

CARRIGTWOHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

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1. Scope of the policy

For the purpose of this policy, special educational needs is defined as “a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit 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”.

The model of assessment and intervention outlined here is underpinned by a recognition that special educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Therefore, our response to the needs of students is also offered along a continuum, from whole school and preventative approaches to individualised and specialist approaches.

This policy is drafted in the context of Circular Letters: S70/00, PP1/05, PPT12/05, 0051/2007, 0056/2011, 0025/2012, 0030/2014, 42/2015, 0034/2015, 0014/2017, 008/2019, 0053/2019, 30/2020, 0029/2021.

This policy is drafted in the context of the revised model of allocation process (0014/2017) which will provide a single unified allocation for special educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school’s educational profile. This revised allocation process will replace the Learning Support and English as Additional Language Support (LS/EAL) scheme, whereby a general allocation of resources had previously been allocated to post primary schools annually. It will also replace the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) allocation process which provided additional resource teaching supports to schools, to support students who had been assessed as having Low Incidence disabilities, in accordance with DES Circular 70/2014. It will also replace the allocation process for post primary schools to support students with High Incidence special educational needs, as set out in DES Circular 0010/2012. This single allocation is being made to allow schools to provide special education teaching support for all students who require such support in their schools. The NCSE reports that there is a spectrum of ability and disability within every category of special educational need. Schools will now deploy resources based on each students’ individual learning needs. 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. The baseline allocation will ensure that all schools have a minimum allocation of teaching resources to support inclusion, assistance with learning difficulties and early intervention. The baseline component will support schools in having whole school policies and practices in place to minimise the emergence of low achievement and learning difficulties. These additional allocations are being provided on the basis that no child will be refused enrolment on the grounds that they do not have sufficient teaching resources to meet that child’s needs.

This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and special educational needs, the statutory requirements placed on schools and Boards of Managements by: The Education Act 1998, The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.

This policy is drafted in the context of guidelines published by NEPS: Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support for Post Primary Schools, DES: Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post Primary Guidelines and NCSE: Guidelines on Individual Education Plan Process 2006.

2. Aims

The effective inclusion of students with special educational needs requires a whole-school approach which enables Carrigwohill Community College to meet the diverse needs of their student population in an efficient and timely manner.

The broad aims and principles of education for students with special educational needs reflect those that are relevant to all students and include:

- Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his/her full potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensuring that all students are afforded fair and equal opportunities to learn.
- Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential.
- Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.
- Giving practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a physical disability, assessed learning difficulty or who have other special educational needs, as they relate to education.
- Providing, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- Ensuring that students with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive learning environment.
- Affirming that students with educational needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from education as students who do not have those needs.
- Co-operating and working closely with the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE), NEPS and other agencies with regards to the education of students with special educational needs.
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the special educational needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Developing staff expertise in supporting students with educational needs.
- Monitoring and evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of practice in support of students with educational needs.
- Encouraging and fostering a positive partnership with parents in order to achieve appropriate support for students at home.

3. CPD

The Principal will make all staff aware of in-service opportunities of which she is notified. Interested staff will be given the opportunity to attend. Further in-school training for whole staff may be organised by the Principal.

4. SEN Team

Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Special Education Teachers (SETs), Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and subject teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Role of the Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with educational needs, lies with the Board of Management. In this regard the board should;

- Ensure that all students with learning support/special educational needs are identified, assessed and provided with appropriate support and intervention within the limits of the school's resources as provided by the Department of Education and Science.
- Ensure that the school has a special educational needs policy in place, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.
- Ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided in the school to ensure in as far as is practical that students with special educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society.
- Ensure that the necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with special educational needs.
- Promote the development of positive partnership with parents and other relevant agencies/personnel and to ensure that parents are informed of their child's special educational needs and how these needs are being met.
- Ensure that the Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the School Plan.
- Ensure that parents are consulted with and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education.

4.2 The Role of the Principal

On behalf of the Board of Management, the Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. The Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers (as outlined in Section 18 of the EPSEN Act 2004). This may include:

- Appointment of a Special Needs Co-ordinator from amongst the staff. This person is assigned the responsibility for planning for the provision for special educational needs within the school.
- Establishment of a Student Support Services Team within the school with a specific remit to ensure identification of and support for students with special educational needs.

- In consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other relevant personnel to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for SNAs, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations and exemptions in relation to state exams as well as assessments.
- To implement any changes necessary with regards to new legislation, policies and circulars.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds.
- To promote a whole school approach to special educational need, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area.
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of students with special educational needs.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with feeder primary schools with regard to the enrolment of new students with special educational needs.
- To inform the BOM of any issue that is relevant to special educational needs.

