

CARRIGTWOHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

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1. Scope of the policy

For the purposes of this policy, special educational needs are defined in accordance with the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 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 approach to assessment and intervention outlined in this policy recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe and from short-term to long-term needs. Accordingly, the school provides support along a continuum of approaches, beginning with whole-school and preventative strategies and extending, where necessary, to targeted and individualised interventions.

This policy is informed by relevant Department of Education circulars including S70/00, PP1/05, PPT12/05, CL0051/2007, CL0056/2011, CL0025/2012, CL0030/2014, CL0042/2015, CL0034/2015, CL0014/2017, CL008/2019, CL0053/2019, CL0030/2020, CL0029/2021, CL003/2024 and CL0064/2024. It reflects the Special Education Teaching (SET) Allocation Model introduced under CL0014/2017, which provides a single unified allocation of Special Education Teaching hours based on each school’s educational profile.

This model replaced the previous Learning Support and English as an Additional Language (LS/EAL) allocation, the NCSE resource teaching allocation for students with low-incidence disabilities, and the allocation process for students with high-incidence special educational needs. The unified allocation allows schools greater flexibility to deploy resources based on students’ individual learning needs rather than relying solely on formal diagnoses.

A baseline allocation ensures that all schools have a minimum level of teaching resources to support inclusive practice, early intervention and assistance for students experiencing learning difficulties. Additional resources are provided on the basis that no student will be refused enrolment due to insufficient teaching resources to meet their needs.

This policy operates within the legislative framework of the Education Act 1998, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, and the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018. It is also informed by national guidance including 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 the Individual Education Plan Process (2006).

The deployment and organisation of Special Education Teaching (SET) resources in the school are guided by Department of Education Circular 0064/2024 and the associated Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes (2024). These guidelines emphasise that the subject teacher has primary responsibility for the learning and progress of all students, including those with special

educational needs. Special Education Teaching is provided in addition to, and not instead of, high-quality teaching and differentiated instruction within the mainstream classroom.

The school follows a problem-solving model of identification, planning, intervention and review, consistent with the NEPS Continuum of Support framework. This whole-school approach enables Carrigtwohill Community College to respond effectively to the diverse learning needs of its students.

2. Aims

The effective inclusion of students with special educational needs requires a whole-school approach that enables Carrigtwohill Community College to respond to the diverse needs of its students in a timely, coordinated and inclusive manner. The aims of this policy are to:

- Enable each student to live a full life and realise their potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that all students are afforded fair and equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from education.
- Support students to develop the skills necessary to function as independently as possible in society.
- Encourage and support students to continue learning throughout their adult lives.
- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of students with physical disabilities, assessed learning difficulties or other special educational needs as they relate to education.
- Provide, as far as practicable and having regard to available resources, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students.
- Promote the education of students with special educational needs within an inclusive learning environment wherever possible.
- Affirm that students with special educational needs have the same right to access and benefit from education as their peers.
- Work collaboratively with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), NEPS, and other relevant agencies to support the educational needs of students.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the needs of students with special educational needs and understand their role in supporting them.
- Develop and support staff expertise in inclusive teaching and in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs.
- Monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of supports and practices for students with special educational needs.
- Foster positive partnerships with parents and guardians in order to support students' learning and wellbeing.
- Promote inclusive teaching practices within mainstream classrooms, including differentiation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and appropriate teaching strategies to support diverse learning needs.
- Encourage student voice and participation by supporting students with special educational needs to contribute, where appropriate, to decisions about their learning and supports.

- Promote collaboration between mainstream teachers, special education teachers, school leadership, parents and external agencies to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to supporting students with special educational needs.

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

The SEN Team consists of Principal, Deputy Principals, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (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 Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate provision is made for all students in the school, including those with special educational needs.

