



# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

## A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

This policy is a draft policy. Practices outlined in this policy will be implemented as a pilot throughout the academic year 2009/10.  
A review of the policy and practices will be undertaken and amendments made as appropriate.

Our school community provides a caring, happy and safe environment, which strives to foster a love of life-long learning.

We endeavour to develop each person's academic, physical, moral, cultural and spiritual potential based on mutual respect, fairness and honesty.

We want our students to emerge as confident, adaptable, responsible and caring citizens.

### **School Mission Statement**

## **Aims and Objectives**

As set out in The Education Act 1998, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 St. Colmcille's School aims to:

- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other special educational needs, as they relate to education.
- Provide, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible.
- Affirm that students with special educational needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from education as students who do not have those needs.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision making process in relation to their children.
- Co-operate and work closely with the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the special educational needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that special educational needs is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with special educational needs and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at home.
- Co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of other agencies in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with special educational needs.

## **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all students attending St. Colmcille's Community School and who have special educational needs.

## **The Legal Context**

This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and special educational needs, the statutory requirements placed on schools and Boards of Managements by:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004

This policy is drafted in the context of Circular Letters as outlined below:

- M10/94
- S70/00
- S11/00
- M37/03
- PPT06/04
- M1/05
- PP1/05
- TESO7/05
- TESO8/05
- TESO9/05
- PPT12/05
- M14/05
- M23/05

This policy is drafted in the context of guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service.

This policy is drafted in consideration of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill 2003 as well as guidelines on Individual Education Plan Process 2006.

## **Organisational Arrangements**

### **School Details & Organisation**

St. Colmcille's Community School strives to create an inclusive learning environment where the needs of all students are catered for. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum at both Junior and Senior cycle.

- **Organisation at Junior Cycle**

Students are placed in mixed ability teaching groups in First Year. Students are taught in their tutor groups for the majority of subjects.

There is an element of choice in the First Year curriculum with students choosing four out of nine option subjects. The options subjects are:

- Metalwork
- Woodwork
- Business Studies
- Home Economics
- Music
- Technical Graphics
- Art
- Second Modern Foreign Language

Students also have a choice of French or Spanish as the Modern Language.

At the end of First Year students must choose to progress with two out of their four option subjects. Students and parents can seek support in making this decision by the subject teacher. For students with special educational needs the learning support teacher and/or the resource teacher are also available to support/advise the student and parents regarding these decisions.

In English, Irish and Mathematics students are placed in teaching groups according to their ability. This allows the brighter students to be extended appropriately and also ensures that less able students are following a curriculum, which meets their needs and gives them the best possible chance of success.

Whether students are taught in mixed ability or streamed classes it is expected that teachers will implement differentiated approaches for teaching and learning ensuring that the skills of all students are catered for.

- **Organisation at Senior Cycle**

Transition Year is an optional year between Junior and Leaving Certificate. The Transition Year programme aims to:

- Educate for maturity with an emphasis on social awareness and increased social competence
- Educate through experience of adult working life as a basis for personal development and maturity
- Promote general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self directed learning.

A broad curriculum is offered in Transition Year, which caters for the needs and interests of all students.

- **Leaving Certificate Programmes**

At Senior Cycle the students study the Leaving Certificate Programme. Students study Irish, English, Mathematics, French/Spanish and three option subjects. The option subjects include Accounting, Art, Business, Biology, Chemistry, Construction Studies, Economics, Engineering, Geography, History, Home Economics (Social & Scientific), Music, Design and Communication Graphics and a second language.

For some students the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is most suited to their needs and when appropriate this programme is offered at Senior Cycle.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Board of Management**

- To ensure that all students with learning support/special educational needs are identified and assessed.
- To ensure that the school has a special educational needs policy in place, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided in the school to ensure in as far as is practical that students with special educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with special educational needs.
- To ensure that a special educational needs co-ordinator is appointed from among the teaching staff.
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies/personnel and to ensure that parents are informed of their child's special educational needs and how these needs are being met.
- To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education.
- To ensure that the Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the School plan
- To develop a whole school approach to literacy and innumeracy under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.
- To ensure that an awareness of special educational needs is inculcated in students in the school.