4.3 Role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator is a core member of the SEN team and works with other members of the team in facilitating the provision of education for students with special educational needs and their inclusion in the school. Where possible, the teacher with this planning role should have accessed professional development and attained recognised qualifications in special education.

- The SENCO and the SEN team, endeavour to create whole school ownership in the management of Special Educational Needs.
- The SENCO works closely with the Principal on the day-to-day management of the provision of special educational needs in the school and by arrangement will assume an overall responsibility for co-ordinating the school's provision for the inclusion of students with special educational needs. This will include:
 - Co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEN i.e. timetabling.
 - Liaising with SET teachers to ensure the records on students with SEN or accessing NCSE supports are kept up to date.
 - Liaising with parents of students with SEN.
 - Establishing and regular monitoring of the SEN register, including regular communication with staff.
 - Liaising with the Principal when applying for RACE, assistive technology and SNA access for students.
 - Processing Irish Exemption applications.
 - Student Support File co-ordination.
 - Contributing to the in-service training of staff.
- Liaising with external agencies – including Special Education Needs Support Service, National Education Psychology Service (NEPS), State Examinations Commission, Visiting Teacher Service, Psychologists, Speech & language Therapists, Occupational Therapists. (This list is not exhaustive, and the school will further develop links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate.)
- Facilitating teachers' awareness of relevant information about students with special educational needs and can advise on how these students can be supported in school.

- Organising and administration of the CAT and NGRT tests and for interpretation and communication of CAT and NGRT tests to management.
- Administration of further diagnostic assessments for students, so as to discover where they are now, how far have they progressed and decide (in collaboration with other relevant parties, teachers, parents and external agencies) how a student's SET learning will proceed. This may include reference to a Student Support Plan including consultation with teaching staff, external agencies and parents.

The duties are reviewed regularly by the Principal and may change to ensure the priority needs of the SEN department are catered for.

4.4 Role of Subject Teacher

At Carrigtwohill Community College the academic progress of students throughout the school rests in the first instance with the subject teacher. The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that each student is taught in a stimulating, supportive and inclusive classroom environment where all students feel equal and valued and where each student is given the opportunity to reach his/her own potential. The College recognises that it is the professional duty of each subject teacher to support the students with SEN using strategies which will have been made available to them on the IEP.

The subject teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to students with additional needs, including differentiating the curriculum as appropriate. In line with Continuum of Support Guidelines, the subject teacher may gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions. This information should be used to inform the Student Referral Form should a teacher judge that the student requires support greater than that possible within the subject classroom.

In order to ensure that as a school we meet the needs of all our students subject teachers are encouraged to:

- Be aware of the school's policy (as outlined in this document) for supporting students with special educational needs.
- Seek advice from the Student Support Services Team regarding students with special educational needs. Advise the SSS where necessary.
- Where a student is withdrawn for support, the subject teacher should liaise with the SET teacher and/or the SENCO on how to most effectively support the student in their area of learning.
- Where a student has an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the SNA, the learning support teacher or the SENCO.
- Participate in continuous professional development, particularly regarding high incidence difficulties e.g. Dyslexia, Specific Learning Difficulties and Dyspraxia.
- Make specific accommodations for students within the class as a result of concerns about a student's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that student.
- Support the provision of differentiated learning in the classroom for students with Special Educational Needs.
- Support and encourage independence in the student in taking responsibility for his/her own learning.

4.5 The Role of the Special Education Teaching Teacher

The learning support teacher works closely with the SENCO and the subject teachers of the student with special educational needs.

- The SET teacher, on being assigned a student for SET should make contact with the student's parents to inform them of the support being arranged and request input from the parents on identifying priority learning needs.
- The SET teacher should endeavour to identify the most appropriate teaching strategies and programmes to meet the students' needs and develop a Student Support Plan accordingly. This document will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if necessary and will inform the interventions that form the basis of the SET lessons. This document will be completed and returned to the SENCO at the end of the academic year or when the student's SET teaching is no longer deemed necessary, following review.
- The SET teacher provides direct teaching to a student with special educational needs either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to access the second level curriculum.
- The SET teacher will keep a record of each SET lesson in the Log of Support in the SSF.
- The SET teacher may have a good insight into a student's needs and when appropriate can provide advice to subject teachers as to the teaching methodologies best suited to that student. This information should be added to the SSF.
- SET teachers and subject teachers should work in partnership thus ensuring that students are supported as effectively as possible.
- When team-teaching/co-teaching, the SET teacher will be familiar with the SSF of the students requiring support and will support the student accordingly, in conjunction with input by the subject teacher. This support should be recorded in the log of support in the SSF.

