

# **­­­­Special Educational Needs Policy – New Cross College**

**Introduction:**

New Cross College is a co-ed Mainstream Secondary School under the patronage of Le Chéile Schools Trust and The Religious Sisters of Charity. Our schools Mission Statement affirms the guiding principles of this policy:

**Our school is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School that aims to provide a safe, inclusive academic environment shaped by mutual respect.**

We respect the dignity of the individual person and are sensitive to the needs of a diverse society.

We aim to make our school a happy and caring environment which recognizes the needs of each individual. We believe that education flourishes in a school where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and there is tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty.

We believe in helping all to develop their confidence, self-esteem and talents so that they make take their place in society as responsible and mature young adults.​

**Enrolment:**

The enrolment policy of the school governs enrolment of all pupils. It is available by contacting the school office.

**Policy Guidelines:**

This Policy provides practical guidance for teachers, Parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and or learning difficulties as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Acts below;

Education Act (1998)

Education Welfare Act (2000)

The Equal Status Act (2000)

Disability Bill (2002)

E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004)

It is the policy of this school to include all children particularly those with special educational needs as a valued part of the school community.

We do this by inclusion which has the following core principles:

1. Intervention at as early a point as possible.
2. Suitable learning challenges.
3. Responding to children’s diverse learning needs.
4. Overcoming barriers to learning and assessment.
5. Ensuring that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have an equal opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs.

**Inclusive Practice:**

* To recognise that the SPHE programme can play a valuable role in supporting inclusiveness when effectively delivered to all pupils.
* All pupils are entitled to their breaks and lunchtimes. To this end Special Needs pupils are supported and monitored by the S.N.As and the Teacher(s) on duty. Special arrangements and management programmes will be supported by all staff.
* The Health and Safety Policy, available to all members of staff, is applicable to all school staff and pupils. Should the question of the administration of Medication arise refer to this policy.
* To facilitate the effective transfer of information between teaching personnel regarding SEN students, the following structures will be in place;

1. Recommendations from psychological reports will be kept in the personal files for each student that possess them.
2. The nature of the disability and practical advice on how to work with these students as needed will be uploaded onto vsware.
3. The full psychological report will be kept securely in the resource room and made available to appropriate professional personal including SNA and teachers.

**Timetabling:**

* The provision of Special Education Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their class and /or in class Tuition.
* Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they are withdrawn for support.
* It is desirable to adopt a flexible approach to timetabling whilst at the same time ensuring that class disruption be minimised.
* Time for consultation and collaboration is essential for all personnel involved in Special Education Support. Whilst it is recognised that informal daily contact is of value, meetings will be arranged as deemed necessary.
* The S.N.A. can provide a regular and consistent liaison between Class and Support areas. This is facilitated by the S.N.A. accompanying the pupil to the support teacher at least once a week.

**Allocation of hours to Pupils with Special Needs:**

Department of education Circular No 0014/2017 replaces all previous allocation models (including those of previous high incidence and low incidence models.)

New Cross like other schools now receive a set amount of hours per year fixed for a two year period. These hours are based on our historical need, social and environmental factors, including our DEIS status.

The new model will provide a greater level of autonomy for schools in how to manage and deploy special education teaching support within their school, based on the individual learning needs of students, as opposed to being based primarily on a diagnosis of disability. It is important to note that no student is entitled to certain amount of hours instead hours will be allocated on a needs basis. These educational needs to be ascertained on a whole school basis but being overviewed by the SEN personnel.

**SNA Access:**

Special Needs Assistants (SNA’s) will be applied for based on psychological, psychiatric, or medical reports that recommend this support, through the channels of the Special Educational Needs Officer

However the usage of SNA support will be determined by overall school needs. SNA’s need not be velcroed to the student they are assigned to. Schools should continue to record how it is planned to support student(s). A plan for each student must outline:

1. The student special care needs
2. Show how SNA support will be deployed to assist the student.
3. The plan should demonstrate how the school intends to actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe.
4. The plan should include targets for the development of independence skills.

**Emotional and Behavioural Needs:**

These difficulties may arise due to various differing reasons. It would be important to identify the trigger to emotional trauma and behavioural difficulties.

* Rewarding systems are available throughout the school according to suitability and age appropriate levels.
* Positive attitudes are adopted and supported in working with these difficulties.
* Parents and other personnel are important and vital to supporting the staff in dealing with these difficulties.
* Expertise is acquired by staff being involved in courses and in-service training in Behavioural management strategies
* Behavioural Management Programmes are drawn up in collaboration with Special Educational Co-coordinators, BFL Teacher, School Completion Support, Class teachers, SNAs, Parents, pupils and where appropriate, the Principal.

**Exceptional Ability/Gifted Pupils:**

From the Report of the Special Education Review Committee 1993

Pupils who are exceptionally able or talented are those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve high performance in one or more of the following areas:

* General intellectual ability
* Specific academic aptitude
* Creative or productive thinking
* Leadership ability
* Visual and performing arts
* Mechanical aptitude
* Psychomotor abilities e.g. in athletics, gymnastics.

A working definition in school, would say that children with ability at the 97th percentile levels, in at least one area, are seen as having special needs. (Ed.Act 1998)

Gifted pupils may be identified by:

* Annual standardized tests
* NRIT
* Teacher observation
* Peer and Parent Appraisal
* Referral through other individuals or organisations.