In fulfilling this responsibility, the Board will:

- Ensure that students with special educational needs are identified, assessed and supported through appropriate interventions within the resources allocated to the school by the Department of Education.
- Ensure that the school has a Special Educational Needs Policy in place and that the policy is implemented, monitored and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that the school provides a broad, balanced and appropriately differentiated curriculum to enable students with special educational needs to develop the skills necessary to participate in society to the greatest extent possible.
- Seek and allocate the necessary resources to support students with special educational needs, in line with Department of Education guidelines.
- Promote and support effective collaboration between the school, parents/guardians and relevant external agencies involved in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that parents/guardians are kept informed of their child's needs and of the supports being provided by the school.
- Ensure that parents/guardians are consulted and, where appropriate, involved in decisions relating to their child's education.
- Ensure that the Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the overall School Plan.

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 provision for students with special educational needs. In accordance with Section 18 of the EPSEN Act (2004), the Principal may delegate specific functions to appropriate members of staff. The Principal will:

- Appoint a Special Educational Needs Coordinator/s (SENCO) from among the teaching staff to coordinate provision for students with special educational needs.
- Establish and support the work of the Student Support Services Team to ensure the identification and appropriate support of students with additional needs.
- Liaise with the Department of Education, the NCSE, and other relevant agencies regarding the provision of supports for students with special educational needs.
- Oversee applications for SNAs, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations in state examinations (RACE) and other relevant supports.
- Ensure that new legislation, policies and Department circulars relating to special educational needs are implemented in the school.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of available resources, including the allocation of Special Education Teaching hours.
- Promote a whole-school approach to supporting students with special educational needs and facilitate appropriate staff professional development in this area.
- Foster positive partnerships with parents/guardians of students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that procedures are in place for consultation with feeder primary schools regarding incoming students with special educational needs.
- Report to the Board of Management on matters relating to special educational needs where appropriate.
- To inform the BOM of any issue that is relevant to special educational needs.

4.3 Role of Special Educational Needs Coordinators

The SENCOs are a core member of the SEN team and work closely with school leadership, teachers, parents/guardians and external agencies to coordinate provision for students with special educational needs. The SENCOs will:

- Coordinate the overall provision for students with special educational needs in the school.
- Work closely with the Principal in the day-to-day management of SEN provision.
- Maintain and monitor the SEN Register and communicate relevant information to staff.
- Coordinate the timetabling and organisation of Special Education Teaching (SET).
- Liaise with parents/guardians of students with special educational needs.
- Coordinate Student Support Files (SSFs) and ensure appropriate documentation is maintained.
- Support applications for RACE accommodations, assistive technology, SNA access and Irish exemptions where appropriate.
- Liaise with relevant external agencies including NEPS, NCSE, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and other relevant professionals.
- Facilitate staff awareness of strategies and supports for students with special educational needs.

- Organise and coordinate standardised and diagnostic assessments where appropriate (e.g., CAT4, PPAD-E).
- Support the development and review of Student Support Plans in collaboration with teachers, parents/guardians and relevant professionals.
- Contribute to the professional development of staff in relation to special educational needs.

The duties of the SENCOs are reviewed periodically by the Principal and may be adjusted to reflect the evolving needs of the school.

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. Subject teachers will:

- Create an inclusive, supportive and stimulating classroom environment where all students are valued.
- Implement differentiated teaching approaches and inclusive strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- Be aware of and implement strategies outlined in relevant Student Support Plans or Student Support Files.
- Identify students who may require additional support and gather information through formal and informal assessment.
- Refer students to the Student Support Services Team where additional intervention may be required.
- Liaise with SET teachers and the SENCO to establish how to most effectively support the student in their area of learning.
- Collaborate with Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) where assigned to support students in the classroom.
- Participate in CPD in relation to inclusive teaching and special educational needs, particularly regarding high incidence difficulties e.g. Dyslexia, Specific Learning Difficulties and Dyspraxia.
- Encourage and support students to develop independence and responsibility for their own learning.

4.5 The Role of the Special Education Teaching Teacher (SET)

The Special Education Teacher works collaboratively with the SENCO, subject teachers and parents/guardians to support students with special educational needs. The SET teacher will:

- Provide additional teaching support to students with special educational needs through individual, small group or team-teaching approaches.
- Liaise with parents/guardians regarding the support being provided and the student's priority learning needs.
- Develop and implement Student Support Plans (SSP). This SSP 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.
- Use appropriate teaching strategies and interventions to support students' learning needs 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.