## **The Role of the Principal**

- On behalf of the Board of management of St. Colmcille's Community School the Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. The Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers (as outlined in Section 18 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004).
- To appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator from amongst the staff and to work closely with the co-ordinator.
- In consultation with the Special Needs Co-ordinator ensure that an Individual Education Plan is prepared for relevant students in the given timeframe (i.e. one month from the date of issue of an appropriate assessment)
- On drafting and/or reviewing such plans, the Principal shall ensure that cognisance is taken, at the appropriate time, of the needs of the student to continue his/her education or training on becoming an adult.
- To inform the Board of Management of issues, which are relevant to special educational needs.
- In consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other relevant personnel to liaise with the Department of Education and Science regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodations and exemptions in relation to state examinations as well as assessments.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds.
- To establish a 'Special Needs Support Team' with the school with a specific remit to ensure identification of and support for students with special educational needs.
- To promote a whole school approach to special educational need, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area.
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of students with special educational needs.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with feeder primary schools with regard to the enrolment of new students with special educational needs.

## **The Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

The Job Description of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is attached an appendix to this policy.

An additional Special Duties post holder is assigned to the Special Educational Needs Department. Duties attached to the post include:

- Irish Exemptions
- Individual Education Plan Co-ordination
- Reasonable Accommodations

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are met.

## **The Role of the Subject Teacher**

At St. Colmcille's the academic progress of students throughout the school rests in the first instance with the subject teacher. In order to ensure that as a school we meet the needs of all our students subject teachers are encouraged to:

- Be aware of the School's policy and procedures (as outlined in this document) for dealing with students with special educational needs.
- Seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with special educational needs.
- Take responsibility for their own continuous professional development particularly with regard to common difficulties e.g. Dyslexia & Specific Language difficulties
- Develop an attitude of ownership to the education of students in their classes with Special Educational Needs.
- Where a student has an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the resource teacher or the SEN Co-ordinator.
- Support/encourage independence in the student. This is particularly important for Senior Cycle students.

Subject teachers must have due regard to the rights of students with special educational needs. The school recognises that it is the professional duty of each subject teachers to support these students using the strategies, which will have been made available to them.

## **The Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

The guidance counsellor is a member of the Special Educational Needs Support Team and works with other members of the team in facilitating the provision of education for students with special educational needs and their inclusion in the school. The guidance counsellor works closely with Year Heads, Special Needs and Learning Support Departments to identify students requiring further attention. If appropriate the guidance counsellor may assist with arrangements for the successful transfer of students to St. Colmcille's and in gathering information about students, including those with special educational needs, before their transfer from primary school.

The guidance counsellor has an important role in assisting all students, including those with special educational needs at the different stages of schooling. To facilitate this students and parents are welcome to make appointments with the guidance counsellor. This is particularly encouraged for students progressing from Junior to Senior Cycle. Students in Sixth Year are offered appointments with the guidance counsellor to support them in making career decisions. It is acknowledged that students with special educational needs may require greater support at formal transfer points in their school career and the guidance counsellor will be particularly aware of these students.

An Options Information Evening is held for parents of students progressing to Fifth Year. The guidance counsellor attends and makes a presentation at this meeting.

Prior to entry to St. Colmcille's First Year students are tested using the NFER Cognitive Ability Tests. The guidance counsellor works closely with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Special Educational Needs team in the organisation of these tests.

At key stages throughout the students schooling the guidance counsellor is responsible for co-ordinating a number of assessments including the DAT's tests and Special Interest Tests.

When appropriate the guidance counsellor is available to staff who may want to seek advice/relevant information regarding students with special educational needs and how they can best be supported in school.

The School Guidance Plan for St. Colmcille's was drawn up in consultation with teaching personnel including the Learning Support and Special Educational Needs Team.

