



Newport College Special Educational Needs Strategy

1.0 Introduction:

Motto: - "A school where every child matters"

Mission Statement: - "We strive to provide a holistic education in order to maximise the potential of each student academically, emotionally and socially, with respect for self, others and the environment as core values, embracing individuality & honesty to enable a productive culture of learning and teaching".

This strategy document takes cognisance of "The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)", "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) and the "Special Education Teaching Allocation" (Department of Education & Science (DES: No. 0014/2017).

1.1 School Context

Newport College is a co-educational secondary school with current enrolment of 210 students. The College is under the Trusteeship of Tipperary Education and Training Board. The school has an open and inclusive admissions policy that caters to students from a wide catchment area.

While the student body of the school is perpetually evolving, the school remains constant in our efforts: to develop the uniqueness of the individual pupil in an atmosphere which is both academically challenging, yet sensitive to the pupil's particular needs. It is, therefore, the policy of Newport College that all students with special educational needs receive appropriate support to enable them to access an effective learning environment that is suited to their needs and abilities.

1.2 Aims:

The aims of education for students with special educational needs are set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in the overview to the NCCA (Draft) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities, which states that the broad aims of education for students with special educational needs reflect those that are relevant to all students and include (a) enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his or her full potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum; (b) enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential; (c) enabling the student to continue learning in adult life. (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2002, p. 2). These Guidelines fully endorse the aims of education for students with special educational needs as set out in the NCCA draft guidelines. In addition, these Guidelines support the view that all students, if provided with suitable learning experiences and adequate levels of support, are capable of development and learning. Mindful of the fact that all students are entitled to a high-quality education in as inclusive an environment as possible, it is strongly advised that these Guidelines be read and implemented in conjunction with the NCCA guidelines.

1.3 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).
- (b) Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students: Special Education Teaching Allocation (Department of Education & Science (DES: No. 0014/2017).

1.4 Rationale:

- To facilitate integration of students with SEN into the second-level system.
- To increase access of students with SEN to a greater level of mainstream subjects.

- To ensure that students with SEN have access to state examinations, particularly where special concessions are required.
- To improve standard of literacy and numeracy.
- To boost the self-esteem and self-confidence of students with SEN.
- To promote reading for pleasure and enjoyment outside of school in a positive manner among students with SEN.

2.0 Categories of SEN:

- Mild, Moderate or Borderline General Learning Difficulty
- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties –ADD/ADHD
- Specific Learning Difficulty – Dyslexia
- Sensory difficulties (hearing and visual impairments)
- Physical difficulties – Dyspraxia
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g. Asperger’s)
- EAL students (English for students of other languages)
- Exceptionally Able

2.1 SEN Support:

- An Educational Passport is requested from the primary school.
- Meetings are held with primary schools.
- 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.
- A student who requires opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students are deemed to be exceptionally able. It is estimated that 5-10% of the school population will demonstrate very high levels of attainment in one or more of the following areas:
 - general intellectual ability or talent
 - specific academic aptitude or talent

- visual and performing arts / sport.
- leadership ability
- Creative and productive thinking
- Mechanical ingenuity
- Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation

Newport College may be in a position to support students who are identified as having particular difficulty in accessing the curriculum where relevant diagnoses/reports have not been submitted. This is dependent on the resources and staffing available at any given time. Students identified through in-school assessment and referrals from mainstream staff are prioritised through consultation and the consensus of the Special Needs Team.

3.0 SEN Team- Roles and Responsibilities of Internal & External SEN Team:

3.1 Duties of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The duties may include:

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the school's SEN policy
- Formulate, implement and review of SEN policy or Inclusive Education Framework
- Liaison with feeder schools, teachers & parents of incoming students
- Support the management team in terms of management and responsibility for provision of SEN within the school
- Managing and timetabling of the SEN team (Special Education Teachers & Special Needs Assistants)
- Co-ordination and allocation of duties for SNAs
- Provision of cover for members of the SEN department, e.g. SNAs
- Liaising with and advising colleagues
- Co-ordination, formulation, implementation and review of Student Support Plan
- Monitoring and tracking of students with SEN
- Co-ordinating provision for students with SEN
- Overseeing the records/reports/register on all students with SEN
- Liaising with parents/guardians of students with SEN
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff
- Identification of Irish and 3rd language exemptions