- Maintain records of support provided through the Log of Support in the Student Support File.
- Work collaboratively with subject teachers to ensure continuity between mainstream classroom learning and SET support.
- Provide guidance to teachers regarding appropriate teaching strategies for students with additional needs. 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. The role of the SNA is to assist students with care needs, thereby enabling them to participate fully in school life. SNAs will:

- Develop the Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP), drawing on their knowledge of the student and working in collaboration with parents/guardians, the SET teacher (where applicable) and information contained in the Student Support File (SSF). The SNA should be familiar with the student's priority care needs when supporting the development of the PPP. A copy of the completed plan will be shared with parents/guardians.
- 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.
- Support students with primary and secondary care needs, as outlined in Department guidelines.
- Assist students in accessing the curriculum and participating in school activities.
- Support students in developing independence and life skills where appropriate.
- Assist teachers in the classroom with non-teaching duties, under the direction of the Principal.
- Work collaboratively with teachers, the SENCO and parents in supporting the care needs of students.
- Follow duties outlined in the school's SNA Policy.

SNAs do not have a teaching role and will not be left in sole charge of a class or group of students.

4.7 The Role of the Student Support Services Team

The Student Support Services Team (SSS) supports the identification and coordination of supports for students experiencing educational, social or emotional difficulties. The team includes Principal, Deputy Principals, SENCOs, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain and other relevant staff members as required. The Student Support Services Team will:

- Oversee the pastoral care and wellbeing of students.
- Review and record student referrals to the team.
- Identify and coordinate appropriate supports or interventions for students.
- Allocate supports based on the individual needs of students.
- Communicate relevant information and planned interventions to appropriate staff members.
- Identify students who may require additional support even where a formal referral has not yet been made.

5. Special Education Support Posts

Special Education Teaching (SET) posts will be filled in accordance with the staffing and redeployment arrangements outlined in the relevant Post-Primary School Staffing Circulars for the current school year. Appointments to SET roles will be made from among fully recognised and registered post-primary teachers.

In allocating Special Education Teaching responsibilities, the Principal will consider the qualifications, experience and professional development of teachers in order to ensure that students with the greatest level of need are supported by teachers with appropriate expertise and that continuity of support is maintained.

The school will endeavour to establish and maintain a core team of Special Education teachers. Members of this team will have appropriate experience and will be supported in accessing ongoing professional development to enable them to effectively meet 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 Carrigtwohill Community College (CCC), parents/guardians are invited to provide the school with any relevant educational or psychological reports if they wish the school to be aware of their child's special educational needs. This information enables the school to plan appropriate supports and ensure suitable arrangements are in place before the student begins secondary school.

Following the entrance assessment in January, the school forwards the NCCA Information Request Form to the primary schools of incoming students. Primary schools are required to transfer relevant student information to post-primary schools through the 6th Class End-of-Year Report Card, developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This transfer occurs once confirmation of a student's enrolment in the post-primary school has been received. The report card is complemented by a Student Self-Profile, which may also include input from parents/guardians. Together, these documents provide a clear understanding of each student's learning profile, strengths, and areas where additional support may be needed.

CCC actively liaises with feeder primary schools to support early identification of students with special educational needs. Meetings and correspondence with primary school teachers enable the sharing of relevant information regarding learning needs, accommodations, and strategies that have been effective, ensuring that incoming students receive continuity of support from the outset.

First Year Induction Programme

During their first term, students participate in the First Year Induction Programme, designed to support their transition from primary to post-primary education. The programme helps students to settle into the school community, become familiar with the school environment, staff, subjects, and materials, and build positive relationships with peers.

The induction programme provides opportunities for students to ask questions and seek support in areas where they may encounter difficulties. It specifically addresses the needs of students with special educational needs while also benefiting all students as they adapt to the new learning environment. The programme promotes confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging within the school community.

7. Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Carrigtwohill Community College adopts a three-stage model of support in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support framework, ensuring that all students receive appropriate interventions based on their level of need.