## **The Role of the Learning Support / Resource Teacher**

At St. Colmcille's the resource teacher works closely with students who have special educational needs. The role of the resource teacher is wide-ranging and varied. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator provides each Year Head with a timetable for each student allocated resource hours. The name of the allocated resource teacher is included on this timetable. Resource teachers and subject teachers should work in partnership thus ensuring that students are supported as effectively as possible.

The resource teachers is responsible for providing diagnostic assessments for students at regular intervals, so as to discover where they are now, how have they progressed and decide (in collaboration with other relevant parties) how a student's should and can be furthered.

The resource teacher has a very good insight into a student's needs and when appropriate can provide advice to subject teachers as to the teaching methodologies best suited to that student.

The resource teacher provides direct teaching to a student with special educational needs either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum.

At times withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. In these instances the resource teacher and the subject teacher may decide that team-teaching would have a greater educational benefit.

When appropriate the resource teacher is invited to contribute at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies.

## **The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

The Special Needs Assistant provides care assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the schools capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.

The Special Educational Needs Department and Year Head work collaboratively in devising an appropriate strategy plan for a student with special educational needs. The SNA is made aware of this plan and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.

The Special Needs Assistant plays an important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development. It is important that the Special Needs Assistant supports student participation in school life without developing a culture of dependency.

The duties of the Special Needs Assistants involve tasks of a non teaching nature such as:

- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs students with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. A Special Needs Assistant should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Year Head. In such instances teachers will have been informed.
- General assistance of the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal of a non-teaching nature. Special Needs Assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- Special Needs Assistants are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.

## **The Role of the Special Educational Needs Support Team**

The Special Educational Needs support team comprises the:

- Principal/Deputy Principal
- Resource Teacher
- Learning Support Teacher
- Guidance Counsellor
- Year Head
- Department Co-ordinator
- SEN Co-ordinator

Through the work of the Special Educational Needs Support team the school endeavours to create a whole school ownership in the management of Special Educational Needs.

The SEN Support team play a key role in the evaluation of practice and procedures relating to Special Educational Needs.

The School acknowledge that it is particularly important to continually review and develop our practices in relation to:

- Accessing relevant information about all our intake students
- How we use assessment data results, including the Cognitive Ability Tests & DAT Scores
- Literacy and Numeracy Testing for Junior Cycle students
- More Able students

The Special Educational Needs Support Team plays a key role in this process.

## **Transfer from Primary School**

Prior to entry to St. Colmcille's the Head of First Year and the Special Needs Co-ordinator visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools. The school sees this liaison as an important step in ensuring proper identification of students with special educational needs and the continuity of provision for them.

Where possible visits are arranged for students with special educational needs prior to their transfer to St. Colmcille's.

Information received from the Primary Schools and parents coupled with the results of the Cognitive Ability Tests help the school identify those students who may need additional support at Secondary School level.

A student who has been sanctioned Resource hours by the Department of Education at Primary School will not automatically have this entitlement on transfer to Secondary school. A new application is made, however applications are not always successful.

To support the transfer of all students to St. Colmcille's there is a comprehensive Induction programme.

A 'buddy-system' operates in the school, which gives Senior students the opportunity to work with the incoming First Years.

All First Year teachers are briefed on matters relating to the students they are going to teach or come into contact with. Clearly the extent to which individual teachers are given confidential information is a sensitive matter. It is however important that teachers have as much information as possible regarding the students they teach if they are to contribute towards the best possible learning environment for them.

## **Students transferring into other Year Groups**

When a student is accepted into St. Colmcille's to join a year group other than First Year information is sought from their previous school. The Principal/Deputy Principal usually does this. This information is passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Co-ordinator if appropriate.

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

The education of students throughout the school rests in the first instance with the subject teacher. Each teacher should be aware of which students are likely to experience barriers to learning.

In many cases a student's needs are resolved through the provision of differentiated work suited to their needs. For those students whose progress continues to cause concern referral to the Special Educational Needs team may be appropriate. Referral to the SEN Team should be made on the Referral Form and should be underpinned by evidence which shows that despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities the student makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted to a pupil's identified area of weakness.