4.6 The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

The SNA provides care and assistance to named students who have been granted access to an SNA. They make a valuable contribution to the College's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students. SNA support is provided to facilitate the attendance of those pupils at school and to minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the pupils concerned, or for their peers, and with a view to developing their independent living skills. The duties of the Special Needs assistance involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as;

- Draw up the Personalised Pupil Plan using their knowledge of the student, input from the parent(s), SET teacher where applicable and the information available in the SSF. Good practice would mean that the SNA be familiar with the student's priority needs prior to drawing up the PPP. Once completed, the SNA should make a copy available to parents.
- Engage with the Personalised Pupil Plan and inform the SENCO of progress or difficulties of the student with regards to the care needs of the student.
- Provide additional adult support to assist children with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs. The SNA will support these primary care needs and some types of secondary care associated tasks.
- Provide support for behaviour related care needs where there is a clear diagnosis of EBD/SEBD.

- Provide support for children with sensory impairment.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal with duties of a non-teaching nature (SNA's may not act as either a substitute or temporary teacher; in no circumstances will they be left in sole charge of a class or group of students).
- Engagement with parents of special educational needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by the principal.
- Following all duties as outlined in the SNA policy for Carrigtwohill Community College.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.

4.7 The Role of the Student Support Services Team

- The Student Support Services Team comprises of the: Principal, Deputy Principal, SENCO Chaplain, Career Guidance Counsellor

The SSS team is responsible for:

- Overseeing the pastoral care of the students.
- Recording any referrals to the SSS.
- Determining the relevant support or course of action for each student referred to the SSS.
- Deploy resources based on each student's individual needs.
- Making relevant staff members aware of intended interventions or courses of action.
- Bringing attention to any student who may need support/interventions but who has not been referred by other staff members.

5. Special Education Support Posts

Special Education Teaching posts should be filled in accordance with the published staffing and redeployment arrangements which will be set out in the Post Primary School Staffing Circulars for the current school year. The following teachers can be appointed: Fully recognised and registered post primary teachers.

In addition to the qualification requirements noted above, the acquired professional development and expertise of teachers should be taken into account by the principal when allocating teaching responsibilities, in order to ensure that students with the greatest needs are supported by teachers

who have the relevant expertise, and who can provide continuity of support.

Schools should establish and maintain a core team of teachers for special educational needs. Members of this team should have the necessary experience and ongoing access to professional development to support the diverse needs of students with special educational needs.

6. Transfer and transition from primary level to second level

Following the offer of a place in CCC, parents are requested to forward any relevant reports to the College should they wish for the College to be aware of the SEN of their child. This allows the College to put an appropriate plan in place to meet the needs of the incoming students from the start of the next school year.

Following the entrance exam in January, the College will forward NCCA 'Information Request Form' to primary schools of enrolled students. As of 2014/2015, primary schools are required to transfer student information to the relevant post-primary schools using a standard end-of-year 6th class report card developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This information transfer is contingent on the primary school receiving confirmation from the post-primary school of a student's enrolment for the new school year. From 2014/2015, the 6th class report card will be complemented by a student self-profile that will also include an option for parent input.)

Induction programme

In their first term, students partake in a 'First Year Induction Programme' designed specifically for CCC students, to help them to settle into the school, to make friends, to become familiar with the building, the staff, the new subjects and new materials and equipment. It allows for students to ask questions and request support in areas where they may be experiencing difficulties. The aim of the programme is to aid student's transition from primary level into second level so that are comfortable as part of the community of the College.

Elements of the 'First Year Induction Programme' are specifically geared towards supporting students with special educational needs, however, it is quite often the case that this is of benefit to all of the students.

7. Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage I – Support for All Students/Classroom Support

At the whole school level, Support for ALL, teachers will adopt an approach that gives all students the best chance of success. Teachers continually adjust in their classroom to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for students. They will vary classroom seating, activities, and task instructions. They consider classroom organisation, teaching and learning styles. This approach emphasises the need to offer all students high quality, evidence-based instruction, and behavioural support, within the context of mainstream classes.

A crucial element is that the school also offers school-wide screening of attainments and aptitudes, to identify those which may need monitoring or intervention. The idea is that, rather than wait to see which students may fail, the school intervenes quickly and at the least intrusive level to respond to needs. Differentiation is in place to attempt to enable each student to achieve to his/her own potential. A subject teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural, or emotional development of a student. Opportunities for positive and constructive feedback are created. At stage I the student's progress and difficulties are monitored informally, concerns are communicated between staff members and with the SSS Team. Relevant classroom support plans in the form of differentiation are put in place. If cause for concern continues, the student moves to stage II of the process.

