



St. Louis Secondary School
Carrickmacross

Education for persons with Special Educational Needs Policy

2016



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1.0 Description of School

St. Louis Secondary School is an academic post-primary school with a cohort of approximately 590 academic-oriented pupils. Student intake is predominantly from a middle-class catchment area.

The term “Learning Support Department” encompasses the work of both the Learning Support and Resource Teacher(s) in the school.

Learning Support provision is largely targeted at those in the Junior cycle and any remaining time is distributed to those in most need of help throughout the school. The Learning Support Department provides support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and co-ordinates the support of newcomer students.

2.0 Policy Rationale

The Education Act 1998 states that students with SEN are entitled to an education and support services appropriate to their needs. The obligation is on schools to (1) admit students with SEN, (2) identify and provide for their educational needs and (3) develop a SEN policy ensuring equality of access and participation in the school. The main components of the Education Welfare Act 2000 concern admission policies, school leaving age, arrangements for assessment of a student and Education Welfare Officers.

This document outlines a policy whereby the provisions of the Education Act (1988) and Education Welfare Act (2000) can be practically applied within St. Louis using principles of best practice. The staff in St. Louis’ have a shared belief in the principle of inclusive education, where no-one is denied access on grounds of SEN. This policy is a valuable reference and is a working document that should be reviewed every 2/3 years. This policy was written in the context of the most recent SEN legislation.

The Equal Status Acts (2000+2004) enacted in legislation that a school must do, “all that is reasonable” to accommodate the needs of a pupil with SEN. It further stated that the inability to do all that is reasonable is an act of discrimination and outlined that a school cannot discriminate on the grounds of disability. The provisions of the Acts are extended to the admission of a student, access to a course/facility/benefit, expulsion/sanction based on disability or any other term or condition of participation.

3.0 The impact of legislation

The development of legislation, through the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) Act (2004), has further highlighted the importance of developing this **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Policy**. The EPSEN Act has adapted a new definition of SEN and established two new bodies, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Special Education Appeals Board (SEAB).

The Act contains components that outline:

- (1) the education of the pupil with SEN takes place in an inclusive environment unless it is not in the best interests of the student or of other students
- (2) the steps that must be taken in order to cause an assessment to be carried out
- (3) the steps that must be taken in order to formulate an education plan for each student with assessed SEN
- (4) the designation of schools
- (5) the role to be played by parents/guardians, Principal, whole staff and SENO and
- (6) the timeframes involved.

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The NCSE's consultative forum proposed the following definition of inclusive education:

Inclusion is seen as a process of:

- Addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities and
- Removing barriers within and from education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school (Winter and O'Raw, 2010: 39).

This concept of inclusion promotes the active participation of the learner as the primary aim rather than simple placement or accommodation. It also emphasises the need for changes within the education system and the school to accommodate the learner. (Inclusive Education Framework NCSE 2011)

4.0 St Louis SEN Mission Statement and Aims

St. Louis will try to ensure an equality of access to (curricular access/extra-curricular access/ co-curricular access), participation in, and benefit from an appropriate education for students with SEN.

St. Louis aims to,

- “optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy” (Learning Support Guidelines).
- Develop positive self-esteem and a positive attitude to school and learning in these pupils.
- Enable pupils to become independent learners.
- Create an awareness amongst all partners, teachers, parents/guardians, students, professional services; NEPS (National Educational Psychological services).
- Create an awareness that we must foster a whole school approach and share the responsibility of helping these students achieve to the best of their ability.

There is awareness that St. Louis doesn't lend itself naturally to physical or sensory disability. There are certain limitations within the school in dealing with these students. Inclusion of students with learning and physical disabilities is dependent on additional resources and funding by the Dept of Education and Skills.

St. Louis' is committed to assisting pupils with physical difficulties with the various resources at the disposal of the school, including specialist equipment (e.g. laptops), RACE (Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations) and SNAs (Special Needs Assistants) and mobility assistance including the provision/ installation of a lift for pupils with physical difficulties. Classroom location is specifically managed to accommodate these pupils, e.g. easily accessed classrooms for pupils who use a wheelchair.

St Louis views parental involvement as key to delivering on its SEN policy. Parents/guardians are consulted regarding subject choices and Parents/guardians are to the fore in the Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations (RACE) process and are made aware of all necessary aspects of RACE, for example that an explanatory note is indicated on the student's results that they were a candidate for RACE. We encourage parental involvement in the development of IEP's for individual students.

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5.0 Policy Objectives

St Louis' policy objectives are outlined below:

1. Improved learning for the students and the opportunity to participate in the full curriculum
2. To ensure students' success in state exams (with the assistance of Reasonable Accommodations in the State Examinations - RACE). The purpose of the RACE scheme is to allow candidates who have SEN that interfere with their capacity to engage with the standard examination arrangements to demonstrate what they know and can do without compromising the integrity of the examination. Applications for RACE can be made on one of four grounds as follows:
 - Learning difficulty
 - Hearing difficulty
 - Visual difficulty
 - Physical difficulty – this category includes medical, sensory, mental health and behavioural difficulties.