Stage I – Support for All / Classroom Support

At this stage, teachers provide high-quality, inclusive teaching for all students within the mainstream classroom. This includes:

- Differentiating teaching methods, activities, and task instructions to meet diverse learning needs.
- Adjusting classroom organisation, seating, and learning resources to optimise engagement and learning outcomes.
- Providing evidence-based instruction and behavioural support for all students.
- Monitoring student progress through informal observation, screening, and feedback.

School-wide attainment and aptitude screening is conducted to identify students who may need additional monitoring or support. Concerns may arise from teachers or parents regarding academic, social, behavioural, emotional, or physical development. At Stage I, classroom support plans, including differentiation strategies, are implemented, and progress is monitored. If the student's needs are not met through these measures, they progress to Stage II.

Stage II – School Support (for Some Students)

Stage II provides targeted interventions for students who do not respond sufficiently to Stage I strategies (typically 10–20% of students).

- Students are referred to the Student Support Services Team using a Student Referral Form and differentiation checklist.
- Interventions may include short- or longer-term supports tailored to the student's needs.
- Diagnostic testing may be conducted if necessary to inform teaching and support strategies.
- The focus at this stage is on small-group or targeted support to address specific learning or behavioural needs.

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

Stage III provides intensive, individualised support for students with significant and ongoing learning difficulties (typically 2–5% of students).

- Interventions may involve additional professionals such as NEPS psychologists, CAMHS, speech and language therapists, or occupational therapists.

- Supports may include Student Support Plans, behavioural plans, SET interventions, Assistive Technology, and Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Exams (RACE).
- Parents/guardians are fully consulted throughout the process.
- Interventions are closely monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the student's needs.

8. Criteria for Intervention

It is important to note that screening information is not used to determine enrolment. Discrimination against a student on the grounds of special educational needs is prohibited under the Equal Status Act (2000). Screening and assessment systems serve multiple purposes, including:

- Supporting mixed-ability class groupings
- Planning provision and resource allocation
- Identifying students at risk of learning difficulties
- Monitoring student progress over time

In identifying students for additional support, the College considers the following:

- Standardised assessments in reading, spelling, comprehension, and mathematics. Students performing below the 10th percentile and identified by teachers as requiring support are prioritised for literacy and numeracy interventions.
- Students previously receiving learning support who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Ongoing assessment and intervention outcomes, as outlined in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010). This includes monitoring attainment, behaviour, social and emotional functioning, and learning outcomes. Professional reports are also considered where available.
- Students with mild or transient educational needs, such as speech and language difficulties, social or emotional challenges, or co-ordination and attention difficulties.
- Students with specific learning disabilities, requiring targeted interventions.
- Students with significant special educational needs, including those with substantial learning, behavioural, emotional, physical, or sensory needs, who require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes.
- Students with additional literacy or language learning needs, including those requiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) support.

The level and type of additional support provided are determined by each student's individual needs and are delivered differentially through the Continuum of Support framework. In line with DES Circular 0014/2017, the College deploys resources based on the specific learning needs of each student as they present.

9. Assessment and Identification

The process for identifying students who may require additional support involves multiple elements:

- Screening assessments to identify learning strengths and needs

- Requesting relevant information from the primary school
- Ongoing monitoring of students' progress
- Further diagnostic testing, if necessary

Screening Assessments

Upon entry, all first-year students complete standardised group assessments:

- Literacy is assessed using the PPAD-E developed by NEPS
- Cognitive ability is assessed using CAT4; students are not retested for cognitive ability
- Numeracy is assessed using the Maths Competency Test

Screening assessments are designed to:

- Identify learning needs that may not yet be known
- Support the formation of true mixed-ability classes
- Facilitate subject and option choices where appropriate

Students and parents are generally not informed in advance of these assessments, except when assessments were conducted prior to entry. While results are not routinely shared with parents, the College will contact parents if significant concerns arise.

The use of standardised tests contributes to the school's educational profile, helping to identify students with low achievement in literacy and numeracy, including those whose special educational needs affect learning outcomes. Combined with informal assessment methods—such as teacher observation, monitoring of homework, and social development—this allows the school to identify students who may require additional support.

In line with Circular 0070/2014, priority is given to students performing at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests when identifying students for learning support.