Stage II – School Support (for Some Students)

If the classroom support plan fails to support the student's need and intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the student should be referred to the Student Support Services, for further deliberation. Should a teacher judge that the student requires support greater than that possible within the subject classroom, a Student Referral Form, included in which is a differentiation checklist, is filled in by subject teacher(s) and the student will be referred to the appropriate support service, for support, suitable interventions and further diagnostic testing if deemed necessary.

Intervention at this level is for those students, typically around 10-20% of the school population, who do not respond to the whole-school strategies sufficiently and who need more support. A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which may be short-term, while others may be longer term.

Stage III - School Support Plus (for a Few Students)

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. These students, typically about 2-5% of the school population, have significant difficulties and involvement of additional professionals, such as the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or CAMHS, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists may be necessary. They may require intensive, individualised interventions. Interventions at this stage are likely to include: Student Support Plans (including behavioural plans), SEN support, Assistive Technology, Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Exams (RACE). The parents are fully consulted throughout this process.

8. Criteria for intervention

It is important to reiterate here that screening information will not be used by the College to determine whether a student will be enrolled. Discrimination against a student on the grounds of special educational needs is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act (2000). These screening systems may serve many functions, including enabling grouping of students to ensure mixed ability groups, planning for provision, identifying those at risk of learning difficulty and monitoring progress over time.

In summary, in identifying students for support, the College will take into account the following:

- Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify students' performance in reading and mathematics. Those students performing below the 10th percentile, identified by relevant subject teachers as presenting with a need, should be prioritised for support
in literacy and numeracy.
- Students who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a learning support teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Students who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010). This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes ie. How the student's needs present. The College also considers the needs set out in professional reports, where available.

- Students with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties.
- Students who have specific learning disabilities.
- Students with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, students with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical, and sensory needs. These students need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
- Students who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those students who need English as an Additional Language Support.

The level of additional support that is provided for students with low achievement and students with special educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process. Essentially, according to circular 14/2017, the College will ‘deploy resources based on each students’ individual learning needs’ as they present.

9. Assessment and Identification

The process to identify students who may need additional support contains three elements:

- Screening assessments to identify strengths and needs
- Request of information from the primary school
- Monitoring of student’s progress
- Further diagnostic testing, if necessary

Upon entry, all first-year students undergo standardised group assessments. Literacy is assessed using the NEW Group Reading Test (NGRT) (Form 3A or 3B). Cognitive ability is assessed using the CAT 4. It is unnecessary to reassess cognitive ability therefore students are not retested. Following their admission into the school each September, first year students are also assessed with the Maths Competency Test. To safeguard the integrity of the assessment process and to allay any exam anxiety, students and their parents are not informed of assessments prior to them being administered. (The only exception to this is if students are assessed prior to entry to the College). The purpose of the screening assessments is to identify learning needs that have not yet become known, to ensure a true mixed ability class setting and to facilitate option choice where appropriate. As a policy, the College does not disclose assessment test results to parents unless requested to do so. However, where a significant concern arises, parents are contacted, and student’s individual needs are discussed.

The NCSE working group report (2014) considered that standardised test data provides a broad and objective basis to establish differences between schools in levels of relative overall student educational achievement. The report recommended that standardised test results should be used in building the educational profile of schools, as they link directly to the educational achievement of students in schools. The use of standardised test scores will ensure that the school’s educational profile includes students with low achievement in literacy and numeracy, including those students

whose special educational needs affects their learning achievement levels. The number of students in the lower performing grades indicates the extent of learning support needs in the school. The allocation which is being made to the school recognises this. Combined with various informal methods of assessment e.g. teacher observation, monitoring of homework, observation of social development, it generally becomes possible to identify students with possible special educational needs or general learning needs. In identifying students with general learning needs for learning support, the College endeavours to give priority to those performing at or below the tenth percentile on the standardised tests (Circular 0070/2014). Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). The SET teacher will, where necessary, arrange for individualised diagnostic assessment and may seek to obtain reports from other professionals e.g. educational psychologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and social workers.

Students who previously received learning support or resource teaching under the General Allocation Model in their primary schools and who continue to show marked learning difficulties will also be prioritised for learning support intervention. Information available from primary schools may include results of standardised test and individual education, behaviour or transition plans.

Referral

According to circular 14/2017, 'Medical and other professional assessments should, where available, continue to be used to inform relevant interventions. However, such assessments, or diagnosis of a particular condition will no longer be necessary for students to access additional educational teaching resources'.