The State Examinations (SEC) is introducing changes to the RACE scheme. From this year (2016/17), accommodations that were provided at Junior Certificate will be reactivated at Leaving Certificate subject to confirmation by the school authority of an identified and continuing need. New applications for a Leaving Certificate candidate must be made if that student did not have an application made on their behalf at Junior Certificate.

The category of "Specific Learning Difficulty" will be broadened to a new category to be known as "Learning Difficulty".

The Learning Support teacher will still apply for RACE based on assessment results, psychological reports, teacher observations etc. Relevant teachers involved in the education of that pupil are consulted and informed. The closing date for Leaving Certificate RACE Applications is December 2016 and for Junior Certificate candidates is January 2017.

3. Functional literacy and numeracy, while also supporting other subject areas
4. The development of social skills.
5. The development of independent learning within our students
6. To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning
7. To ensure a whole school approach in meeting the needs of assessed students across the curriculum in an inclusive environment.
8. To encourage alternative forms of support, in class support, differentiated work, use of software, team teaching, etc.
9. To meet with the relevant partners in the formulation of IEP's and promote implementation by class teachers.
10. To ensure the referral system for students with learning difficulties is used where all partners are involved; School Principal, SEN Coordinator/Learning Support, Guidance Counsellor, parents/guardians, student, psychologists and/or other relevant outside agencies.
11. School Self Evaluation – this collaborative, inclusive, and reflective process involves subject departments making judgements and decisions based on information gathered from a range of sources to change or adapt teaching methodologies with a view to bringing about improvements in students' learning

These objectives are the same as for every student in the St Louis' school.

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Foundation levels in English, Irish and Maths act as a support to students with SEN. The Leaving Cert. Vocational Programme (LCVP) is offered in the school. The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA) is also offered in the school.¹

6.0 Whole School Strategies for Preventing Learning Difficulties:

St Louis is committed to

1. Providing additional support in literacy and numeracy for those who need it
2. Continued observation and assessment of language, literacy and numeracy
3. Early identification of pupil needs/SEN
4. The process of School Self Evaluation – The process enables schools to use this evidence to identify meaningful and specific targets and actions for improvement that focus on teaching and learning practices. (School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016)

7.0 Transition Primary to Post Primary:

To ease the transition from primary to post primary the following practices are encouraged:

Information about whether the student had learning support resource hours in the primary school is requested from the parents/guardians on the school application form

Learning Support Coordinator makes contact with all feeder schools to initiate the profiling system, which highlights a pupil's strengths, needs and concerns. This information is collated using a transition form. When necessary the Learning support coordinator will visit the primary school and meet with the student, class teacher and learning support teacher

To reinforce the transition students are encouraged to attend Open Night.

Parents/guardians of SEN students are encouraged to make an appointment with the Learning Support Coordinator to ensure early intervention and implementation of resources.

Parents/guardians of SEN students are contacted individually by Learning Support Coordinator during their 6th class, if identified by the national school/parents/guardians. Where necessary, strategies' including school visits, meetings in liaison with all relevant parties or regular interaction are implemented to provide opportunities to discuss the specific needs of students before transition.

Permission is sought from parents/guardians to transfer all information, for example psychological reports/Speech and Language reports etc.

8.0 Selection of pupils

The selection of pupils for additional support is carried out by the Learning Support Teacher in consultation with relevant interested parties and is based on a combination of any of the following criteria:

1. Students who have scored at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests of achievement in literacy and/or numeracy
2. Assessment results of incoming first years

¹ The Junior Cert. Schools programme (JCSP) is not offered in the school.

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3. Psychological Assessment results
4. Recommendations by subject teachers and school exam results. A referral form is now available in the staff room for teachers to express their concerns about individual students. This form is then passed on to the Learning Support Department who will investigate the concern further and determine what action is necessary.
5. Information supplied by parents/guardians/pupils/primary schools
6. Resource hours granted by the Dept of Education and Science

Time allocation varies depending on the needs of the pupil, the minimum of support given is one class per week and the maximum is five classes per week. It must be a co-ordinated intervention programme involving the pupil's class teacher, Learning Support/Resource teacher, pupil and parents/guardians. Time allocation is also dependent on the annual NCSE allocation for the school by the SENO. Applications for students starting in September are made the previous March. This is subject to annual change.