Further Diagnostic Assessment

Some students may require individualised diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of their learning or behavioural needs. These assessments may be conducted by the SET teacher or other professionals, such as:

- Educational psychologists
- Psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and language therapists
- Social workers

Students who previously received learning support or resource teaching in primary school and continue to experience significant difficulties are also prioritised. Information from primary schools—including standardised test results, Individual Education Plans, behaviour plans, or transition plans—supports early identification and planning.

Referral Process

Teachers who have concerns about a student's learning, social, emotional, or behavioural development are encouraged to submit a referral to the Student Support Services (SSS) Team. In line with Circular 0014/2017, professional assessments or formal diagnoses are not required for students to access additional educational teaching resources. Where available, medical or professional reports may inform interventions, but access to supports is primarily based on students' identified learning needs.

The SSS Team reviews all referrals and assessment information, and prioritises interventions based on the needs of students and available resources, ensuring that supports are allocated effectively and equitably.

10. Allocation of Resources

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

From the 2017/18 school year, the allocation of Special Education Teaching (SET) posts to mainstream post-primary schools was revised to provide a single unified allocation for each school, based on its educational profile. This allocation replaces the previous distinctions between Learning Support and NCSE Special Needs Resource Teaching posts.

At Carrigtwohill Community College, SET resources are deployed according to individual student learning needs, ensuring that students with the greatest need receive the highest level of support, regardless of prior NCSE categories (learning support, high-incidence or low-incidence support). SET resources are used to:

- Promote early intervention and learning within an inclusive mainstream classroom
- Provide targeted support through:
 - Team-teaching within mainstream lessons
 - Withdrawal for individual or small-group support
 - A combination of these approaches, tailored to students' needs

Supports are designed to address the academic, social, emotional, physical, and life skills of students, as well as literacy and numeracy needs. Interventions are guided by the individual educational plans of students, developed in consultation with subject teachers, parents/guardians, relevant professionals, and the students themselves.

All schools are provided with a baseline allocation to support students with learning or literacy difficulties, including those arising from English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. Standardised test results form part of the school's educational profile and inform resource allocation.

Attendance and Use of SET Resources

Students are expected to attend allocated SET lessons. If a student fails to attend four consecutive SET sessions without a valid reason, the allocated SET support may be withdrawn and reallocated based on priority needs. This ensures that SET resources are used effectively and that students with the greatest need receive appropriate support.

11. Models of SEN Support

Individual learning needs at Carrigtwohill Community College are addressed through a range of support models. Support is not limited to withdrawal for one-to-one or small-group tuition; inclusive strategies such as team-teaching provide effective ways to meet individual needs within the mainstream classroom. Withdrawal for intensive teaching of specific skills may also be used when appropriate, depending on the student's level of need.

Supporting small groups of students or providing in-class support for multiple students allows the College to maximise the use of available resources, ensuring that qualifying students receive the greatest benefit. Interventions are planned collaboratively with subject teachers, the student, and parents/guardians. They may be tailored to an individual student or designed for a group of students and can include a combination of approaches depending on need. When planning interventions, the following models are considered:

- Whole-class initiatives and differentiated instruction
- Team-teaching within the mainstream classroom
- Inclusion of a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) in specific classes
- Small-group withdrawal (short-term or long-term)
- Individual withdrawal (short-term or long-term)
- Curricular reduction where appropriate
- Support from external agencies
- Use of Assistive Technology

Nature of Support

Support may target a variety of areas, including:

- Literacy and numeracy development
- Organisational and study skills
- Handwriting and fine motor skills
- Social and communication skills
- Assistive Technology training
- Preparation for Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Exams (RACE)
- Participation in the First Year Induction Programme
- Access to Special Needs Assistants as required

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

In accordance with the Protocol for Processing Personal Data Relating to Special Educational Needs (Cork ETB), Carrigtwohill Community College has established procedures to ensure that all personal data concerning students with SEN is processed lawfully, fairly, and securely.

Key Principles of Data Protection

The College adheres to the following principles:

- Personal data must be obtained and processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- Data must be collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes and not used in ways incompatible with these purposes.
- Data should be adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary (data minimisation).
- Data must be accurate and kept up to date.
- Data should be retained only as long as necessary.
- Data must be kept securely, protecting against unauthorised access or disclosure.
- The College is responsible for, and able to demonstrate, compliance with these principles.
- Compliance is ensured through appropriate policies, procedures, and this protocol, which enhances existing practices.

