



CRESCENT COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE SJ

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

15th June 2016



A.M.D.G.
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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of effective resource teaching for children with a recognized disability, as per circular N.C.S.E 02/05 by the National Council of Special Education N.C.S.E., and to fulfill our obligations under the Education Act 1998 and the EPSEN Act 2004.

Definition of Special Needs

The definition of 'special educational needs' as set out in Section 1 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs 2004 refers to "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 from a person without that condition".

Aims of Special Needs Teaching

The aims of the Special Needs Teaching are:

- To support as far as possible the inclusion of the child with recognized disabilities into the mainstream setting.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in students with special educational needs
- To ensure that pupils with special educational needs have access to appropriate education

Identification of Children with Special Needs

This can happen in three ways:

Firstly:

Parents furnish the school with recognised professional report(s) which states the child's disability/disabilities.

Secondly:

Mainstream Teachers may have a concern regarding a student's lack of progress even after supplementary teaching by the learning support / resource teacher.

Thirdly:

Students are identified through screening assessment and further diagnostic assessment by the SEN department.

Assessment of Students

- Having consulted with the mainstream teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher and parents, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator will carry out the appropriate assessment on the student. The SEN coordinator will where necessary offer the parents a consultation with the N.E.P.S psychologists. Where further assessment is deemed necessary the SEN coordinator will seek appropriate assessment through the National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.) or will refer parent(s) / guardian(s) to other professional with a view to identifying a disability.
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s) inform the principal of a concern they have regarding their child and ask for an assessment to be carried out as per Education Act. The Principal will then consult with the SEN coordinator and the NEPs Psychologist to request a meeting between the N.E.P.S. psychologist and the Parent(s) / Guardian(s).
- In the situation where the parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse to grant consent for their child to attend for a psychological assessment a record of the offer and its rejection will be kept on file.
- Where a parent refuses to give consent and the school deems this to be detrimental to the pupils wellbeing, the Board of Management may apply to the Circuit Court for an order that an assessment of the child be carried out as set out in the EPSEN Act.(Section 10-5)
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s) inform the principal of a concern they have regarding their child and ask for an assessment to be carried out as per Education Act. The Principal will then consult with the SEN coordinator and the NEPs Psychologist to request a meeting between the N.E.P.S. psychologist and the Parent(s) / Guardian(s).

Application for Extra Resources based on a Special Educational Need

Where a student is identified as having a recognized disability and the professional report meets the criteria set out by the N.C.S.E. the Special Educational Needs Coordinator will make an application to the N.C.S.E. on behalf of the school for the relevant additional supports required by the school to meet the needs of that student. Resources available to the school to meet the needs of students with recognized disabilities are

- Extra teaching hours
- Special needs assistants
- Assistive technology
- School transport

Allocation of resource teaching hours

The N.C.S.E. through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.) attached to the

school determines the amount of resource teaching hours granted to the school based on the number of pupils with special educational needs enrolled in the school. If a student with special educational needs leaves the school the resource teaching hours granted to the school for that student is withdrawn. The SEN coordinator is responsible in determining the amount of resource teaching hours a student gets according to the latest guidelines set out by the Department of Education.

Deployment of resource teaching hours within the school

The school management ensures that the Special Needs Allocation is only used to meet the needs of students with Special Educational Needs.

Provision of Resource Teaching

- The primary work of the Resource Teacher is the provision of resource teaching to pupils with special educational needs
- Extraction groups will be formed to meet the needs of the pupils.
- A system of individual withdrawal, group withdrawal and/or in-class support in the form of team teaching will operate in response to the needs of the pupils.
- The schools special educational needs coordinator decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual needs of pupils in each group.
- The SEN department follows the “Continuum of Support” model of provision as recommended by the National Educational Psychological services.

SEN Teacher(s) liaises with the Class Teacher to devise Individual Learning Targets (ILT) or Group Learning Targets (GLT). Pupils are also encouraged to contribute to setting their own short-term learning targets.

Individual Learning Targets and Group Learning Targets

The individual learning targets (ILT) or group learning targets (GLT) will be in accordance with the guidelines, issued by N.C.S.E. and the Department of Education. The individual learning targets will address the pupils’ range of needs and will allow pupils to progress at a level commensurate with the pupils’ ability.