9.0 Methodology for Timetabling

St Louis' School SEN timetabling methodology is outlined below:

1. General studies classes take place during French times, second year to fourth year inclusive. The General studies classes focus mainly on the areas of literacy and numeracy, in addition to their regular Maths and English classes. Maths and English may sometimes both be addressed within the same class period. However, the pupils do receive some support in other subject areas of concern such as History, Geography and Science. In first year every student is given the opportunity to study French but a decision to give up French may be made between September and June in consultation with parents/guardians, pupil and teachers. The future implications of giving up French are discussed with parents/guardians. In fifth and sixth year pupils who are still experiencing severe difficulty may continue to receive some level of support.
2. Pupils granted an Irish exemption may receive support at Irish times. Frequency of classes depends on the pupil and the reason for the exemption. A pupil may be exempt from another subject for various reasons, for example an exemption from Home-Economics or P.E due to a physical difficulty.
3. A small number of pupils receive support on a withdrawal basis, either in a one-to-one or small group situation. Students are withdrawn at a different time each week in order to minimise the impact on any one particular subject. Withdrawal times are discussed with parents/guardians and pupil and usually take place once weekly. There is not a specific policy on what subjects can or cannot be used for withdrawal purposes. There has been a movement away from the model of withdrawal over recent years.

10.0 Methodology for Groupings of Pupils

St Louis is committed to organising class groups within the school on a mixed ability basis.

First year classes are formed with a deliberate mix of ability ranges and taught as a homogenous unit. Certain subjects, such as Maths, do not however lend themselves to being taught as mixed ability. In senior cycle there is more ability grouping.

11.0 Model of Organisation for Learning Support

St Louis Secondary School is committed to using a variety of models for learning support.

Firstly, withdrawal is used on a *one-to-one basis* when it is deemed necessary but is kept to a minimum.

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Secondly, **Team Teaching** has been introduced and is a model which may be used more in the future. Team teaching halves the pupil-teacher ratio and ensures minimal disruption to a pupil's class programme; it may also remove the need to withdraw a pupil which takes them away from their peer group.

Thirdly, groupings are formed as a result of **exemptions** from various subjects, for example an exemption from Irish on the basis of a learning difficulty.

In second year, General Studies (Learning Support) is presented as an "option" to students with learning difficulties. This option is controlled by the Learning Support teacher, relevant teachers and parents/guardians; they reserve the right to veto a pupil's choice. The Learning Support Teacher is guided by first year assessment results and performance in first year. Those who are already receiving Learning Support in first year or who are falling below the 10thile in standardised tests are targeted for General Studies.²

General Studies is no longer timetabled after fourth year. In cases where there are a large number of pupils doing General Studies, e.g. 8 pupils or more, the Learning Support Teacher and Resource Teacher may decide to split the group into two separate classes. Pupils do not usually receive support from both the Learning Support and Resource teachers unless there are particular reasons for doing so, e.g. timetable constraints, particular areas of expertise. Groupings are formed on the basis of ability, learning needs and the allocation of resource hours. Therefore, by halving the pupil-teacher ratio, the pupils will benefit from increased individual attention and instruction.

A Peer tutoring programme was established in January 2007. It was designed to cater for our international students. This programme provides the international students with extra language support in addition to the help that is given by the Learning Support/Resource teacher. Five Year students are selected to become Peer tutors. These students are assigned to an international student and they work with that student for one period a week. Full training is given to each of the Peer Tutors and all the material is provided by the Learning Support/Resource teachers. The Programme is also carefully monitored. At the end of the year an awards ceremony is held. Certificates are given to both the Peer tutors and the students in recognition for the hard work they have done over the year. This programme is set up on a year to year basis depending on the number of international students in need of language support in the school and also the availability of periods on the 5th Year student's timetables.

12.0 Educational planning:

In the short term St Louis is committed to providing a weekly written record of work being currently covered in the resource classes. Long term planning takes the form of a written IEP/EP (Education Plan). According to the EPSEN Act Education Plans should be reviewed at least once per year.

St. Louis develop and store Education Plans electronically, this allows for constant updating, reviewing and adapting.

Pupils receiving support generally do so owing to one of the following reasons: Mild Learning Difficulties (MLD), Moderate Learning Difficulties; Specific Learning Difficulties; Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Physical Difficulties. This educational planning, psychological reports, testing results and additional information are held in hardcopy on file in a locked filing cabinet in the learning support room and also electronically.

² This is the inclusion threshold indicated by the Dept. of Education for those who have the "potential to benefit from remedial teaching."

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Supporting a gifted pupil:

To meet the broad continuum of SEN, it is equally important to meet the needs and utilise the strengths of students identified as Gifted and Talented. It is important that these students do not under achieve and it is vital to identify and monitor their progression.

The following recommendations are advocated to subject teachers to fulfil their potential; differentiation, mind mapping, recognition of prior teaching, higher expectations and encouragement of student opinions, reflections and questioning.

Six periods per week of English, Irish and Maths are timetabled for 5th and 6th Year students.

Learning Support/Resource teaching takes place in three specialist rooms all with visual access in terms of the doors having windows. If a pupil is absent, forgets to attend or is unable to attend their support class, the class will still go ahead and this pupil may not receive support until the next time the group meets. In terms of a one-to-one class, the pupil will have to wait until the teacher can reschedule the class. If a pupil receives an exemption from a subject, it is seen by the staff to be a permanent arrangement without the option to later return to that subject.