- Application for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)
- Withdrawing of students for individual/group instruction
- Preparing resources and subject materials for classroom support, school support and school support plus
- Liaising with external agencies including: National Council for Special Education (NCSE); NCSE Support Service (Special Education Needs Support Service (SESS), National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), Visiting Teachers Service); National Education Psychological Service (NEPS); State Examinations Commission (SEC); Psychologists, Speech & language Therapists, Occupational Therapists; Dyslexia, Dyspraxia Associations; Autism/Asperger Support Ireland; National Council for the Blind of Ireland; National Council for the Deaf.

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

3.2 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 Additional 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 additional support programme and selection of students for additional 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.
- Liaises with the SENO in relation to all matters SEN including; SNA access and applications to the NCSE
- Processes exemptions from Irish
- Facilitates and chairs SEN department meetings

The Special Educational Needs co-ordinator, in consultation with other members of the SEN Department, identifies those students in need of reasonable accommodation in school and

state examinations. Psychological reports that recommend reasonable accommodation for certain students may be acted on and applications forwarded to the 'Reasonable Accommodation' section of the State Examinations Commission.

3.3 Duties of Special Needs Assistants

The duties of the special needs assistants are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with the duties of the post as outlined in Circular 30/2014 which is included in Appendix 2 and is also available [here](#).

3.4 Role and functions of the Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special educational needs, lies with the board of management. Boards of management facilitate the inclusion of students with special educational needs through inclusive enrolment policies and by promoting inclusive whole-school policies and procedures. Boards of management and principals are charged with specific duties in legislation. Members of boards of management are advised to make themselves aware of the responsibilities of the board to make arrangements for inclusive education under the relevant education legislation.

3.5 The Special Educational Needs Support Team

The Special Educational Needs team comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Needs co-ordinator, additional support teacher(s) and the Home School Liaison officer. The SEN team endeavours to help create the best environment possible for SEN students to develop to their optimum potential. The members of the team work collaboratively in the development, implementation and review of policies and procedures for identifying and meeting the special educational needs of individual students.

3.6 Home School Community Liaison officer

HSCL's role is to maximise active participation of the student in the learning process in particular those who might be at risk of failure. Active co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies in promoting the educational interest of the student is fostered and awareness is created in parents of their own capacities to enhance their child's education. In Newport College the role of the HSCL in SEN is as follows:

- Be of support to the SEN team

- Attend all SEN meetings where possible
- Advise the team when and if necessary
- HSCL communicates and liaises with parents/guardians of SEN students and prospective students

3.7 The Role of the Classroom Teacher

Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of students in schools. The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all students in his/her class, including any student with a special educational need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that each student is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all students feel equal and valued. In line with Continuum of Support Guidelines, the class teacher may gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions. The classroom teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to students with additional needs, including differentiating the curriculum as appropriate. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist, and the local Special Educational Needs Organiser. The classroom teacher will also make specific accommodations for students within the class as a result of concerns about a student's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that student.

4.0 SEN Model of Organisation

4.1 Additional Teaching Support

Many children require additional teaching support in schools. In such circumstances, the classroom teacher will be supported by Special Education Teachers, who will have access to additional training in the area of special education, and who will work closely with the class teacher to provide additional teaching support for children with special educational needs. The classroom teacher, in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Teacher as required, will consider ways in which the curriculum can be differentiated or adapted to suit the needs of individual students. This may also involve identifying the most appropriate teaching

strategies and programmes to meet the student's needs, and whether additional teaching supports are required. Parents should normally be consulted as part of this process.

4.2 Type of Teaching provided:

Additional Teaching support can be provided in a variety of ways. The special educational needs teacher might work in the classroom with the class teacher or withdraw students in small groups and/or individually for a period of time (depending upon the nature of student's needs) for intensive teaching of key skills. The range of teaching supports may include team-teaching, small group teaching and, where necessary, individualised teaching to address specific learning needs. Individualised learning needs can be addressed in a variety of ways and should not be solely equated with withdrawal from class for one-to-one or group tuition.