Individual learning targets will be included in 2 instructional terms of work of approximately 20 weeks each. Each instructional term will include:

- Priority learning needs
- Learning targets
- Weekly or fortnightly plans to reach these targets

Each plan will be evaluated by the SEN teacher.

Time-tabling

The provision of resource teaching is in addition to the regular class subjects. Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss classes in examination subjects when they attend SEN support classes. However, this is not always possible due to timetabling restrictions and the number of resources classes a student may need. This may mean that some S.E.N. students might have reduced subjects. This will be agreed between the parent(s) / guardian(s) and the subject teacher. Where necessary the SEN coordinator can advise.

Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all parties involved in meeting the learning needs of S.E.N. pupils is essential.

The various strands of this system include:

- Meetings between parent(s)/Guardian(s) and SEN teacher(s) and special needs assistants where appropriate
- Consultation between Class teacher and SEN teacher(s) to discuss pupil needs and difficulties as they may arise

A key element of communicating information on S.E.N. pupils to all staff is through the Special Educational Needs Student List on the computer in the correcting room. This list gives the name of every S.E.N. student in the school and the level of provision they receive. It is the responsibility of every teacher to consult this document to identify S.E.N. students in their classes. Subject teachers can discuss any concerns they have about a student(s) concerns with the SEN teacher or teachers relevant or the SEN coordinator or relevant.

A number of students with emerging special educational needs are added to this list throughout the year along with other information on existing students. Teachers are advised to consult this list throughout the academic year to keep up to date with any changes.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Board of Management

Oversee implementation and review of the resource teaching policy and the provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage for the Special Educational Needs department.

School Management

- The Principal is responsible for special educational needs in the school.
- The management are responsible for the adoption and implementation of suitable whole school policies for S.E.N. students.
- The management have responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of S.E.N. students.
- The management have responsibility to ensure that all staff has access to suitable training and advice to meet the needs of SEN students.
- The management in consultation with the SEN coordinator are responsible for identifying and allocating the teachers who work in the S.E.N. Department.

Special Education Coordinator.

The Special Education Coordinator manages the day to day running of the SEN department along with the school management. The responsibilities of the coordinator include

- Organising and oversee the time table for S.E.N. students and learning support student to meet the individual needs of the S.E.N. students and learning support students through
 - Individual tuition through extraction.
 - Tuition in small groups through extraction.
 - In class support for students with Special Educational Needs through team teaching in subject classes.
- Organise and oversee the Special Needs Assistants timetable.
- Meet with parents of S.E.N. students to discuss their child's needs both academic and emotional.
- Processing applications for Reasonable Accommodation for the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate State Exams to the State Examinations Commission on behalf of students/parents.
- Organising SEN centres for house exams in the school library.
- Processing applications for Exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils whose parents have applied for exemption and where students are eligible to be exempted.
- Liaise with the National Council for Special Education through the schools SENO in relation to:
 - Applying for resource teaching hours.
 - Applying for Special Needs Assistants.
 - Applying for Assistive Technology.
 - Applying for transport to and from school where necessary.
 - Conducting a S.N.A. review.
- Liaise with the National Educational Psychological Services for:
 - The assessment of student.
 - In service for staff.
 - Advice on individual pupils.
- Liaise with other outside agencies and providing information on S.E.N. students where appropriate to agencies such as:
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health services.
 - Occupational Therapists.
 - Speech and Language Therapists.

➤ National Educational Welfare Board.

- Provide in house training for teachers new to Special educational needs department on testing, record keeping and individual education targets.
- Support and Advise Special Educational Needs teachers and Subject teachers, year heads, pastoral care team on specific difficulties that pupils with specific disabilities have.
- Liaise with visiting teacher for visually impaired
- Liaise with visiting teacher for hearing impaired
- Attend case conferences with school management or external agencies in relation to specific SEN students where appropriate.

Mainstream Teachers

Mainstream teachers have a key role in the inclusion of S.E.N. students in Crescent College Comprehensive. The S.E.N. Department will endeavour to provide mainstream teachers access to all information that is relevant to teaching S.E.N. students, including psychological reports and other professional reports where necessary.

