

SEN Policy

This policy is informed by current legislation, DES policy (including the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020) and the school's mission statement which states: 'Coláiste Cholmcille is a community which respects the individual's rights and self-worth and aims to provide a happy and safe environment in which the individual may achieve his/her spiritual, academic and personal potential in order to develop all positive aspects of the individual and the community'

As outlined in the school's enrolment policy students with a wide range of abilities are accepted and every effort will be made by Coláiste Cholmcille to meet the individual's educational needs within an inclusive environment in order to allow all students to access the curriculum effectively. The EPSEN Act states that "a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with an assessment carried out under the act or
- b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated"

This policy sets out the means by which Coláiste Cholmcille will meet its obligations in this regard.

The school aims to promote an inclusive curriculum and to promote differentiated approaches to teaching and learning. However restrictions may be placed on participation on particular school activities where it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the student to participate.

This policy supports Coláiste Cholmcille's goal of inclusion for all students. Coláiste Cholmcille will work in partnership with parents and guardians in enabling the student with SEN to access the school curriculum.

Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out clear guidelines for the identification of students with special educational needs (SEN) and the procedures to be followed once students are identified. Where possible it is designed to reflect the NEPS document “A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary schools”.

Identification of Students with Special Educational Needs

Coláiste Cholmcille will take all the necessary steps at the earliest possible opportunity to identify students with special educational needs so that the school can become familiar with their needs. This will also enable the school to make advance preparations for the admission of the student and to seek additional resources where appropriate.

❖New students

All information gathered in relation to a student with SEN will be stored securely, treated confidentially and used only for educational purposes. A profile of the student will be developed:

- From information in the student’s application form
- From information given by parents / guardians who contact the school directly to discuss their child’s needs
- From a psychological or other assessments provided to the school
- From information in a written report from the student’s primary school which is automatically forwarded to Coláiste Cholmcille.
- From information and documentation given to the Year Head by the primary school, in the year of enrolment
- From results of assessments carried out by the Learning Support team subsequent to entry.
- From information provided by visiting teachers or other external multi-agency professionals involved with the student.

❖ *Existing students*

- From information given by subject teachers and Year Head
- From information given by parents to the subject teacher or Year Head or a member of the Learning Support team.
- From information provided by visiting teachers or other external multi-agency professionals where a student has been newly diagnosed.

Follow-up Procedures for New Students with SEN

- Applications will be made for resources from the DES for students with Low Incidence Special Educational Needs. These may include resource hours, SNA hours, assistive technology and major modifications to classrooms or equipment. Other matters may be dealt with by the school at a nominal cost.
- Irish exemptions previously granted by the DES will be noted and filed. A recommendation for an Irish exemption will be followed through.
- Liaison with visiting teachers will be organised where necessary
- In-school screening will be done to identify any possible special educational need and where appropriate application will be made for NEPS support.
- Taking into account the limits imposed by the timetable, the most appropriate means of providing Resource hours allocated by the DES will be decided by the LS team and the Principal and will take into account the recommendations made in a psycho-educational or other report.
- Those students with a psychological report detailing a Specific Learning Difficulty ie those students with High Incidence Special Educational Needs will receive Learning Support.

Follow-up Procedures for Students with Low Achievement

- To access Learning Support priority will be given to students with a reading age of two or more years below their chronological age and / or

performing at or below the 10th percentile in standardised tests in English and Maths.

- STen scores in Maths and English are acquired from students' primary schools. A Group Reading Test is administered in September. The data gathered from these is analysed carefully and a list of potential students for LS is drawn up.
- Parents will be informed by telephone or in writing and their approval sought before supplementary teaching begins or any curricular modifications are implemented.

Class Placement Arrangements for Students with SEN

- Students will be placed in mainstream mixed-ability class groups throughout Junior Cycle.
- Careful consideration is given to the organisation of pupils with SEN within 1st Year mixed-ability classes to ensure that the goal of an inclusive environment is being achieved. Organising the class groups will involve the Learning Support core team, the Year Head and the Principal and / or Deputy Principal. Special attention will be paid to the health and safety of all students in organising class groupings.
- Access to the support of a Special Needs Assistant may influence a student's class placement.

Junior Cycle

- In consultation with parents a reduced Junior Cert. curriculum will be organised for students whose needs demand it. Any implications arising from this in terms of the Leaving Cert exam and post-Leaving Cert courses will be explained to parents.

Senior Cycle

- LCA is available to students at Senior Cycle
- Additional literacy / numeracy interventions and / or resource time may be provided where appropriate and within available resources.