These interventions are dependent on the resources and staffing available at any given time. Students identified through in-school assessment and referrals from teaching staff are prioritised through consultation and the consensus of the Student Support Services team. Teaching staff are encouraged to submit a referral from to the Student Support Services if they have concerns about a student.

10. Allocation of Resources

[See also Circular 0070/2014, 0014/2017]

The revised allocation process for Special Education Teachers to mainstream post primary schools from the 2017/18 school year provides a single unified allocation for special educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. This single allocation is being made to allow schools to provide special education teaching support for all students who require such support in their schools. The new Special Education Teaching Post is a combined post which allows schools to provide for all of their additional special educational needs teaching support from within this single allocation. The distinction between what were previously Learning Support Posts and NCSE Special Needs Resource Teaching Allocations will no longer apply from September 2017.

Carrigtwohill Community College will deploy resources based on each students' individual learning needs, ensuring that those with the greatest need receive the highest level of support, regardless of former NCSE categories of diagnosis (learning support, high-incidence support or low-incidence support). The College utilises these teaching resources to

promote early intervention and learning in an inclusive school environment and to provide additional targeted support to students within the context of a mainstream subject lesson through team-teaching, through withdrawal either individually or in a group or, through a combination of these modes of intervention. Additional supports provided should be tailored to meet the unique needs of students, addressing social, emotional, physical and life skills, as well as literacy and numeracy needs. The supports should be used to address the specific learning objectives of individual students as set out in their educational plans following consultation with relevant teachers, parents, professionals as necessary, and the students themselves.

The current allocation model retains and reflects this provision and provides that all schools will have a basic allocation to assist students who have learning and literacy difficulties, including those arising from English Additional Language (EAL) needs. The standardised test scores on which part of the profile is based will reflect where students have literacy problems. The profiled allocation for schools therefore takes account of EAL needs in schools.

11. Models of SEN Support

Individualised learning needs can be addressed in a variety of ways and should not be solely equated with withdrawal from class for one-to-one or group tuition. Configurations of team-teaching have been shown to provide an appropriate model for engaging with individual needs in the collective setting of the classroom. As necessary, this can be combined with withdrawal for intensive teaching of specific skills, based on level of need.

The provision of support for small groups of students, or use of in class support teaching for a number of students, as opposed to primarily one to one teaching, also means that qualifying students will often be able to receive more support than they otherwise would have done.

Interventions are planned in consultation with the relevant teachers, the student and the parents. Interventions may be planned to meet the needs of a group of students or they may be tailored to meet the needs of an individual student. Indeed, a student may benefit from a range of interventions, depending on the level of need.

In assessing and planning which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context the following options are considered:

- Whole class initiatives
- Team Teaching
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal (short/long term withdrawal) / Individual withdrawal (short/long term withdrawal)
- Curricular reduction
- Support from external agencies
- Assistive Technology

Nature of Support:

Literacy, numeracy, Assistive Technology skills, RACE practice, organisational Skills, handwriting practice, social and communication skills, study skills, literacy/numeracy initiatives, First Year Induction Programme, SNA access.

12. Protocol for Processing Personal Data relating to Special Educational Needs

As per the protocol for Processing Personal Data relating to Special Educational Needs [Cork ETB]:

Each school is required to implement a procedure for how personal data relating to SEN is being processed in the school.

Background:

The following are the key principles of data protection:

1. Personal data must be obtained and processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
2. It must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not processed in ways incompatible with these purposes.
3. It must be adequate, relevant and limited, i.e. the principle of data minimisation
4. It must be kept accurate and up to date
5. It should be kept for no longer than necessary
6. It must be kept safely and securely, protecting against unauthorised access or disclosure
7. The organisation is responsible for and must be able to demonstrate compliance.

Compliance requires having appropriate policies and procedures in place, and this protocol is an enhancement of our existing procedures.

The process for issuing information in relation to SEN to parents or guardian, or other parties must include strict adherence to the following checklist prior to documentation being sent.

- Copy and paste parents' email address from VSWare
- Only add email address once the email is ready to be sent and checklist has been checked
- Ensure that the email is in relation to the correct child and attachments are only about named child
- No superfluous information in the email/attachments
- Encrypt the email prior to sending (option available under *Options* on Outlook)
- Two people go through updated information from parents each September i.e. secretary/Principal/SENCO

All assessment reports and related documentation are the property of the parent/guardian of the student. Permission must be granted by the parent/guardian to access documents. Information will only be shared with staff if necessary. Consent to share information with staff is granted by the parent – noted and dated at the end of the student support file. This information is used in the SSF, SSP, PPP, SET register and SET timetable. Confidentiality regarding all personal documents is a priority. All written documents will be stored in locked filing cabinets in the main SEN office, the location of the key for this lock is only known to members of the SSS team. Access to these files will be on a strictly limited basis and only as deemed necessary by a member of the SSS team. Files that are accessible in the SEN Department site on Sharepoint online can only be viewed by staff members who have access to the password protected Sharepoint system. A regular check will be conducted on the IT system by the IT Co-ordinator to ensure that no changes have been made inadvertently to settings. These checks should be done quarterly, and a log should be kept of these checks. The check should include ensuring that any changes in staffing in the school are reflected in changes in permission.