The mainstream teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring they have identified S.E.N. student in their classes.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of S.E.N. students in their class.
- Ensuring that all S.E.N. students in their class are provided with a differentiated learning programme **where appropriate and where possible.**
- Meeting the learning needs of S.E.N. student's through appropriate and reasonable classroom accommodations.

For example:

- Giving students extra time to take down homework or to complete exams.
- Giving different or less homework to students.
- Accepting work typed or on tape.
- Not asking students with reading difficulties to read out loud in class.

Special Educational Need Teacher

The SEN teacher delivers extra tuition to S.E.N. students across a range of subjects. This should be done in consultation with the relevant subject teacher.

The resource teacher is responsible for:

- Keeping records of individual and group learning targets for SEN pupils or groups of pupils on his/her caseload.
- Ongoing evaluation of the learning targets.
- Review of the Learning targets in early January and the 1st week in May when the learning targets are being and reviewed.
- Administering Diagnostic Assessments in Literacy / Numeracy to S.E.N. students.
- Advising mainstream teachers on strategies that will help with the inclusion of S.E.N. students in the mainstream classroom.
- Advising mainstream teachers on classroom resources that will help with the inclusion of S.E.N. students.
- Keeping parent(s)/Guardian(s) informed of their child's progress. Resource teachers should meet parent(s) or guardian(s) of students in their caseload at parent teacher meetings and on other occasions as they deem necessary.
- Keeping mainstream teachers informed of students' progress and changing needs.
- Identifying students in their caseload who may need to be referred to outside agencies.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) are responsible for supporting their child's learning through:

- Disclosing of all relevant information pertinent to their child's educational performance and needs.
- Monitoring and helping with their child's homework.
- Maintaining clear communication with class teacher and SEN teacher and SEN coordinator.

Pupils

It is important for the students to have an input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can:

- Become more independent as learners.
- Become aware of different learning styles.
- Become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs.
- Enjoy success and evaluate their progress.

Resources for Resource Teachers and Mainstream Teachers

School management have a responsibility to ensure that the learning support department and subject teachers have the necessary resources available to implement this policy.

A comprehensive collection of reference books on children with learning difficulties are available in the school library or in the SEN coordinators office.

Success Criteria

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement for students with learning difficulties.
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of resource teaching based on positive assessment results.
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs.
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' with learning difficulties.
- Increased opportunities for students with learning difficulties to access the curriculum.
- Improve self-esteem of students with learning difficulties.

Role of Special Needs Assistants

Special needs assistants (S.N.A.s) are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs.

Special needs assistants are recruited specifically to assist the school in providing the necessary non-teaching services to students with assessed educational needs. The allocation of posts to the school is reviewed each year.

Special needs assistants may be appointed for the care of students with assessed special educational needs who have, for example, a significant medical need for assistance or a significant impairment of physical or sensory function, or on behalf of students whose behavior is such that they are a danger to themselves or to other students.

Clear directions and support are given to special needs assistants by the SEN Coordinator in relation to the duties they are expected to carry out.

They should work closely with the teachers in providing assistance to students with special educational needs, for example in the areas of personal care, supporting mobility, or supervising work or recreation activities.

When a special needs assistant is engaged in assisting a student or group of students in relation to a particular learning task, this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.

Special needs assistants normally carry out their work in the school premises. However, on occasions when students with special needs are required to attend a venue outside the school, a special needs assistant (or assistants) may be assigned to provide assistance to the students in the other setting and to accompany them while they are travelling to and from the school.

Special needs assistants are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential.

The duties of special needs assistants are assigned and supervised by the SEN Coordinator, acting on behalf of the Principal and the Board of Management. The duties of special needs assistants are set out in Circular SNA 12/05 and include tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms.
2. Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.
6. Assisting in the supervision of pupils in their care during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special needs assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children).
9. Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management, or parent/guardian.
10. Other duties appropriate to the post as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special needs assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the post when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.

Ratified by the Board of Management: 15th June 2016

Helen O'Donnell

Helen O'Donnell, Chairperson, BOM

Karin Fleming

Karin Fleming, Principal & Secretary to the BOM