- A reduced curriculum can be organised where necessary

State Exams

Applications are made for all pupils entitled to Reasonable Accommodation in the Certified Exams

Organisation of Additional Teaching Support – Resource and Learning Support

In deciding the best means of providing additional teaching and learning support to students with SEN the following options will be considered:

- In-class support teaching
- General Studies. In Coláiste Cholmcille this allows for additional support during language classes i.e. Irish, French and German one or more of which might not be taken by a student with SEN
- Student withdrawal during a specified subject where after consultation with the subject teacher it is clear that support is needed.
- Individual or small group teaching
- Team teaching
- Reduced curriculum, this will only happen following consultation between all the relevant parties.

The most suitable arrangements will be decided based on the student's needs, the school timetable, allocated NCSE resources, health and safety considerations and any recommendations in a psycho-educational or other assessment.

The LS team will identify a suitable time for additional teaching to take place within the framework of the school timetable and the students' subject choices. The LS core team will draw up a timetable of all support teaching.

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependant on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is reviewed when appropriate. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with

the regular curriculum. All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and the student involved.

Strategies to Meet the Needs of Students with SEN

In order to meet the special educational needs of students a variety of strategies must be used, these may include:

- Differentiated teaching and learning materials
- Curriculum modifications
- Identification of learning outcomes
- Assessment for learning procedures
- SNA support
- Assistive technology where appropriate
- Access to the ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Support Class. See Policy and Procedure for Enrolment in ASD Support Class.
- Access to the NBSS Behaviour for Learning Support Class

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- Oversee the development and implementation of the SEN policy.

Principal and Deputy Principal

- Monitor the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.

Year Head

- Inform teaching staff and new staff/ substitute teachers of relevant information on students with special learning needs in their year group.
- Communicate information regarding students with SEN to the LS team

Subject Teachers

- Differentiate the curriculum and utilise a variety of teaching methodologies
- Avail of opportunities for professional development in the area of special needs as appropriate.
- Familiarise themselves with the details of students with SEN in their classes by reading the Learning / Behavioural Profile or Student SEN Profile (Appendix 1) and completing any relevant sections or where necessary reading the information in students' files.
- Liaise with the LS team and where appropriate decide on how LS or Resource time can be used to supplement class work.

Resource and Learning Support Core Team

- Screening of incoming 1st Years
- Gathering information from Primary schools on incoming pupils with Low Incidence Special Educational Needs in order to make timely applications to the NCSE for resources.
- Coordinate the development of a Student SEN Profile or Learning / Behavioural Profile which will outline the student's learning / behavioural needs, a summary of recommendations for classroom teachers and practical strategies for subject teachers
- Co-ordination of records of work covered with individual students
- Liaison with subject teachers
- Liaison with Principal
- Liaison with outside agencies
- Liaison with parents
- Diagnostic Testing
- Advise on staff training in the area of developing student learning / behaviour programmes
- RACE applications and special accommodation for house exams
- Work with students on a one to one basis or with small groups
- Co-ordinate the SNA team
- Manage student files and records
- Develop and maintain a register of students with SEN

- Organise Irish exemptions
- Liaison with visiting teachers
- Liaison with NEPS re identifying candidates and applying for support.
- Liaison with Career Guidance re applications for third level courses, post Leaving Cert courses or training and DARE applications

Learning Support Teacher

- Liaison with subject teachers
- Work with students on a one to one basis or with small groups
- Liaise with Learning Support core team and Learning Support teaching group.
- A template for recording students' progress and material covered in class will be provided for teachers timetabled for Learning Support.

SNAs

- As outlined in their contract. See also Appendix 3 Duties of Special Needs Assistants Circular Letter SNA 12/05 and DES Circular 00/30/2014

Ancillary Staff

Caretaker, Clerical, Catering, Cleaning

Staff will be aware of the needs of the individual students where necessary.

They will accommodate as far as possible the special needs of such students.

Parents

- Inform and update the school about their child's special educational needs.
- Provide consent to access records
- Actively support the school's programme.

Students

- Co-operate with staff and parents in the implementation of their programme of learning
- Agree to the learning targets that have been set for them
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies that they are taught during their learning support classes and learn to apply these skills to improve their own learning

Policy Review

The Principal and the LS team will be responsible for the evaluation of this policy on an ongoing basis. The policy will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Appendix 1

SEN Student Profile

Name:	DOB:	PPSN:	Date of Enrolment
Address:			
Parent / Guardian:			
Year Head:	Key Teacher:	SNA:	
Assessment/s		Date:	
Resource Allocation:			
Exemption/s:			
Assistive Technology:			
Medical:			
Outside Agencies:			
Visiting Teacher:			

Nature of Special Educational Need:

-
-
-

Psychologist's Recommendations:

-
-
-
-

What does this mean for my subject area?

<i>Strategies</i>

APPENDIX 2

DUTIES OF SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with assessed educational needs. Their duties are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal. Those duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms
2. Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties 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 or group of children).
9. Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
10. Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.
11. Other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.