13.0 Continuation/Discontinuation of Learning Support/Resource

The length of time a pupil is in receipt of Learning Support is dependent on the view of parent/Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher/pupil/relevant staff, a review of progress, school exam results and the outcome of re-testing the pupil in the relevant areas of difficulty. This is discussed at parent-teacher meetings and the beginning of the school year.

- Those in General studies groups stay in that group until the end of fourth year.
- Those with Irish exemptions continue to receive support until such time as it becomes unnecessary or, if that pupil also gives up French, they may receive support in the General studies group instead of at Irish time.
- If a pupil is receiving help at Irish time, they may be working in the mainstream Irish class for one or two periods depending on how much support they are receiving.
- A minority of pupils continue to receive support in fifth and sixth year.
- Those who are granted formal resource hours from the Department of Education continue to receive support for as long as the department grants those hours, in agreement with parent and pupil and subject to any time constraints within the school. These hours are set up taking into account timetables of pupil and teacher and the wishes of both the parent and pupil. They may not be on an individual basis depending on other pupils with similar needs and similar timetables. Placement of the student is discussed in full with the pupil by the Learning Support Teacher.

14.0 Referral System

- Class teacher to obtain pieces of work; class work, homework, tests etc. which highlight evidence of their concerns
- Complete a pupil referral sheet.
- All information is handed to Learning Support Coordinator
- Pupil review sheets circulated to all subject teachers
- Class teachers to return pupil review sheets
- Permission sought from parents/guardians to diagnostically assess student
- Diagnostic Tests completed and analysed

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- Learning Support Coordinator will discuss student's intervention, if needed, with student, parent, Principal & Guidance Counsellor
- Information will be recorded in the SEN confidential book in the staffroom and information will be circulated to all subject teachers.
- Profiles monitored, evaluated and reviewed
- The class teacher and Learning Support teacher must monitor progress

15.0 Record Keeping Procedure:

- Files are kept on each student who is in receipt of resource and Learning Support. Information on each student is kept in this file. Psychological reports, results of tests that have been administered, correspondence from parents/guardians and primary schools are kept for each student. These files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Learning Support teacher's room. This room is locked when the teacher is not in it.
- The Learning Support Department have devised a weekly record keeping book. Each teacher keeps a record of the lessons taught to each group/individual for the week. This enables the Department to know the work that has been covered, the things that worked well for students or the things that didn't work so well.
- A record of all phone calls made by the Department is kept. The reason for, and nature of the call is also noted.
- Copies of letters sent to parents/guardians are kept on file
- Any letters received from parents/guardians in relation to individual students are put in students files.
- Copies of applications for Resource Hours and Reasonable accommodations are kept.
- A folder containing student IEP's is kept in the Learning Support Room
- Any correspondence with the NEPs psychologist either in writing or over the telephone is recorded.
- Minutes of the weekly Department meetings are recorded and stored in the Folder.
- Results of the Entrance test results are stored electronically and also in the filing cabinet.

The Learning support Coordinator has access to all student files. The photocopying of reports for subject teachers is inappropriate. All relevant information in relation to the learning needs of a student is summarised and shared with subject teachers. This information is contained in an SEN confidential book in the staffroom. Sensitive information is handled appropriately in consultation with parents/guardians' wishes.

16.0 Reporting Procedures

Subject teachers are now provided with information on students with special educational needs. Teachers have access to a book which gives them some brief information on the needs of each student. A summary of the entrance tests results for each student is also given in this book. This book is highly confidential and is not to be removed from the staff room.

The Learning Support and Resource Teacher/s have one formal meeting weekly in order to discuss relevant issues such as education plans, assessments, pupils' progress, timetabling issues etc. All other teachers are welcome to attend this meeting if they wish to discuss a relevant issue/pupil. Another time can be arranged for a meeting if that time does not suit.

If a student is diagnosed with a learning difficulty in the middle of the school year, the student's subject teachers are informed. The Learning Support Department can offer advice, provide or recommend resources. In-service can be organised if staff request it.

Teachers are also consulted at staff meetings and also informally during the school day regarding issues such as results of tests, identification of SEN, psychological reports, RACE and pupils with SEN in their classes.

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17.0 Homework

It is the policy of the Learning Support Department not to give homework. This is based on an understanding that these pupils are experiencing difficulties at school and are very often unable to manage the homework load given to them. Occasionally, a small amount of work may be given but in general homework is not assigned to these pupils. Parents/guardians may be advised on how to support the student at home if appropriate and necessary, e.g. paired reading, homework help.

18.0 Diagnostic testing Procedures

The standardised testing undertaken in the school constituting the screening tests for the new intake includes the NRIT (Non Reading Intelligent Test) yielding a total raw score which can then be translated into an approx. IQ. In addition the Group Reading Test 2 (GRT2) is administered to assess reading abilities in a written rather than an oral way. This test yields a reading age, a standardised score and a percentile rank. The Single Word Spelling Test (SWST) is administered and also yields a spelling age, standardised score and percentile rank. The WRAT 4 Maths test is used to assess the student's mathematical ability. Practical abilities are not assessed; these tests assess academic abilities/performances. The pupils also undertake an informal Irish test and free writing test. These tests are administered by the Learning Support Department and are corrected by same.