Issuing SEN Information

When sending information relating to a student's SEN to parents/guardians or other parties, the following checklist must be strictly followed:

- Copy and paste the parent's email address from VSWare.
- Add the email address only once the email is ready to send and the checklist has been reviewed.
- Confirm the email relates to the correct student, and attachments only contain information about that student.
- Exclude any superfluous information in emails or attachments.
- Encrypt emails before sending (available in Outlook under Options).
- Each September, two staff members (e.g. admin. staff, SENCOs) review updated information from parents.

Access, Storage, and Consent

- All assessment reports and related documentation are the property of the student's parent/guardian.
- The College requires parental permission to access these documents.
- Information is shared with staff only on a need-to-know basis, with parental consent noted and dated in the Student Support File (SSF).
- Relevant information is recorded in the SSF, Student Support Plan (SSP), Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP), SET register, and SET timetable.
- Confidentiality is paramount. Physical documents are stored in locked filing cabinets in the SEN office. Keys are held only by members of the Student Support Services (SSS) team. Access is strictly limited to those deemed necessary. Electronic files stored on SharePoint Online are accessible only to authorised staff with password-protected access. The IT Co-ordinator conducts quarterly checks to ensure permissions reflect staffing changes and maintains a log of these checks.

Student Files and Retention

- Student files include correspondence with parents or external agencies and records of assessments to maintain transparency.
- Files are regularly updated to reflect the student's current support needs.
- Physical and electronic files are retained for a period not exceeding seven years after the student leaves second-level education.

13. Student Support File and Related Documents

The Student Support File (SSF) is a central tool for planning interventions, tracking students' progress through the Continuum of Support, and sharing relevant information with staff. It encourages collaboration between subject teachers, SET teachers, SNAs, and parents. At Carrigtwohill Community College, the SSF is maintained as a Microsoft Excel workbook, adapted from the NEPS template to suit the College's Continuum of Support process. Students accessing 'School Support' or 'School Support Plus' will have a full SSF. Support for students via 'Classroom Support' is documented using the Differentiation Checklist in the Student Referral Form if escalation is required.

Development and Review

The SENCO and/or SET teachers summarise professional reports provided by parents to create the SSF. For students without a formal diagnosis but referred to 'School Support', the lead SET teacher develops the SSF using available information. A Student Support Plan (SSP) is drawn up annually for each student by the SET teacher(s), in consultation with parents/guardians and the student. It includes SMART targets and informs the type and level of support provided. The SSP review informs ongoing support within the Continuum.

SSF includes:

- Student's learning needs and priority areas
- Relevant assessment results
- Strengths and interests
- Advice to staff for supporting the student
- Programmes, interventions, materials, and equipment
- Sources of information
- Parental consent to share information

SSP includes:

- Reason for support
- Level of support from the Continuum
- SET teacher(s) involved

- Frequency of support
- Targets and review dates

For students with additional care needs, a Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) is developed in conjunction with the SSF to outline SNA support. The PPP, informed by the NCSE template, includes:

- Medication details (if applicable)
- Priority care needs
- Strategies for classroom or supervised break support
- Nature and extent of SNA assistance
- Current areas of independence and areas to develop independence

Note: Since September 2021, the PPP is integrated into the SSF as a dedicated tab for students accessing SNA support.

For some students at ‘School Support’, especially those with behavioural or organisational difficulties, a Behaviour Plan or Target Sheet may replace the SSF if more relevant.

Modes of Support

Support is provided in a variety of ways, including:

- Withdrawal from class (individual or small group)
- In-class support (team-teaching or SNA assistance)
- Curricular reduction or adaptations
- Irish exemptions (see section 15.3)

Irish Exemptions

Students granted an exemption from Irish are withdrawn from the appropriate classes when support is needed, subject to resources and timetabling. SET teachers coordinate support during exemption time. For students without Irish exemptions, withdrawal may occur from non-exam subjects such as PE, CSPE, or STEAM. Parents are informed and can decline support if desired.