4.3 Supports for schools

Additional support and guidance will be available for school management and staff from Department agencies and services such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and the DES Inspectorate.

5.0 Identification of students in need of SEN

All students present at the entrance exam are assessed prior to entry to the College in August. Formal testing of incoming first years generally takes place in February each year and students' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed. Enrolment forms are processed in November/December and parents/guardians are requested to forward any relevant reports to the College pending agreement with the relevant primary school.

The Special Educational Needs co-ordinator meets primary school personnel and pupils in order to glean any other relevant information to identify student's individual strengths and the difficulties they may be experiencing.

Further formal testing may be carried out throughout the school year to ascertain further needs if any, and mainstream staff is requested to refer those students they believe to be struggling to access different aspects of the curriculum.

SEN provision endeavours to derive maximum benefit for each individual.

6.0 Organisation of SEN:

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

- Individual withdrawal
- 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.
- Group Withdrawal
- Co- Teaching*
- Reduced Timetable
- Whole Class groups

**Co-teaching involves two teachers providing tuition in the classroom and has many benefits for SEN students including; providing continuity of learning, building social skills and developing team building skills with their peers. Both teachers share responsibility for the teaching of the class and special educational needs students benefit from in-class support, immediate feedback and affirmation in the classroom.*

SEN provision is generally centred on the development of literacy, numeracy,* life skills, social skills, behavioural and language skills, along with special emphasis on social and communication skills where the need arises.

**Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/lit_num_strategy_full.pdf*

6.1 Organisation of Class Groups:

In First Year, a mixed ability policy is in place. In Second and Third Year, classes are banded for some subjects with regular class reviews taking place. Senior cycle for all subjects operates a mixed ability policy with the exception of Higher-Level Maths.

6.2 Student Support Plan:

In Post Primary Schools the emphasis is on whole-school approaches to developing best practices in responding to the need of all students (Support for All). At this stage, the school will be identifying those students who may be of concern, through screening and information gathering, especially during first year intake. Newport College has a Student Support Team in place to assist with the systematic tracking of students.

Support for ALL aims to support and promote positive student learning and behaviour. Key elements of this approach are:

- Creating positive learning environments
- Best practice in teaching, with a diversity of learning opportunities
- Establishing and teaching clear behavioural and learning expectations for students

- Having a system for reinforcing and monitoring students
- A student support team
- Listening to the voice of the student

Additionally, students about whom there are significant concerns may be discussed at the Student Support Team and interventions agreed may address the needs of groups of students, or individual students.

6.3 Timetabling

Students are timetabled for extra help in different ways. Students with an exemption in Irish are withdrawn in small groups and help is provided in subjects which they need extra help in, when resources are available. Also, English and Maths are taught in these classes.

At present the SEN Co-Ordinator takes these classes and pre-teaches Maths. A number of other teachers are involved in the teaching of SEN students as the allocation allows.

6.4 Access to resources:

The Special Education Needs office on the second floor has been developed to store hard copies of documentation regarding SEN students and general SEN resources. These include Student Support Plans, Departments guideline and documents and teaching strategies and resources. The SEN department have access to this room. All teachers have access to the SharePoint where resources and online documents can be viewed.

6.5 House and Mock Examinations

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

7.0 Communication:

7.1 SEN Team:

The SEN team meet regularly to discuss on-going strategies, students, resources and issues. We meet informally and formally through Planning and Lunch-time meetings. We communicate with all staff, students and parents and offer support and guidance. This allows maximum input from home, students and teachers who offer the best insight into how to support the student.

7.2 SEN Register:

In September a register of all pupils with S.E.N. is compiled and made available to staff. The register includes:

- Name of student
- Category of need
- Support being provided
- Area of strength and need
- Potential provision at State Exams.

Parental permission is sought in advance for the transfer of this information.

If a psychological assessment is available, a summary of the needs and recommendations is forwarded to all relevant staff. This information is only given with the permission of the parents.

7.3 Liaising with Parents/Guardians and SEN students

7.3.1 Parental Involvement

Parents are the significant partners in developing policy and planning for SEN students as they understand their needs best. A meaningful attempt to address those needs can be made through the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), created in partnership with parents. Furthermore, they can also identify more readily the individual strengths of their sons/daughters, information that can be most valuable in the teaching methodologies employed to educate the child.