The Learning Support teacher analyses the data and completes a profile of the students' abilities. This is then used to assist in identifying pupils with possible SEN. Feeder primary schools and parents/guardians may be contacted, often by phone but in person where time allows, in order to gain further information which may then be used to apply for resource hours from the DES, identify pupils for learning support or, in some cases, identify other reasons for poor performance on the tests such as nervousness. Parents/guardians' permission is sought to access copies of psychological reports from the primary schools. This initial contact with parents/guardians and primary schools is of paramount importance and provides vital information in preparation for the pupil starting secondary school. Making links with parents/guardians of pupils with SEN at this stage is a priority.

All of the above tests help to determine the extent to which pupils have mastered specific tasks in reading, spelling and mathematics etc with a view to improving their subsequent performances. Principal, Vice Principal, Guidance and Learning Support Departments have access to these records and other teaching staff involved in that pupil's education. The results of the assessment are not automatically given to primary schools or parents/guardians except where it is felt to be necessary as regards possible learning support at secondary level. Primary schools are not made aware of the assessment tests used by the school.

Pupils who do not attend on the assessment day of all first years are assessed in the same way early in the following school year.

The Mathematics Department would use this data to assist in dividing maths classes into ability groupings in first year.

Assessment takes place in February, this enables us to identify pupils as early as possible who may be in need of support at secondary level or may have SEN. This also enables the Learning Support Teacher to apply to the NCSE as early as possible for resource hours and to put Irish exemptions in place. In this way, the school is prepared for the incoming pupils and support structures are in place as soon as they enter secondary school. Those pupils who received resource hours in primary school

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must be reapplied for. Those allocated resource hours and having a psychological assessment are given priority as regards timetabling their support hours as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Assessing for reasonable accommodations in State Examinations:

When assessing for Reasonable accommodations in State Examinations the CAT 3 and WRAT 4 is used. The CAT 3 is used to obtain a picture of the student's overall general intellectual ability and the WRAT 4 is an achievement test which measures an individual's ability to read words, comprehend sentences, spell, and compute solutions to math problems. The results are analysed and discussed with the NEPS psychologist and a decision is made as to whether to proceed with an application on behalf of the student.

If a student is eligible for RACE subject teachers are made aware of this and take it into account when correcting tests and also accommodations are provided during in-house examinations in so far as is possible.

Assessing to identify the possible presence of a specific learning difficulty:

The Dyslexia Screening test is used in conjunction with the CAT 3 and also the WRAT 4. The information is analysed and discussed with the parents/guardians and the student. Further assessment may then be required by the NEPS psychologist to confirm if the student has a Specific Learning Difficulty.

Permission is sought from parents/guardians before any assessment tests are administered.

19.0 St Louis Open Night

Prospective parents/guardians and pupils can attend an open night early in the school year, usually October; this makes parents/guardians aware of the support structures in the school before their student enters the school. Other information evenings for parents/guardians could be arranged in the future, for example regarding education plans or categories of SEN.

20.0 Links with external agencies

St Louis uses the National Educational Psychological Service as a valuable resource.

A small number of pupils are referred each year to NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) for psychological assessment. This usually happens where a pupil is not progressing in school and staff/parents/guardians feel the pupil may have SEN. The pupil may first be referred to the Learning Support teacher by staff (with parental consent)/parents/guardians and a psychological assessment may follow if it is seen to be in the best interests of the pupil. The NEPS staged approach comes into play, therefore an assessment is not the first port-of-call and the school will do all that it can within its constraints to ensure that the pupil benefits from the education they are receiving. Permission to assess a pupil is sought from the parents/guardians and the issue is discussed in full with them. A number of parents/guardians decide to have assessments carried out privately. The Learning Support teacher oversees psychological assessments within the school, i.e. liaises with the psychologist/parents/guardians/pupil, makes the application etc.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator would also liaise with the following external personnel/agencies:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE) - SENO
- CAHMS
- Tusla
- Social Workers
- Therapists (Occupational, Speech, etc.)

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- Visiting teachers of the visually/hearing impaired
- State Examination Commission – RACE

21.0 Roles of Key Personnel

The role of special education needs support is a collaborative one shared by all the educational partners- BOM, Principal, Management, SEN coordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Subject Teachers and SNA's.

BOM

To support the implementation and review of SEN policy, to provide supports and resources to aid a whole school approach and to promote inclusive practices through the School Plan.

Principal

- The Principal has overall responsibility for the school's Learning Support/Resource Programme and for the operation of services for student with special educational needs.
- To liaise with BOM on the implementation of this policy
- To monitor the implementation of this policy and review yearly or as required.
- To facilitate opportunities to encourage a whole school approach, include SENs on agenda at staff meetings.
- To work with teachers in the development of the School Plan on resource and learning; highlighting differentiation of learning styles and needs, assessment for learning and sharing of resources.
- To monitor student's progress in internal and external examinations.
- To monitor screening processes and the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement, high incidence and low incidence disabilities.
- To arrange for classroom accommodation and resources as appropriate.