14. Communication

Communication with Students

Support provided to a student is recorded in the Student Referral Form. Once a Student Support File (SSF) is created on the SEN Department SharePoint, details of the support provided are recorded in the Log of Support associated with the relevant SSF.

Any additional communication between staff and students takes place through the respective ETB email accounts of the staff member and student.

Communication Between Staff

Details of meetings relating to student support are recorded in the Meeting Minutes Record and stored on SharePoint. Additional communication between staff members takes place through their ETB email accounts. These emails are encrypted and, for confidentiality purposes, student initials only are used in the subject line.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

Details of in-person meetings or phone calls with parents/guardians are recorded on a meeting record sheet and stored in the student's file in the SEN filing cabinet. Email communication with parents is sent from staff ETB email accounts to the email address provided to the College by the parent/guardian. Such communication may include, but is not limited to:

- Concerns regarding the student's progress or wellbeing
- Applications for Irish exemptions
- Applications for Assistive Technology (AT)
- Applications for Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE)

Where a student is timetabled for withdrawal support, the SET teacher informs the parent/guardian by email, outlining the nature of the withdrawal and the subject affected. Parents are invited at this stage to contribute to the development of the Student Support Plan (SSP) and may decline the support if they feel it is not appropriate for their child. Once the Student Support Plan has been developed, a copy is emailed to parents/guardians for review. Parents may request amendments to the plan at this stage. Following the review of the SSP, the updated review document is shared with parents for their comments and input, which may be incorporated into future planning.

Where a student requires Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support, communication regarding the Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) takes place via the SNA's ETB email address and the email address provided by the parent/guardian.

Ongoing liaison with parents is considered essential to the success of the support programmes. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's educational development and to support the development of organisational and study skills at home where possible.

Communication with External Agencies

Communication with external agencies occurs only with parental consent. Records of such communication are documented on a meeting record sheet and stored in the student's file in the locked filing cabinet in the SEN office.

The SEN Coordinators (SENCOs) liaise with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) to facilitate and coordinate educational services for students with special educational needs. The SENO also processes applications for additional resources submitted by the Principal and SENCOs to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and may advise parents regarding their child's educational needs.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides psychological assessments of students and offers recommendations to support the development of students' strengths and address identified areas of need. NEPS also advises schools on the effective use of resources and strategies to support students in the classroom and wider school environment.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support for students experiencing behavioural or emotional difficulties and offers guidance on appropriate strategies to support these students within the school setting.

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

15. Special Services and Accommodations

15.1 NEPS Assessments

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides a range of supports to post-primary schools. NEPS psychologists work in partnership with teachers, parents and students to support learning, behaviour, and social and emotional development. Educational psychologists may also liaise with other professionals outside the school where appropriate.

Psychological assessments provided by NEPS are subject to the annual allocation of NEPS support to the College. Due to these limitations, the Student Support Services (SSS) team prioritises students for assessment based on their presenting needs.

In-School Criteria for Selecting Students for NEPS Assessment

When identifying students for possible NEPS assessment, the school may:

- Review results from WRAT, WIAT and PPAD-E assessments where relevant
- Build a profile of the student using these results in conjunction with CAT4 results, other formal and informal assessments, and information received from the student's primary school
- Gather feedback from subject teachers through the NEPS teacher questionnaire

Selection of Students for NEPS Assessment

Students may be prioritised for assessment based on:

- The urgency and nature of the student's presenting needs
- The availability and relevance of existing professional reports or recommendations
- The age of the student

- Whether a previous assessment requires updating at post-primary level

Procedure

Where a student is identified as requiring assessment, the SENCOs consult with the NEPS psychologist and request a Request for Involvement of Psychologist form.

The SSS team, in collaboration with the student's teachers and parents, complete the form and submit it to the NEPS psychologist. The student is then placed on the waiting list for assessment.

15.2 Irish Exemption

An exemption from the study of Irish means that a student attending a recognised primary or post-primary school is not required to study Irish as a subject. While Irish is a compulsory subject in schools recognised by the Department of Education, exemptions may be granted in specific and limited circumstances.

