



Special Educational Needs Policy
Whole school Inclusion Policy
Loreto Secondary School, Bray

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).

2. Mission:

"Loreto / IBVM education values and respects each student and seeks to educate all irrespective of ability in an open learning environment." (Kolkata Guidelines: Page 6)

In Loreto Bray, we endeavour to ensure that our school is experienced "as a caring Christian Community in which students have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment." Excellence is understood in relation to each one's potential.

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.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

As set out in The Education Act 1998, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 and Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004, Loreto, Bray 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 school.
- Provide, as far as 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.
- 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 the contribution they can make in this area.
- Develop staff expertise in supplying students with special educational plans.
- Ensure that special educational needs are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community and that students with special educational needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Facilitating students with SEN to set achievable goals and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential
- Encourage and foster partnership with parents in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with special educational needs.

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.

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 and it is recommended that such support should be continued.
- A student identified during the entrance assessments.
- A student identified by their subject teachers, Form teacher or Year Head as having difficulty with one or more of their subjects.

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.

(c) Learning Support Co-ordinator (s):

- To co-ordinate Individual Education Plans for all students with Special Education Needs (SEN) in consultation with parents, student, SEN team and teachers.
- To co-ordinate the Learning Support Team and provision for pupils requiring support.
- To organise in consultation with the Principal a timetable for Learning Support and Resource.
- To co-ordinate and apply for Reasonable Accommodations at Examinations in consultation with the Guidance and Counselling Department.
- To co-ordinate and organise standardised school based testing for Dare applications in consultation with the Guidance and Counselling Department.
- To facilitate communication with the general staff on Learning Support issues.
- To select students for learning support and inform parents if their daughter needs such support and to collate consent forms.
- Makes application to the D.E.S. for resource hours and other supports for incoming students with special needs.
- To liaise with outside bodies and agencies including The National Council for Special Education, National Education Psychology Service (NEPS), The Visiting Teacher Service, Special Education Needs Support Service, psychologists, speech and language and occupational therapists. The State Exams Commission.

(Please note this list is not exhaustive and other outside bodies and agencies will be consulted as student needs dictate.)

- To withdraw students for additional classes in particular subjects
- Providing specific support for students with special educational needs in social skills etc.
- Liaise with the Primary schools and gathering information about the learning needs of students.
- Meet and advise parents as required.

(d) Learning Support Teacher(s):

1. Work with the Co-ordinator(s) and consult with subject teachers.
2. Support and remediate the literacy and numeric needs of students and give support in other specific subjects should this be required.

(e) Guidance Counsellor(s):

1. Administering diagnostic assessment tests in First Year.
2. Counseling in personal, educational and career development.
3. Psychological testing.
4. Career information management.
5. Consultations with Special Educational Needs team, staff and parents.
6. Referrals to other professionals and agencies.

(f) Subject Teacher(s):

1. Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his / her class.
2. Collaborates with the Resource / Learning Support teacher in identifying and advising on pupils who may have special educational needs.
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.

(g) Special Needs Assistant(s):

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 12/05.
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.

All the above school personnel involved with the delivery of the inclusion policy of Loreto Secondary School are expected to treat all matters related to their work in school as strictly confidential.

(i) **Parents:**

Loreto, Bray 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. Their input is valued. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling are conducted, parents are consulted and their permission sought. When an individual learning plan is being developed, parents will be consulted and informed and be part of the process.

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. They are asked to send in a copy of any relevant Psychologist or other report to the school. The Principal or Learning Support Co-ordinators meet parents prior to entry to review psychological reports and to complete applications for appropriate supports to the National Council for Special Education.
- (b) The Principal nominates two teachers to consult with Primary teachers when visiting feeder Primary schools in May.

- (c) Standardised tests are administered to all First Years in the January proceeding entry and the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support.
- (d) A class teacher, form teacher and /or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN Department. Referral forms are available in a folder 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 school that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, this may initiate 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, form teachers and the relevant Year Head
 - 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 and outside agencies.

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) 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 Irish and 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

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 information on all pupils with S.E.N. This is given at a staff meeting designated for the purpose.

- Name of pupil
- Year group and form class
- Category of difficulty
- Support being provided

- Potential areas of difficulty
- Potential provision at State Exams.

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

(e) Mock Examinations:

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

11. The Exceptionally Able Student:

Students who require 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.

The Confucius Institute provides a programme of Chinese Studies that may be availed of by our exceptional students and also those of linguistic ability. Exceptional students may also avail of our extra-curricular activities such as debating (in English, Irish and French) and may enter other public exams e.g. The Goethe Institute. They also may wish to go forward for the Maths and Science Olympiads.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on
15 February 2017.

Signed: *Michael Denny*

Date: 15 Feb 2017

Date for review: Feb 2020

(b)

DRAFT