Student files will also contain copies of any correspondence with parents or outside agencies and tests administered in order to keep communications transparent. Student files will be updated regularly and will be stored in the school for a period not exceeding 7 years after the student's departure from second-level.

13. Student Support File and Related Documents

The Student Support File (SSF) is used to plan interventions and to track a student's pathway through the continuum of support. It also functions as the provision of information and the development of an awareness of the student's needs for staff. The SSF encourages subject teacher, SET teacher, SNA and parental collaboration. In CCC, the SSF takes the form of a Microsoft Excel sheet which was created using the SSF template provided by NEPS and adapted overtime to suit the Continuum of Support process in our college.

Carrigtwohill Community College will endeavour to develop and deliver Student Support Files and Student Support Plans for students accessing 'School Support' and 'School Support Plus'. Support for individual student in 'Classroom Support' will be documented by the differentiation checklist in the Student Referral Form should the provision of support require escalation to 'School Support'.

The SENCO and/or SET teachers read and summarise the students' professional reports made available by parents to develop the Student Support File. For students who do not have an SEN diagnosis and are referred to 'School Support', a SSF is drawn up by their lead SET teacher using the information available to them in the absence of professional reports. A Student Support Plan is drawn up by the SET teachers supporting a student each year and is reviewed by the SET teacher(s), parent(s) and the student. The SSP includes SMART targets and forms the basis of the nature of support provided to the student. The review process informs the level of support from the Continuum which is best suited to the student going forward.

The Student Support File includes:

- The nature of the student's learning needs and priority learning needs
- Available, relevant assessment results
- Strengths and interests of the student
- Advice to staff on how best to support the student
- Specific programmes/interventions/materials and equipment
- Sources of information which informed the File
- Consent by parents to share information with staff.

The Student Support Plan sets includes:

- Reason for Support
- Level of support from the Continuum
- SET teachers names
- Frequency of Support

- Targets to be achieved
- Review

For students with additional care needs, a Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) will be designed in conjunction with the Student Support File to identify how the SNA access will respond to the care needs of the student.

The Personalised Pupil Plan is informed by the template provided by the NCSE and it includes:

- Details of medication (if applicable)
- Priority Care Needs presenting
- Strategies that may help in the mainstream class/supervised break
- Nature and extent of SNA assistance required
- Areas of independence at present
- Areas to encourage independence

Prior to 2021/22, the PPP was a separate Word Document, but from September 2021, the PPP is incorporated as a tab in the Student Support File for those students who are accessing SNA support.

For some students at Support for Some level, especially those with behavioural or organisational difficulties, a Behaviour Plan or Target Sheet will be used in lieu of the SSF as it may be more relevant to the student's presenting needs.

When we support students:

Withdrawal from class, Irish exemptions, reduced timetable, in-class support (co-teaching/SNA).

If a student has been granted an exemption from the study of Irish, every effort is made to withdraw the student from one or more Irish classes each week, should the student require support. This is subject to availability of resources and timetabling constraints. The College endeavours to provide intermittent support by a SET teacher who supports all students with an Irish exemption to plan for how best to use exemption time in the classroom. In the absence of an Irish exemption, students are withdrawn from non-exam subjects such as religion, CSPE, PE or STEAM. Parents will be made aware of this withdrawal and will be given the opportunity to reject this support should they not feel it appropriate for their child. Again, this withdrawal is subject to availability of resources and timetabling constraints.

14. Communication

Communication with students

Support for a student is recorded in the Student Referral Form and once a Student Support File is created in the SEN Department Sharepoint, support is detailed in the Log of Support connected to the relevant Student Support File. Any

additional communication between staff and a student is via the staff member and student's respective ETB email address.

Communication between staff

Details of meetings are recorded in the Meeting Minutes Record and stored on Sharepoint. Any additional communication between staff via the staff member's ETB email address. This email is encrypted and student initials only appear in the subject line.