Role of Parents/Guardians

The role and input of parents/guardians/guardians is vital to the success of the student. It is imperative that the parents/guardians/guardians and the school work together with the support of outside professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes for each student. It is extremely important that the school recognises and values the role of the parent/guardian. It is equally important that the parent/guardian respects and values the role of teachers as the professional educators.

There is constant communication between the Learning Support Department and parents/guardians of students with Special Educational Needs.

- Parents/guardians of incoming first years are contacted after the entrance tests have been corrected. Any difficulties that their daughter may have are discussed. The level of support required by the Student is also discussed. Any relevant information that the parents/guardians may have e.g. psychological reports etc. is passed on to the Learning Support Department.
- An information evening is held in May for parents/guardians of incoming first years. Different departments prepare short presentations. The Learning support department provides information about the system of additional support that is offered in the school. The Learning Support teacher is available afterwards if any parents/guardians have any questions.

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- Parents/guardians are invited into the school when IEPs are been drawn up. They are invited to partake in the development of the IEP and any suggestions/recommendations made by parents/guardians in relation to the IEP are welcomed.
- Parents/guardians are contacted by phone and invited in to discuss applications for Reasonable Accommodations for students in state examinations.
- The Learning Support Teachers are available at all Parent teacher meetings to talk to parents/guardians about their daughters progress
- If at any time a parent wishes to meet with any teacher in the Learning Support Department they can phone to make an appointment.
- Parents/guardians are contacted in writing if permission is sought to carry out any assessment tests with a particular student.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility:

- To support and participates in the students learning.
- To support and cooperate with the school's efforts in meeting the needs of the student.
- To support the student at home by responding to requests of teachers.
- To liaise with SEN coordinator in reviewing and setting targets.
- To attend meetings with outside professionals at request of the school.
- To work with and support the school in providing the best possible education for each student.
- To bring concerns immediately to the attention of relevant school personnel.

Roles of SEN Coordinator

- To raise awareness of the changes in reference to meeting the needs of the identified student.
- To advise, or where possible, provide alternative teaching resources.
- To carry out diagnostic testing after students have been through the referral system
- To assess, monitor and review students with learning difficulties, in collaboration with subject teachers
- To liaise with the listed outside agencies including NEP's and the regional SENO in organising assessments.
- To liaise with local schools.
- To meet and coordinate SNA's
- To meet and coordinate with the SEN team.
- To assist in the transition of students from primary to post primary
- RACE applications
- To make applications for resource hours and/or assistive technology.
- Promote Literacy & Numeracy
- To highlight and promote differentiated learning styles
- To encourage the sharing of resources
- To monitor and evaluate SEN provision
- To oversee the records of all student with special needs and store copies of all assessments, tests and IEP's in the filing cabinet in the Learning Support Room
- To maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or special educational services and to update confidential SEN folder in the staffroom on a regular basis.

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Roles of Subject Teachers

- This policy includes all teaching staff and emphasizes upon a whole school approach.
- Mainstream teachers have the responsibility to ensure all students including those with SEN are provided with a learning programme and environment that enables them to access the curriculum and to advance their learning.
- Teachers' observation and correct use of referral system are vital in identifying a learning difficulty and thus ensuring the relevant supports are implemented for student progress.
- Mainstream teachers need to check SEN confidential folder in the staffroom on a regular basis.
- They also need to collaborate with Resource/ Learning Support teacher to gain familiarity with student IEP to ensure lesson plans incorporate opportunities' to meet targets set in IEP.
- They need to differentiate the curriculum to meet individual student needs in class. To support the SEN student, differentiation could include; group work, mind mapping, the use of ICT, oral work, concrete examples, the use of manipulative materials/scaffolding, drawing on the student's interests/hobbies.

Role of SNA

The duties of the Special Needs Assistants are assigned by the Principal. Their work is supervised by the Principal.

Their duties are those of a non-teaching nature such as:

- To work as part of the Learning Support team to promote a whole school inclusive approach.
- Administration of medicine: where a student requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: where a student with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
- Assistance with mobility and orientation: on an ongoing basis including assisting a student or students to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport or helping a student to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision
- Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a student may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of student, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

Other support tasks which may be carried out, but which would not in themselves normally constitute a reason for the allocation of SNA support include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a student who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.

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- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for students with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class teachers or support teachers.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.
- Where special needs assistants have been appointed to assist the school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the students concerned.(Information taken from Circular 0030/2014)

Additional duties might include:

- To assist with other students apart from the assigned student, under the direction of the Principal.
- To foster the participation of SEN students in the social and academic process of the school and to enable students to become independent learners.
- To assist teachers in the preparation of resources for SEN students.
- Meet with the Learning support teacher on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of the student and any concerns/issues the SNA may have. Regular informal meeting take place with the Learning Support teacher and the SNA

Student

Students generally respond positively to the additional support provided and are particularly appreciative of it. It is viewed by the whole school community in a very positive light. If a pupil is unhappy about attending additional support, then it is the parents/guardians' decision in collaboration with the pupil to terminate the support. It is the student's responsibility to

- participate in the construction of IEP
- work in implementing the IEP
- review their learning targets.
- work and cooperate with teachers in implementing IEP and achieving targets.