Having reviewed the documentation and liaised with the relevant staff the Special Educational Needs Support Team may decide that the student's needs do not warrant their involvement.

If the Special Educational Needs Support Team decides that a student would benefit from further intervention they will assess the student informally. Parents are informed and their consent is sought prior to any assessment taking place. The outcome of this assessment will determine what course of action is taken.

The results of the assessment may indicate that a student has not got a learning difficulty. In this case the student's needs are supported through the structures available to all students. These include:

- Working with school chaplain
- Mentoring/monitoring by Year Head
- Differentiated work appropriate to their needs
- Review of entry levels for State Examinations
- An agreed referral to an outside agency (family matters)

If the results of the assessment indicate that a student has a learning difficulty a decision is made as follows:

- Referral for a Formal Assessment e.g. to NEPs
- Allocation of learning support time (this can be allocated without Department of Education sanctioning using a prioritising system of below 11<sup>th</sup> percentile)

## **Organisation of Resource / Learning Support allocations**

The school employs 1 whole time equivalent Learning Support Teacher.

The school's resource allocation is student dependent and is variable on an annual basis.

## **Arrangements for Students with Resource/Learning Support**

In consideration of the definitions relevant to this policy, as outlined in the Education Act 1998, the Education of Persons with Disability Bill 2003 and the Education of Persons with Special Educational the School considers a student as being in need of **learning support** if he/she:

- Is recognised as being at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile or below on a standardised test and following an assessment by the relevant professional personnel.
- Is failing to achieve in school due to specific personal circumstances.

A student is defined as having special educational needs if s/he has a learning/physical difficulty, which calls for support provision to be made for him/her. This in particular refers to:

- Students with a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for students of the same age.
- Students, who following the correct identification procedures, have been assessed as special educational needs by an educational psychologist and are sanctioned **resource support**. At present the Department of Education and Science defines this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile or below and grant hours to these students accordingly.

### ***Procedures regarding withdrawal/co-operative teaching***

The Special Needs Department endeavour to provide an eclectic mix of teaching styles and strategies when working with students with special educational needs, these include 1-1 support, team teaching and target teaching. Team teaching when appropriate is encouraged and the school acknowledge its place in promoting inclusion

The individual needs of the student dictate what type of practice is most appropriate. In deciding how best to support a student in a sympathetic manner the special educational needs team take account of :

- The programme required
- The student's personality/wishes
- Recommendations from relevant clinicians

### ***Students with Irish Exemptions***

A significant number of resource students have Irish language exemptions. The special needs departments have structures in place to ensure that students get maximum benefit from the additional timetable allocation that exemption from Irish creates.

Students are normally withdrawn for a number of their Irish lessons to work on a 1-1 basis with their resource teacher. The School believe that it is important that students, regardless of their exemption be exposed to the language even if it be in a limited capacity. Students therefore remain in the Irish classroom for 1 lesson/week. They are encouraged to participate in class if and when appropriate. The Irish teachers retain responsibility for nurturing the student's interest and involvement in the language.

## **Arrangements for Students with Resource/Learning Support (continued)**

### ***Students who withdraw from the study Modern Foreign Language***

It is school policy that all students follow a modern language up to at least ordinary level standard.

In some circumstances it may be beneficial for a student with special educational needs to be withdrawn from the modern language examination. When resources allow the special needs department will endeavour to formulate the student's resource timetable to coincide with their language timetable.

As with Irish exemptions the school believes that it is important that students, regardless of their exemption be exposed to the language even if it be in a limited capacity. It is therefore unlikely that a student would be withdrawn from all their language lessons. When in the language lesson they are encouraged to participate in if and when appropriate. The language teachers retain responsibility for nurturing the student's interest and involvement in the language

### ***Leaving Certificate Applied Programme***

The LCA Programme is offered to all students.

An advantage of the LCA programme is that it focuses on the talents of each individual student and is intended to meet the needs of those students who are not adequately catered for by other Leaving Certificate programmes or who choose not to opt for such programmes.