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be offered an augmented and differentiated curriculum and information will be available regarding the relevant outside agencies.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The support of Special Needs Education pupils is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experience. This will include Board of Management, S.E.N.O., Principal, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Class Teacher, Special Needs Teachers, Parents, Special Needs Assistants, Visiting teachers, H.S.C.L. officers

**Board of Management:**

The Board will fulfil its statuary duties towards pupils with special needs. It will be knowledgeable about the schools S.E.N provision i.e. funding, equipment and personnel.

**Principal:**

The role of the Principal is to:

* To assume responsibility for the development and implementation of the schools policy on Special Educational Needs in Co-operation with the Board of Management, teachers, parents and children.
* Liaise and work with the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators and the Special Ed. Team.

**Special Needs coordinator (Post Holder):**

The role of the Special Needs Co-ordinators is to:

* Oversee the day to day operation of the S.E.N policy.
* Co-ordinate provision for the children with Special Educational Needs.
* Liaise with, advise and support colleagues in order to facilitate planning for Special Needs pupils.
* Liaise with and advise S.N.A. with regard to supporting the pupils.
* Liaise with and support parents.
* Oversee and store the records assessments, Tests and I.E.Ps of all children with Special Needs.
* Liaise with all external agencies concerned with the pupils.
* Monitor and evaluate S.E.N. provision regularly.
* Contribute to in-service training of staff. To provide support and a mentoring system to new Special Needs Teachers as needed.
* Facilitate and Chair meetings of the Special Education Team within school.

**Class Teacher:**

The Class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his /her class including those selected for supplementary teaching.

* To initiate the three stage process in identifying and assessing a potential pupil for special educational resource.
* To acquire knowledge of the educational difficulties of their pupils in collaboration with the support teacher to enable them to integrate and differentiate the curriculum for those with special ed. needs.
* To establish a support network between the Class, and Resource teachers and S.N.As in implementing the programmes.
* Will be involved in the collaboration between outside professional agencies and parents in supporting a student with SEN.

**Special Needs Teacher**:

* To provide input to the special needs pupil according to the diagnosis given and to co-ordinate information about a specific learning difficulty.
* To collaborate and liaise with Special Educational Needs co-ordinator as well as parents and outside agencies in providing an individual Education plan.
* To provide direct teaching and educational support to the individual pupil.
* To acquire an expertise and knowledge in the areas of a variety of special needs to enable them to give advice and support to class teachers.
* Liaise with the class teacher and S.N.A.s to implement I.E.P interview.
* To record all resource classes for the purpose of coordinating learning and for inspection purposes. This recording and reflection will constitute a major part of the students IEP.
* To provide support to the class teacher by assisting with modifications to the curriculum content, developing alternative resources and setting up student support networks in the class.

(There are many models of co-teaching that can be used see attached appendix 4.)

**H.S.C.L.Teacher:**

* The H.S.C.L. coordinator may be part of the team in supporting a pupil with Special Educational Needs.
* The main duty would be to link with and support parents as necessary.

**Behaviour for Learning Teacher:**

* The BFL teacher is part of the team that supports pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The teacher is referred students from the Care Team and the SET Team. She works with these students on an individualised behaviour plan depending on the needs of the student or can also work with small groups around resilience and life skills.

**S.N.As:**

To support the student with special needs within the school in terms of physical, emotional social and intellectual support.

The S.N.A. will work as part of the Special Education Team which is led by the Special Education Needs Co-Ordinators.

To work under the direction of the class teacher in collaboration with the Special Needs Support teachers.

To be involved in further training to enable them to update knowledge of the various special needs in the school population.

**Parents:**

The Role of the parents is vital in the success of support for pupils with special needs. Parents contribute by:

* Regular communication with the class Teacher and Support Teacher
* Fostering a positive attitude about school and learning in the student.
* To encourage and support homework tasks.

**Visiting Teachers:**

* These teachers allocated by the DES provide support on specific learning difficulties such as Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment.
* The Visiting teacher will liaise with the Support teacher and Class teacher in order to provide support and specific information and expertise in these given areas.

**Collaboration with outside Agencies:**

These agencies could include any combination of the following;

* Speech and Language Therapists.
* Occupational Therapists.
* Psychologists.
* H.S.E. personnel.
* Doctors and Psychiatrists
* Any other personnel involved with the individual student.

The school will facilitate and coordinate work with any of the personnel defined above, in order to establish the specific needs of and necessary resources for the pupil.

It is recognised that these agencies can deliver valued expertise and advice regarding the many and varied needs arising for the pupils.

The teacher will be in a position to coordinate this information and translate it into a consistent and practical application through the curriculum.

**Facilities and Resources:**

* Resources include a variety of, Textbooks, Reading Schemes, Library books, Oral Language Development materials, I.T. programmes and varied ancillary materials.
* Assessment and Diagnostic Testing materials are also available.
* Learning support materials will primarily be used in the learning Support rooms. These resources may be made available to the Class Teachers following consultation with the Special Needs Teacher.

**Complaints Procedure:**

Parents with any complaint should first contact the appropriate member of staff as follows:

Resource Teacher

Class Teacher R.T.T.

The complaint is investigated and if not resolved, is referred to the Principal.

If the matter remains unresolved, it will proceed to the B.O.M. for consideration.

The policy will be reviewed in 1 year and every following third year after that date.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_