The Guidance Counsellor/School Chaplain:

The Guidance counsellor may be involved in the delivery of support:

- during transitions from primary to post-primary
- if a student needs emotional support during their time in school.
- At times they need to make choices; subject choices, programme choices (Leaving Certificate or LCA), career decisions.

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22.0 Resources

The Learning Support Department has responsibility for the purchase of resources, books and materials made available for Learning Support/Resource.

Resources are replaced when necessary in the school, e.g. testing material. It may be a good idea to have a staff library area where all staff could have access to material relating to SEN, currently the Learning Support Teacher provides information when necessary, e.g. information on ADHD when a pupil with ADHD enters the school.

Resources that will enhance the students learning are constantly being sourced by the Learning support Department.

23.0 Inclusive Curricular

The school's curriculum emphasises the development of higher order thinking skills. It is designed primarily for the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Whole staff involvement in Education Plans will enhance the inclusivity of the curriculum. The school provides:

1. **The Junior Cycle Programme**
Students study on average 10 subjects, with various options offered. Students have the option of taking Irish, English and Maths at Foundation level. There are no Foundation level mainstream classes, these students form part of the Ordinary level pupil cohort in classes.
2. **The Transition Year Programme**
The TY programme aims to promote personal development and increasing maturity. Half of the timetable is devoted to academic subjects that will benefit the students when they sit their Leaving Certificate Examination. The other half is ever-changing, designed to meet the emerging needs of today's students
3. **The Leaving Certificate Programme**
Students have the choice of taking Irish and Maths at Foundation, Ordinary and Higher level and English at Ordinary and Higher level.
4. **LCVP (Leaving Cert Vocational Programme)**
It provides a broader choice of LC subjects and strengthens the vocational content by including link modules.
5. **Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA)**
This programme has been developed by the NCCA. It is designed to cater for the diversity of participants' needs. It prepares students for the transition from the world of school to that of adult and working life.

24.0 Training Needs of Staff

There is a need for whole staff professional development on SEN at second level. Currently, the staff have received a one day in-service regarding pupils with autism in the mainstream classroom. This in-service was delivered by the SESS. They have also received a half a day in-service on Dyslexia delivered by Philip Clarke, NEPS psychologist.

The Learning support Co-ordinator holds a Graduate Diploma in Special Education Needs. A second teacher employed within the Learning support Department has also recently qualified with a Graduate Diploma in Special Educational needs.

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Staff are encouraged to participate in relevant and ongoing professional development. Support and encouragement would be given by the Learning Support personnel to any colleagues who engaged in CPD in the area of SEN.

25.0 ICT in the Learning Support Department

ICT is used within the Learning Support Department in order to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with learning difficulties, depending on a pupil's individual needs. It is a good visual medium; it is consistent and can be motivating for pupils when used correctly. The use of ICT can also support attention, organisational, memory and communication skills

Both of the rooms utilised for learning support are equipped with a computer. These computers are used for administrative work, such as the development of IEP's using specialist software and also for use with pupils receiving support. An example of the software used with pupils with literacy difficulties is Starspell 2001 (Fisher-Marriott Educational Ltd), Wellington Square (Semerc) and Clicker 4 (Crick). Only two students would be able to use the computers in the Learning Support rooms at any one time. Students who have been allocated assistive technology by the NCSE are encouraged to use it during class time and can do assignments/homework electronically. General studies groups may be brought to the computer room where the timetable permits.

Staff were provided with information on useful websites that would promote the use of literacy across the curriculum in 2015. This was done as part of the SSE plan to improve levels of literacy throughout the school.

26.0 Grievance Procedure:

Parents/guardians/ Students who are concerned and who wish to discuss or make suggestions about any aspect of educational provision should approach the relevant teacher, tutor, year head or Learning Support co-ordinator. If an issue is unresolved, a formal letter should be submitted to the Principal. If still unresolved, the issue can be referred to the Board of Management.

Clearly the additional support outlined above is dependent on additional resources and most of these additional resources are granted annually by the NCSE and Department of Education and Skills.

27.0 Evaluation of Learning Support Policy

The evaluation of educational provision is a complex process whether normal provision or additional support is being evaluated. Success in the State Examinations and literacy and numeracy are interlinked. The success of students with special needs in this school is highly valued, especially by the students themselves, their parents/guardians/ guardians and also by the staff and Board of Management of St. Louis'. Teacher observation, class tests and house examinations are important regular forms of evaluation for students with special needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the learning support programme will be conducted on an on-going basis throughout the year by School Management and the Special Education Team. August/September is set aside for planning, (during the course of the first term, some modifications may be made in order to meet with students needs which present during that time period). During the month of April, school management will meet with the Co-ordinator to plan for the following academic year. There are numerous informal discussions between the Learning Support Co-ordinator and Management

A major review of this policy will take place every 2/3 years.