For these reasons a number of students with special educational needs opt to follow this course. The LCA curriculum is reviewed at the beginning of each cycle and where resources allow the elective modules are selected reflect the needs of the group.

### ***Banding in English, Irish and Mathematics***

Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year are banded for English, Irish and Mathematics. This facilitates the creation of smaller groups for those students who find the subject difficult and require more individual attention.

### ***Reasonable Accommodations***

#### **Arrangements at Junior Certificate**

Applications for reasonable accommodations are collated and signed off by the school at Junior Certificate level. Applications are based on percentiles as outlined in the guidance.

#### **Arrangements at Leaving Certificate**

The School assists parents and students in collating the requested information if they decide to submit an application for Reasonable Accommodations. NEPS considers and decides on the matter. Students may be interviewed as part of the application process.



## **Monitoring Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting**

All students are assessed on an ongoing basis. Assessment may be formal, informal, summative or formative.

### **Formal Assessment**

- Incoming First Year students sit the NFER Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) prior to entry.
- Students sit house examinations in November and at the end of the school year. A continuous assessment grade is reported to parents in February.
- Students sit Differential Aptitude Tests (DAT) in Transition Year
- Other professionals working with the school may formally assess students with SEN.

### **Informal Assessment**

- End of unit/chapter tests
- In class questioning
- Assessing homework/project work
- The literacy and numeracy skills of students with SEN may be assessed.

The responsibility for many aspects of formal and informal assessments lies in the first instance with the subject teacher. The organisation of the DAT and CAT tests is the responsibility of the Guidance Department who are supported by the SEN team.

Resource/Learning support teachers take responsibility for literacy and numeracy testing of students with SEN.

### **Using Assessment Data**

Assessment data is used to:

- Highlight brighter/less able students
- Profile a class group/year group
- Track student progress

### **Recording Assessment Data**

Teachers record assessment marks both formal and informal in the Teacher Planner provided by the school each year. House examination results are included on the school report to parents in November and at the end of the school year. A continuous assessment result is reported to parents in February. Copies of the student's reports are available on their file.

### **Recording Assessment Data**

The SEN department maintain files for the students with whom they work (Learning Support and Resource students). Included in these files are any additional assessments that the students may have taken.

### **Access to Assessment Records**

The school is aware that some assessment material is of a sensitive nature and therefore it is treated confidentially and only made available to appropriate personnel.

The SEN department manage a significant amount of the assessment information for students with SEN. Relevant information is disseminated as appropriate by the SEN team.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

The responsibility for monitoring student progress lies in the first instance with the subject teacher. Subject teachers may liase with Subject co-ordinators and/or Year Heads if they have a concern about a student in their group. If a students has been identified as having Special Educational Needs the SEN department will also play a key role in monitoring student progress.

### **Evaluation**

The successes of any intervention strategies are monitored on an ongoing basis through formal and informal assessment. The SEN department consult with students, parents, teacher and year heads in the formulation and review of Individual Education Plans.

## **Involvement of Parents**

The school regards the partnership with parents as a very important one and is always open and responsive to expressions of concern made by parents. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend any meeting concerning their son/daughter's progress. The Form Tutor, Year Head and when appropriate the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator are available by appointment to meet with parents regarding concerns. Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity.

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 to:

- Inform parents of their child's special educational needs and how those are being met.
- Consult parents with regard to the making of all decisions of a significant nature concerning their child's education and invite them to participate in such decisions.

The Special Needs Department are in regular contact with the parents of students with special educational needs. This contact can take the form of a meeting or a telephone call.

The Special Needs Department endeavour to contact parents at least once each half term. It is however more usual for this contact to be on a more frequent basis.

Students receive a school report on three occasions in the school year. There is one parent-teacher meeting each year where parents have the opportunity to meet with all teachers. The Special Needs team make themselves available to parents on these evenings.

## **Involvement of Students**

The School believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.

The Special Educational needs department fully involve students in skills audits and discussions around their disability. Students in the Senior Cycle are particularly encouraged to adopt a proactive and independent approach to their studies.