Information evenings, award ceremonies, religious ceremonies, competitive events, leisure activities and JCSP celebrations also provide ample opportunities for parents to participate actively in their sons'/daughters' education and they are generally well attended.

7.3.2 Student Participation

Students have a critical role to play in the development and evaluation of their own learning.

They can become:

- More aware of their own individual needs and strengths
- More independent as learners and enabled towards responsibility for their own learning

- Successful as learners and the ability to develop skills and strategies to maximise their own learning
- More aware of different teaching and learning styles
- Part of the development of their own individual plan and learning targets and outcomes
- More aware of working co-operatively with others and understanding the concept of a team approach to enquiry and formulation of responses to tasks set.

8.0 Enrolment:

8.1 Admissions Policy:

Please click [here](#) to view Newport College's admissions Policy document available on our school website.

8.2 Transitions:

Here in Newport College we work very hard to ensure the smooth transition of incoming First Years into our school from their primary school.

We hold many events to ensure this transition:

- Transition workshop days where Fifth and Sixth class students get the opportunity to try out Post-Primary subjects such as Woodwork, Art, Home Economics, Science and Metalwork.
- Primary schools' soccer tournament
- Student Council Quiz
- Open Night
- 1-1 guided tours on request
- Science Day
- SEN co-ordinator visits primary schools to liaise with teachers.

8.3 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.

9.0 Assessment:

9.1 Screening:

All students are assessed at an Entrance exam in the February prior to a student's enrolment in August. This assessment takes the form of a Cognitive Ability Test. It allows for the allocation of SEN hours in conjunction with recommendations made by relevant professionals regarding specific students.

9.2 Assessment/Monitoring

This assessment is done informally through a teacher's observation or more formally, when referrals to NEPS or in-house assessments carried out by the SEN Coordinator.

9.3 Medical and Professional Assessments

Medical and other professional assessments continue to be used to help explain, and provide a better understanding of a student's needs, the nature of his/her difficulties, and to inform relevant interventions.

The school maintains a full school profile, for the duration of the student's time in school.

The school may allocate additional teaching support to students who have identified needs for teaching and learning using school-based assessment, the NEPS Continuum of Support and the Guidelines provided to schools. The school draws on professional reports where available.

Students receive additional teaching support based on their identified learning needs, rather than primarily on diagnosis of disability

9.5 Tracking:

Students will continue to be monitored through continuous assessment in each subject. Teachers are always free to seek advice and express concern about students to the SEN team/Co-Ordinator. The SEN team will monitor students and their progress, liaising with parents, teachers and management to ensure that progress is being made. The SEN Co-Ordinator can refer students at Student Support Meeting if necessary.

Short, medium and long- term goals are tracked through-out the school year. This helps to identify students who are meeting their targets and students who need to have their targets re-adjusted.

9.6 Record-keeping:

Long, medium and short-term Student Support Plans kept for each student. These will be digitalised for incoming First Years in 2019-2020.

Specific targets for each student discussed at each SEN meeting and recorded. These are available on SharePoint for all staff.

All formal assessments will be recorded digitally from September 2019 for incoming First Years.

10.0 Liaison with External Agencies/Services

In order to best support our student body we liaise with many agencies in many areas of Special Education.

The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) liaises closely with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and facilitates the delivery and co-ordination of educational services to children with SEN. The SENO also processes application forms for resources for SEN Students to the NCSE and advises parents/guardians regarding their son's/daughter's needs.

The National Psychological Service (NEPS) provide psychological assessments of students and recommendations on how best to address strengths and weaknesses identified. The service also advises as to how best employ resources and strategies in the classroom, and school environment in general, to benefit SEN students.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support for students experiencing difficulties of a behavioural/emotional nature and provides advice and recommendations on how best to address those difficulties in a school environment.

Other Agencies include the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Special Education Support Service (SESS), the Second Level Support Services (SLSS) and the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI), the Department of Education and Skills, The Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), The Educational Welfare Board, Local primary schools, Social Services, General Practitioner.