All procedures relating to exemptions from the study of Irish are outlined in the College's Irish Exemption Policy, which is informed by Department of Education Circular 0053/2019 (which replaced Circular M10/94).

15.3 Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE)

The RACE Scheme, administered by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), enables candidates with special educational needs to access the State examinations. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that candidates whose disabilities or learning difficulties impact their ability to access standard examination arrangements are given appropriate accommodations. These accommodations allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without compromising the integrity of the examination process.

Students granted accommodations at Junior Cycle may have these arrangements reactivated for Leaving Certificate, subject to confirmation by the school that the need continues to exist. In most cases, the SEC accepts the school's recommendation that the same supports remain appropriate and additional testing is not required unless exceptional circumstances arise.

Eligibility for RACE supports is based on appropriate evidence of need. The presence of a diagnosis or a test score within the qualifying range does not automatically result in an application. Applications are generally made only where:

- The student's needs have been clearly identified
- The student is receiving appropriate interventions through the Continuum of Support
- The requested accommodations reflect the supports normally provided in the classroom

Screening for RACE

Screening typically takes place during Second Year, with any necessary follow-up assessments completed during Third Year, usually before Christmas.

To maintain the integrity of the process and reduce assessment-related anxiety, students and parents are not informed in advance of screening assessments.

Where a student meets the criteria for RACE, parents are contacted and may decide whether they wish the school to submit an application on their child's behalf. Parents must sign the application and will receive confirmation from the SEC once the application has been processed.

Range of Possible Accommodations

Applications are considered in line with the SEC Framework of Principles, and accommodations may be granted on one of the following grounds:

- Learning difficulty
- Hearing difficulty
- Visual difficulty
- Physical difficulty (including medical, sensory, mental health or behavioural difficulties)

Possible accommodations include:

- 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
- As of 2026 state exams students who qualify for a spelling and grammar waiver and reading assistance will get an extra 10 minutes per exam.

Requests for examinations to be taken on alternative dates will not be considered. In exceptional or emergency circumstances, the College will contact the State Examinations Commission for guidance on appropriate arrangements.

15.4 Grants for Assistive Technology

The Scheme for the Provision of Assistive Technology to Students with Special Educational Needs is outlined in Department of Education Circular M14/05. Assistive technology refers to equipment that improves the functional capability of a student with special educational needs and provides a direct educational benefit. Grants may be provided to schools to purchase equipment for students with significant physical or communication difficulties which make ordinary communication through speech or writing challenging.

Examples of assistive technology include:

- Computers or laptops
- Recording devices
- Specialist software
- Other appropriate technological supports

Applications are submitted by the SENCOs to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) using the Assistive Technology Application Form (Form 3). Relevant professional reports must accompany the application.

15.5 SNA Access

The allocation of Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support is governed by Department of Education Circular 0030/2020 and guidance issued by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Under the current model, schools receive a frontloaded allocation of SNA support, based on the overall profile of care needs within the school. Special Needs Assistants support students who have significant care needs. Their role may include:

- Assisting with mobility and personal care
- Supporting organisation and participation in school activities
- Facilitating safe access to the school environment
- Encouraging the development of independence

SNAs do not undertake teaching duties, and work under the direction of the school management and teaching staff.

16. Policy Review and Evaluation Procedures

The SEN programme in the College is student-centred and responsive to the evolving needs of students. As such, the programme must remain flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging needs. The delivery of supports is therefore reviewed annually, taking account of screening and assessment data, the needs of newly enrolled students, and the progress of those currently receiving support. Any necessary adjustments to the programme are implemented following this review.

Students receiving Special Education Teaching (SET) support may also be reviewed at the end of each academic year, where appropriate. Consultation with SET teachers and relevant staff contributes to evaluating the effectiveness of the supports provided and monitoring student progress.

It is recognised that, due to the complex nature of learning difficulties and the wide range of factors influencing learning, progress will vary from student to student. For this reason, progress is assessed in relation to each student's individual needs, strengths and circumstances, rather than against a uniform measure of achievement.

The SEN policy and the provision of supports within the school are reviewed periodically by the Student Support Services team to ensure that the programme continues to reflect best practice and complies with Department of Education and NCSE guidance.