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Next Review Date:

Appendix 1

Information on resource teaching hours and SNA support for the current School Year (2016/17)

Nine students in the school are in receipt of Resource Teaching hours. The total number of hours that have been allocated to these students is 25.06. In this current school year 67 students are in receipt of learning support. 12 teachers are involved in the deliverer of learning support. Two applications for assistive technology were made on behalf of a 1st year student and a 2nd year student, both applications were successful and both students now have the use of a laptop.

Two 1st year students have been granted shared access to an SNA.

RACE applications have not yet been made on behalf of any students in the school because of the changes in deadlines by the SEC.

Appendix 2

Current list of resources used in the Learning Support Department (2016/2017)

Reading Material

- 1. Spelling Caught or Taught - A New Look**
Margaret L Peters
ISBN 0-415-02762-4
- 2. How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia**
Philomena Ott
ISBN 0-435-10419-5
- 3. Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies**
Janet W. Lerner
Houghton Mifflin, 2006
- 4. Commonsense methods for children with Special Educational Needs**
Peter Westwood
Publisher Taylor & Francis Ltd
7th Revised edition
ISBN13 9781138022522

Resources

- 1. Flip-Flash Math** (fractions, decimals and percentages) ISBN 1-56451-350-5
www.idealschoolsupply.com
- 2. SRA Reading Laboratory** (3a and 3b)
Don H. Parker
Multilevel Learning Laboratories
ISBN 0-574-79510-3
- 3. Oral Comprehension 1 and 2** (listening and comprehending)
Learning Materials Limited
Tel : 01902 454026 Fax : 01902 457596
- 4. Developing Fiction Skills/ Non-Fiction Skills** (Reading, Word skills and Sentence Skills)
Nelson English
ISBN 0-17-424750-8
- 5. Reading For Comprehension Series (4 boxes)**
LDA (Learning Development Aids)
Duke Street, Wisbech Cambs. PE13 2AE
- 6. PAT (Phonological Awareness Training) Level 3**
ISBN 1874026173
- 7. Alpha to Omega (Teaching Reading, Writing and Spelling)**
Beve Hornsby, Frula Shear and Julie Pool
ISBN 0-435-10423-3
- 8. Lightning Reads (Short stories and exercises)**
LDA
ISBN 1-85503-344-5
- 9. New Reading and Thinking**
Learning Materials Ltd
Dixon street, Wolverhampton, WV2 2BX
- 10. Livewire Real Lives (reading books)**
Hodder and Stoughton
ISBN 0-340-71151-5
- 11. Fraction Tower Activity Set**
Learning Resources www.learningresources.com

Ratified by Board of Management on :

Next Review Date:

12. Visualizing and Verbalizing (For language, comprehension and thinking)

Nanci Bell, ISBN 0-945-856-01-6

Academy of Reading Publications

13. English matters 2 and 3 (literacy skills)

Constant and Duberley

ISBN 0-435-10542-6

14. Five/Ten Minute Thriller Set (books on tape)

LL 00976, LDA (Learning Development Aids)

15. The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

John Boyne 2006

16. Helen Orme Collection of High Interest,

Easy readers.2007

Testing Material

1. Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)

Sacre and Masterson, nFer Nelson

www.nfer-nelson.co.uk

2. NARA 11 (Neale Analysis of Reading Ability - Revised)

Marie D. Neale

NFER-NELSON

Fax +44(0) 1753-620160

3. GRT 11 (Group Reading Test 2)

NFER-NELSON

4. DST (Dyslexia Screening Test)

ISBN 0-7491-0831-2

The Psychological Corporation

5. NRIT – Non Reading Intelligence Test

Dennis Young, Hodder & Stoughton 1989

6. WRAT IV – Wide Range Achievement Test 4

G.S Wilkinson & G.J. Robertson 2006

7. Children's Abilities Test, 3rd ed.

(CAT) (c.a. 8 – 15) Thorndike et al, NFER-Nelson, 1986

Software and Equipment

1. Franklin Pocket Speller

SPQ-108

Argos 20 euro

2. Clicker 4 (supportive writing and multi media)

Crick Software

www.cricksoft.com

3. Issues in English (for English language and literacy learners)

ISBN 0 646 28636 6

Protea Textware

4. IEP Manager

www.semerc.com

ISBN 184235321-7

5. Word Shark/Number Shark (word recognition and spelling/maths)

White Space Ltd

Tel: 0208748 5927

6. Starspell 2001

Fisher - Marriott Educational

Tel: 01394 387 050

www.fishermarriott.com

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7. Measuring Up

Protea Textware

ISBN 0 646 33064 0

8. Inspiration (develop ideas and organise thinking)

ISBN 0-928539-75-x

www.inspiration.com

9. Attack Read/Spell Programme Complete and Advanced

Jean Richards 2000