

If you wish to inform the SEN Department of academic concerns you may have regarding any of your students please complete below and return to the school SEN team.

Thank you,  
Francis Lafferty,,  
PRINCIPAL.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Concern</b>

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_