Communication with parents

Details of in person meetings or phone calls are recorded on a meeting record sheet and stored in the student's file in the SEN filing cabinet. Emails to parents are sent from staff ETB email addresses to the email address provided to the College by the parent. This communication could, but not exclusively, include communication regarding concerns about the student, applications for Irish exemptions, applications for AT or RACE. Once a student is timetabled for withdrawal, the SET teacher notifies the parent, by email of the withdrawal and the subject affected. Parents are asked at this point for their input in the Student Support Plan for the student. Parents can also reject support for their child at this stage. Once the Student Support Plan has been drawn up, a copy is sent to parents, by email, to inspect. Parents can request changes to the Plan at this stage. Upon review of the Student Support Plan, the review is sent to parents, by email, for their comments and input. Any further communication by parents is added to the review at this stage.

If a student requires access to an SNA, communication regarding the contents of the Personalised Pupil Plan is via the SNA's ETB email address and the email address provided by parents to the College. On-going liaison with parents is viewed as vital to the success of the programmes. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's educational development and improve student's organisation skills by supporting them as best they can at home.

Communication with external agencies

Communication with external agencies such as NEPS, CAMHS, RACE, SENO, visiting teachers, primary school, only occurs following consent from parents. Such communication is recorded on a meeting record sheet and is kept in the Student's File in the locked filing cabinet in the SEN office.

The SENCO liaises with the Special Educational Needs Organiser and facilitates the delivery and co-ordination of educational services to students with SEN. The SENO also processes application forms for resources prepared by the Principal and SENCO for SEN Students to the NCSE and advises parents regarding their son's/daughter's needs.

The National Psychological Service (NEPS) provide psychological assessments of students and recommendations on how best to address strengths and weaknesses identified. The service also advises as to how best employ resources and strategies in the classroom, and school environment in general, to benefit students presenting with learning needs.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support for students experiencing difficulties of a behavioural/emotional nature and provides advice and recommendations on how best to address those difficulties in a school environment.

Other Agencies include the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and other relevant professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Visiting Teachers for sensory impairments.

15. Special Services and Accommodations

15.1 NEPS Assessments

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides a range of services to post-primary schools. The NEPS educational psychologists work in partnership with teachers, parents, and students and provide support in relation to learning, behaviour and social and emotional development. The educational psychologist may also liaise with other professionals outside the school on behalf of a student. Educational Psychological Assessments by NEPS are subject to the annual allocation of NEPS support to the College. The SSS team prioritises students for such assessments according to presenting needs within these limited resources.

In-school criteria for selecting students for NEPS assessment

Review WRAT and NGRT results (when identifying learning support needs). Build a profile of student of concern using above results plus CAT results and any other informal/formal assessments, along with information from primary school. Gather feedback from subject teachers from NEPS questionnaire.

Selection of students for NEPS Assessment

Selection of student is based on: (in no particular order)

- The urgency of current need presenting by the student
- The level and relevance of information and recommendations currently available on how best to support the student.
- The age of the student.
- If a previous assessment warrants an updated assessment in secondary school.

Procedure

Once a student has been selected for a NEPS assessment, the SEN coordinator contacts the NEPS psychologist to discuss the selection and requests a 'Request for Involvement of Psychologist' form. The SSS team, in cooperation with the student's subject teachers and parents, fills out the form and returns it to the NEPS psychologist to await an appointment date for assessment.

15.2 Irish Exemption

An exemption from the study of Irish means that a student attending a primary or post-primary school is not required to study Irish. Irish is a compulsory subject in schools recognised by the Department however there are certain limited circumstances whereby an exemption may be granted. All information pertaining to exemptions from the study of

Irish are set out in the College's Irish Exemption Policy which was informed by circular 0053/2019 which revised M10/94.

15.3 RACE

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is introducing changes to the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE scheme). This scheme enables candidates with special educational needs to access the state examinations. The purpose of the scheme is to allow candidates who have special educational needs 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. This involves them being held to the same standard as other candidates regarding what the examination is intended to measure. The RACE Instructions for Schools will be amended and reissued each year. From 2017 on, 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. It is expected that, in most cases, the school's recommendation in the case of Leaving Certificate will be to reactivate the same supports as were provided to the candidate at Junior Cycle Examinations. In the case of reactivating arrangements that had been in place for Junior Certificate, the SEC will accept the recommendation of the school based on the school's judgement that the need for supports persists and in general there will be no need for schools to undertake further testing. Unless some exceptional circumstance arises, the SEC will accept all such reactivation recommendations. The examinations system, which includes the RACE scheme, must be fair to all candidates and must be operated with integrity. The assessment of eligibility for Reasonable Accommodations will be based on appropriate evidence of need. The existence of a SEN diagnosis or a student scoring within the criteria for RACE will not automatically assume an application will be made for RACE. The expectation is that RACE applications will be made on behalf of candidates whose learning needs have previously been identified and who are being provided with appropriate learning interventions as part of a Continuum of Support in the College. This is the initial requirement for a RACE application. The access arrangements made for the examinations should be reflective of the arrangements normally made by the school to support learning for students with an identified need.

