



# **COLÁISTE NA CARRAIGE**

## **Special Educational Needs Policy**

## **Ráiteas Bunchuspóra**

Cuireann Coláiste na Carraige fáilte roimh achan bhall den phobal. Déantar iarracht sármhaitheas a bhaint amach trí sheirbhísí iomlánaíocha oideachais agus tacaíochta a chur ar fáil atá bunaithe ar phrionsabail measa, comhoibrithe agus comhpháirtíochta.

## **Mission Statement**

Coláiste na Carraige welcomes all members of the community and strives for excellence in delivering holistic educational services and supports based on the principles of respect, co-operation and partnership.

## **1. Introduction:**

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with special educational needs (SEN) 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).

A further publication that informed the content of this policy is "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs-Post Primary Guidelines (Department of Education & Science (DES) Inspectorate: 2007).

The policy is a revision of one published in January 2006 and is the result of a consultative process involving staff, Parents and Board of Management.

## **2. Mission:**

In Coláiste na Carraige, we endeavour to ensure that our school is a caring 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 being an inclusive learning community. It is based directly on the needs of our students and therefore is reviewed regularly to meet needs that may change.

## **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 or Resource**

The following students may be selected for Resource/Learning Support classes:

- 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.
- A student identified during the entrance assessments as having difficulties and this is confirmed by assessment test carried out by our SEN coordinator.
- A student identified by our teachers as having difficulty and this is confirmed by assessment tests given by our SEN coordinator.
- A student with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- A student with physical difficulties.

#### **5. Roles:**

The following (a)-(c) have responsibility for managing the school response to students with Special Educational Needs.

##### **(a) Board of Management:**

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of our Special Needs Policy.
- Arranges for a periodic review of the range of curriculum provision within the school to ensure that suitable programmes are on offer to all students.
- Ensures that the rights of parents as prescribed in legislation are upheld in the school.

##### **(b) Principal/ Deputy Principal:**

- Have 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.
- Facilitates the professional development of staff to enable them to support students with special educational needs.
- Ensure adequate accommodation and resources.
- Provide a secure facility for the storage of records.

- 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.
- Promotes the involvement of parents/guardians of students with special educational needs.
- Oversees applications to the N.C.S.E. for resource hours for students with special needs.

**(c) SEN Coordinator**

- To be a member of the Pastoral Care Team.
- To coordinate Individual Education Plans for all students with Special Education Needs (SEN) in consultation with parents/guardians.
- To coordinate the Learning Support Team helping them devise schemes of work to address specific needs.
- To coordinate Reasonable Accommodations at Examinations in consultation with the Examination Secretary and Guidance Counsellor.
- To organize the selection and purchase of resources.
- To communicate with the general staff on SEN issues.
- To communicate with the parent/guardians of children with SEN regarding the needs of their child.

The following (d)-(h) work on a day-to-day basis with students with Special Educational Needs.

**(d) Resource Teachers:**

- Work with the SEN Coordinator and Learning Support teachers.
- Involved in team teaching in mainstream classes where suitable.
- Withdraw students for specific resource classes.
- Provide specific support for students with special educational needs in social skills.
- Liaise with the Guidance Counsellor and other staff members in relation to the selection and implementation of tests and other means for assessing students' achievement and progress.
- Co-ordinate the gathering of information for Individual Education Plans for students with special educational needs from assessment reports by outside professionals and in-school assessment.
- Involved in the administration of standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Involved in the review of individual students' progress following the implementation of the individual education plan.
- Provide advice to mainstream teachers as required.

- Advise on Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations
- Meet and advise parents as required.

**(e) Learning Support Teacher:**

- Work with the SEN Coordinator and the Resource Teachers.
- Support and remediate the literacy and numeracy of students to whom they are assigned.

**(f) Guidance Counsellors:**

- Liaise with the Primary Schools to build a profile of the learning needs of incoming students.
- Administer entrance tests in May of the year of entry.
- Counsel in personal, educational and career development.
- Manage career information.
- Consult with Special Educational Needs Team, staff and parents/guardians.
- Refer students to other professionals and agencies where necessary.

**(g) Subject Teacher:**

- Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his / her class.
- Collaborates with the Resource / Learning Support teachers in identifying pupils who may have general or specific learning difficulties.
- Attempts, as far as possible, to differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils in the class.
- Provide learning activities and materials that will ensure successes for all student.

**(h) Special Needs Assistant:**

- Special Needs Assistants make an invaluable 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 (Appendix I).
- 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.

- An SNA is expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in school as confidential.

**(i) Parents:**

- Coláiste na Carraige 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. 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 can receive a copy of the plan on request. This plan will be reviewed annually.

**(j) 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 should indicate on our enrolment form any special needs that were identified in Primary school in relation to their child.
- (b) In February of the year of entry, the Deputy Principal and the SEN Coordinator have a meeting with the sixth class teacher, resource teacher and parents/ guardians of each child with special needs to plan for their transition to post primary school and to complete NCSE applications for resource hours and SNA support where appropriate (See transfer form Appendix II).
- (c) In May of the year of entry standardised tests are administered by our Guidance counsellor and SEN coordinator, the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support.
- (d) A class teacher, tutor and /or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN coordinator. The SEN coordinator will arrange an in house assessment for the students and organise appropriate support depending on the results.
- (e) When a parent notifies the Principal that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the

Principal initiates a process of formal and informal assessment to be conducted by the SEN team.

Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:

- Observations from mainstream teachers.
- Consultations with parents.
- 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.
- In-house diagnostic tests.

(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 psychological assessments.

## **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. 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 for the review of the IEP.
- (b) The format of this plan is listed in Appendix III.
- (c) A scheme of work is developed and a review of progress with the student takes place every term. This review may take into account the perspectives of both parents and staff.
- (d) All records pertaining to the student will be retained in 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 English, Mathematics and Irish with regular class reviews taking place.
- Transition Year operates a mixed ability policy.
- In Senior Cycle all subjects are taught in mixed ability classes with the exception of English, Mathematics and Irish which are banded.

## **9. Organisation of Resource/Learning Support classes:**

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

- Individual Withdrawal
- Small Group Withdrawal
- Reduced Timetable
- A special stream timetabled parallel to core subjects at senior cycle consisting of a maximum of ten students.

## **10. Other Issues:**

### **(a) Withdrawals:**

The SEN Department may withdraw students from subjects in consultation with teachers and parents/ guardians. 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 (Appendix IV). All students who have an Irish exemption at Junior Cycle will be offered as much Resource/Learning support teaching at this time as our resources will allow. This allocation may vary from year to year.

### **(c) Information:**

During the first planning meeting of the year the staff are made aware of all SEN students and their needs.

More detailed information on SEN students including psychological assessments if available, may be viewed by staff in the office of the Deputy Principal or SEN Coordinator.

The SEN Coordinator meets individually with all resource teachers at the beginning of the school year to make them aware of the needs of the students they are timetabled to teach.

(d) **House and Mock Examinations:**

Every effort will be made, dependent on resources available, to offer Reasonable Accommodations to students in receipt of them for school examinations.

**11. The Exceptionally Able Student:**

Students who require opportunities for enrichment and extensions 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.

Every effort is made, dependent on resources available and the needs of the student, to offer extra enrichment to gifted students and to inform parents of suitable programmes available to them.

**12. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Education Needs Co-ordinator and the Resource Teachers. The entire policy will be reviewed every two years.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of BOM

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: September 2017

**Appendix I**

Circular SNA 12/05

## **Appendix II**

Post Primary Transfer Review form

**Appendix III**

Individual Education Plan Template