At Senior Cycle students act as informal mentors to those in the Junior Cycle. This generates a collegiality amongst the students and allows the senior students to harness their role as leaders in the school.

## Links with Outside Agencies and Services

The school works with a significant number of outside agencies. These include:

- Special Educational Needs Support Service
- National Education Psychology Service
- Special Council for Special Education
- State Examination Commission
- Special Educational Needs office
- Education and Welfare office
- HSE Social Worker team
- LCA Support Service
- LCVP Support Service
- Visiting Teacher Service
  
- **Lucena Services** to include:
  - Clinical Psychologists
  - Occupational Therapists
  - Speech & Language Therapists
  - Special Educational teacher
  - Registrars – psychiatric
  - Youth Liaison Workers
  - Nursing Managers
  - Consultant Paediatric Psychiatrist
  
- **HSE** to include:
  - Psychologists
  - Psychiatrists
  - Consultant paediatricians
  - Foster care
  - Occupational Therapists
  - Physiotherapists
  - Speech & Language Therapists
  
- College & University Student Support Services
- Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- Aspire (Aspergers support)
- Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
- National Council for the Blind of Ireland
- National Council for the Deaf
- National Braille Production Service
- Irish Learning Support Teachers Association
- Irish Association of Special Education Teachers
- The Dyspraxia Association

This list is not exhaustive and the school will further develop links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate.

## Individual Education Plans

The IEP process is currently in pilot phase. Any procedures / templates outlined in this section are subject to amendment as the pilot is implemented, evaluated and reviewed.

The school believe that the formulation of Individual Education Plans is most effective when it is carried out in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders involved. To facilitate this process within the constraints of a school environment the following structures have been set up.

### Collating Relevant Information

Prior to an IEP Planning Meeting the IEP co-ordinator supported by appropriate personnel will ensure that the **Overview Record Sheet** (*Appendix 2*) is completed.

This overview sheet will form the basis of discussions at the IEP Planning Meeting.

### IEP Planning Meeting

The IEP Planning meeting is an opportunity for the school to liaise with all personnel working with the student. The following people should be invited to the planning meeting:

- Parent/Guardian
- Any outside agency working with the student
- Learning Support/Resource teacher

It may also be beneficial (but not always necessary) for the following people to attend:

- Special Needs Co-ordinator
- IEP Co-ordinator
- Year Head
- Students (for some part of the meeting)

At this meeting the Priority Learning Needs for the student are decided.

### Formulating the IEP – a collaborative approach

To ensure that all teachers are aware of the Priority learning Needs of the student an **IEP Summary Sheet** (*Appendix 3*) is disseminated to all staff. Teachers are asked to set the student a target related to the Priority Learning Needs and outline what strategies they will adopt to support the student in achieving this target.

IEP Summary sheets are returned to the IEP co-ordinator who will collate the information.

A review date to monitor student progress against agreed targets

The completed IEP will be disseminated to the appropriate people

**Appendix 1**  
**Definitions**

## **Definitions**

Students with special educational needs should be recognised as individuals who have strengths that can be nurtured and weaknesses that can be supported.

Definitions relevant to this policy, as outlined in the Education Act 1998, the Education of Persons with Disability Bill 2003 and the Education of Persons with Special Educational are outlined in Appendix 1.

In consideration of these definitions the School considers a student as being in need of learning support if he/she:

- Is recognised as being at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile or below on a standardised test and following an assessment by the relevant professional personnel.
- Is failing to achieve in school due to specific personal circumstances.

The School considers a student as having special educational needs as one who has a learning/physical difficulty, which calls for support provision to be made for him/her. This in particular refers to:

- Students with a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for students of the same age.
- Students, who following the correct identification procedures, have been assessed as special educational needs by an educational psychologist and are deemed to be entitled to resource support. At present the Department of Education and Science defines this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile or below.

In the context of this policy the term 'Special Educational Needs' shall include students with learning support and resource needs.

In the context of this policy Special Educational Needs Teachers shall include Learning Support and Resource teachers.