

Saint Brendan's College

Special Educational Needs Policy

Special Educational Needs

The term Special Educational Needs is defined in the Educational Act 1998 as “*The educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students*”.

This policy applies to students who are exceptional; gifted students, students with learning difficulties, students with disabilities and students who are at risk – personal, emotional, social or educational, in short students who may need additional help or support to enable them to derive the maximum benefit from school.

In St. Brendan's College, we are dedicated to helping each student to achieve his/her individual potential with the provision of a quality system of special Educational Needs being central to this commitment.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate students to participate in a curriculum best suited to their ability.
- Develop positive self esteem and positive attitude to school and learning.
- Enable students to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies on Special Educational Needs for these students.

Goals

St. Brendan's College shall strive to have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To identify the Special Educational Needs of all incoming 1st years.
- To review the Special Educational Needs of current students.
- To seek to provide for the needs identified.
- To record the projected and actual progress of Special Educational Needs pupils.

Within the constraints of available resources, all students with Special Needs, who are admitted to the school shall have access to participate in and benefit from an education suitable to their needs. The school shall endeavour to seek adequate resources, equipment and accommodation from the Department of Education and Science and other relevant agencies. The school will make every effort to maximise the resources available to students with Special Educational Needs. These include Visiting Teachers, Resource Teachers, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Counsellors, Technical Aid and Equipment etc. The school will endeavour to provide access and accommodation for such personnel in the school building.

Assessment of Need

The school will assess the special needs of students upon entry to the school and will reassess the needs of students from time to time. The school will also make an assessment of its capacity to respond adequately to those needs. Where a student condition or circumstances change in the course of their school career such a student may merit re-assessment and re-evaluation of suitable provision.

Entry to St. Brendan's College – New Students

Application for entry to St. Brendan's College is made on a standard application form. This form is designed to elicit relevant information about the special needs of students and parents are required to make known their child's needs on the form. Where students have been assessed by a psychologist parents supply the details to the school and are asked to make a copy of any such assessment report available to the Principal. Where a student has availed of any special tuition and /or resources at National School or Secondary School, the parents are required to make this known on the application form. Following consultation and the school is satisfied that appropriate measures can be taken to attempt to cater for the needs of the student; the student will be accepted into the school subject to the following:

- The necessary resources are made available by the Department of Education and Skills and any other relevant agencies.
- Parents/Guardians co-operate with the school to ensure that the students; needs are met as fully as possible and that they supply further information from time to time as may be required.
- The student is well behaved and that the behaviour of the student will not / does not interfere with the progress of lessons or with the rights of other students to their education.

Where a student is refused admission parents will be advised of their rights of appeal as prescribed by the 1998 Education Act. Once admitted appropriate measures will be taken by the school with a view to endeavouring to provide for the student's needs.

Current Students

The school will review the needs of students from time to time, including those who were deemed at entry to have Special Educational Needs and those who were not.

Special Needs Provision in St. Brendan's College

The Special Educational Needs Department at St. Brendan's comprises of Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. The aim of the Department is to ensure access for all Special Educational Needs students to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which offers development and progression in learning and experience. There is acceptance and respect for individuals regardless of ability, impairment, race or gender.

The function and roles of teachers in the Special Educational Needs Department include teaching, assessing and profiling students with Special Educational Needs, formulating and implementing education programmes, Liaison, support to teachers and monitoring of students progress. Meetings are scheduled to record, review and update relevant reports and issues.

Once students have been identified with learning difficulties they are profiled, Individual Educational Programmes will be formulated and implemented. Students are withdrawn from mainstream classes following consultation with parents.

Time spent in the Special Educational Needs Department, withdrawal from some mainstream classes will enable students to:

- Benefit from one to one and /or small group instruction in their specific area of difficulty.
- Become more confident in the abilities they do have.
- Develop good study skills
- Spend time revising knowledge and practising skills encountered during specific subject classes.
- Develop confidence in the use of ICT
- Take a greater responsibility for their own learning.

Certain categories of student may be entitled to additional support e.g. non-national students, traveller children etc. The school will take steps to assess the needs of those students and will use the resources provided to meet those needs.

Students of exceptional ability are catered for in their regular banded groups. However, at Junior Cycle in Irish, English and Maths, classes are run concurrently from second year onwards at least, to enable separate Higher Level and Ordinary Level classes to be formed

Selection of Pupils for Supplementary Teaching.

Priority is given to those with Psychological Reports who met requirements which entitle them to Resource Teaching hours. (Department of Education and Science approved).

Parental Approval

Parental Approval is sought to proceed with diagnostic assessment which may lead to SEN classes.

Timetabling

The provision of learning Support and / or Resource Hours may be delivered parallel to or in addition to mainstream classes.

Referral of identified students

Criteria on which this decision is based include:

- The Special Needs Co-ordinator oversees the Referral of students to outside agencies e.g. NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service).
- The Special Needs Co-ordinator meets the parents to discuss the need for referral and to seek consent.
- The necessary referral form is completed in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the student, Parents/Guardians, Principal, Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher (as appropriate) and the assessment is conducted.
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
- Where concern arises regarding the manner or speed of the follow – through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out of school agency concerned.

Success Criteria

SEN students are identified, assessed and receive appropriate provision. Once they are profiled, an Individual Education Programme will be drawn up and implemented in consultation with Parents, Students and all relevant parties.

Targets will be set for each individual availing of special needs provision. Their progress is measurable and measured regularly. Parents, School Management and other relevant agencies are informed of progress as appropriate. Pupils receive appropriate professional support and that support is available on site where possible.

Review Procedure

This policy will be reviewed regularly with prescribed amendments being presented to teaching staff for consultation and to the school Board of Management for subsequent ratification. Other review measures may be initiated when issues of content or implementation of this policy are reported to Special Educational Needs Team, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or School Management.

School management must ensure appropriate mechanisms and procedure are devised to assist the progress of this review process as quickly as possible.

APPENDICES

Role of Special Education Needs Co-ordinator

- Administer and correct standardised reading, spelling, mathematical and ability tests in May to ascertain reading and mathematical ages of incoming first years.
- Identify pupils with difficulties in reading or writing skills through formal/informal diagnosis.
- Prepare a register of all Special Educational Needs pupils.
- Keep records, profiles and psychological reports and update records regularly.
- Consult with parents, subject teacher, school management.
- Consult externally with Special Educational Needs Officers, National Educational Psychological Service, the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant outside agencies.
- Apply for special arrangements and reasonable concessions in certificate examinations.
- Deploy those that teach pupils with Special Needs who have been granted a reader to assist them in their exams in June.
- Test pupils, using screening and diagnostic standardised testing materials.
- Schedule regular meetings to record, review and update relevant reports and issues.

- Keep informed of current education research, thinking and methodology in the area of Special Educational Needs.
- Keep informed of all current legislation 1998 Education Act, Equality Act, Persons with Disability Act, Education Welfare Act and to ensure implantation of such Acts in relation to Special Education Needs.
- Prepare Resources.
- Endeavour to ensure all concerned have a proper understanding of the role of the Special Educational Needs Department.
- Strive to keep the Special Educational Needs Department continuously updated with latest equipment, resources and facilities to the highest possible standards.
- To support Principal in delegating duties to Special Needs Assistants.

Date of adoption by the Board of Management of St. Brendan's College – _____

Date of Implementation – November 1st 2013.

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____