Screening testing for RACE occurs when students are in second year. Any necessary follow up testing is carried out prior to Christmas in the students third year. In order to uphold the integrity of the process and to allay any assessment anxiety, students and parents are not informed of testing prior to it being administered. Parents will be contacted by the school should their child meet the criteria for RACE. Parents can then decide if they wish for an application to be made on their child's behalf. Parents will be required to sign the application and will receive a copy of confirmation from the SEC once it is received by the school.

Range of Accommodations

Applications for reasonable accommodations are considered in line with the published Framework of Principles and can only be approved in accordance with the principles and requirements of the scheme.

Applications for the RACE Scheme can be made on one of four grounds as follows:

- 1) Learning Difficulty
- 2) Hearing Difficulty

3) Visual Difficulty

4) Physical Difficulty*

* This category is taken to include medical, sensory, mental health and behavioural difficulties as well as physical difficulties.

The following accommodations may be made for students, depending on their difficulty.

- Waiver from the assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation in language subjects
- Use of a personal CD player with a personal induction loop in the main examination centre
- A special examination centre for the aural examination
- Modified aural examination
- Exemption from the aural examination, if modified aural not possible
- Sign language interpreter, to sign an examination paper
- Support arrangements for the oral tests
- Exemption from the oral tests if support arrangements are unsuitable
- Standard examination paper enlarged to A3 size
- Modified examination paper
- Braille version of modified paper
- A reader to read the examination papers
- Word processor (including with vision aids) or other writing accommodation (recording device or scribe)
- Colour identifier in Geography
- Low vision aids, magnifiers and reading lamps normally used in the classroom can be arranged by the school
- Standard word processor, voice activated word processor, or other writing accommodation (recording device or scribe)
- Helper in the practical examinations
- Use of drawing aids such as drafting machines, drawing boards, parallel motion boards and smaller drawing sheets in the subjects Technical Graphics, DCG, Construction Studies, Materials Technology (Wood) or Technology.
- Junior Certificate Home Economics only – exemption from the practical and/or project
- Additional Time
- Rest Breaks
- Alterations to the Standard Timetable

No requests for an examination sitting on an alternative day will be considered.

In emergencies, the College will contact the SEC at the earliest possible opportunity for advice as to how to proceed and hence make the necessary arrangements.

15.4 Grants for Assistive Technology

The scheme for the provision of grants to schools towards the purchase of assistive technology for students with special educational needs is set out in Circular M14/05. The term “assistive technology” refers to any item of equipment that can be used to improve the functional capability of a student with special educational needs and that is of direct educational benefit to them. Under the scheme, grants are provided for the purchase of equipment for use by students

who have been diagnosed as having serious physical or communicative disabilities of a degree that makes ordinary communication through speech or writing impossible for them. Examples of equipment that may be applied for are computers, laptops, tape recorders, and software.

Applications for grants for special equipment are submitted by the SEN Coordinator to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) who has been assigned responsibility for the school, using Form 3: Application Form for Assistive Technology. Relevant supporting documents, including reports of professional assessments, are submitted to the SENO when the application is being made.

15.5 SNA Access

The new Frontloaded Allocation for SNAs for Students in mainstream classes in primary and post-primary school is deferred for a further year to the beginning of the 2022/23 school year. The role of the SNA will remain unchanged but the process of allocating SNA access within a school is due to change. This is informed by NCSE 30/2021 and circulars 30/2020 and 0029/2021. Information in this regard in the College's current SNA Policy is therefore currently irrelevant and will be updated and ratified following official guidance by the NCSE when it becomes available.

16. Policy Review and Evaluation Procedures

Given that the SEN Programme is student centred, the programme must be highly flexible by nature to adapt to current needs. Therefore, the programme delivery will be reviewed annually following retesting of new students, to ensure that their needs can be catered for within the existing system. Any necessary changes or adaptations would be arranged as a result.

Reviewing of students attending SET classes at the end of each year where relevant and review of the SET process in consultation with SET teachers can be a tool used to measure the success of the programme and the progress of student involved. However, it must be noted that due to the complex nature of learning difficulties and factors contributing to progress for individual students the extent of progress and successes are relative to each individual student and their specific circumstances.