



**January 2019**

Presentation Secondary School Listowel

Draft Special Educational Needs Policy

**Adopted by the Board of Management**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management

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

**Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Mission Statement:**

**Ours is a Presentation Secondary School, inspired by the vision of Nano Nagle, and in response to her we welcome and cherish girls irrespective of ability or background.**

**We aim to develop a vibrant community of Pupils, Staff, Parents, and Management, based on Gospel values such as justice, truth and honesty, in accordance with the ethos of the school and our agreed Code of Discipline and conduct.**

**We aim to assist in the development of the full potential of each girl in a pleasant and safe environment, where the dignity of each member of the School community is recognised, affirmed and valued.**

**We aim to awaken our girls to their true dignity and role as women in present day society. Inspired by these values we dedicate ourselves to the continual development of our Presentation School.**

## **RATIONALE**

- Presentation Secondary School Listowel has an open and inclusive Admissions Policy.
- All pupils identified with special educational needs (SEN) will receive appropriate support to enable them to access effective learning opportunities suited to their needs and ability as set down in the Admissions Policy. Parents should inform the school of the nature and detail of their child's disability.
- It is hoped that students with special educational needs (SEN) will be able to access an educational setting where :
  - all students are valued equally
  - all students integrate socially and academically
  - barriers to learning and participation are reduced
  - there are systems and resources that ensure early identification and intervention
  - suitable learning challenges and targets are set to meet the diverse learning needs of the individual student
  - all students have access to a broad, balanced, relevant and appropriately differentiated curriculum
  - development of self-esteem and of values such as respect for all individuals are paramount
  - students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities

## **RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL MISSION, VALUES, AIMS**

The school is a community where students feel cherished, secure and happy. It gives students access to a broad and balanced education and to develop their spiritual, academic, physical, emotional and ~~spiritual~~ **intellectual** potential to the full. These aims inform all teaching and learning in the Special Needs Department **and within the whole school environment.**

## **DEFINITION**

This Policy accepts the definition of “special educational needs” as outlined under the EPSEN Act 2004, "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"

Presentation Secondary School Listowel recognises that students with special educational needs are present in every classroom. All students have particular learning needs, be it an identified disability, emotional/behavioural issues or exceptional gifts and talents .

## **GOALS**

- to identify and provide for all students with special educational needs appropriately and equitably
- to promote and continue to develop a whole school approach for inclusion of students with special needs in all aspects of the school's operation
- to ensure that pre-enrolment screening **~(are we compliant with this if formal testing isn't done before September?)** of new students is effectively carried out and that all appropriate information in regard to students' learning needs is available to the appropriate teachers
- to collaborate with the relevant Year Counsellor?? and Pastoral Care team to ensure that students with special needs are appropriately supported
- to collaborate closely with Year Heads/Class Tutors and teachers and to assist in the programme planning needed to ensure that all students with special needs are appropriately supported in the classroom
- to ensure that teaching staff are provided with appropriate information in regard to students with special needs and that the information is regularly updated
- to inform staff of the services and resources available
- to ensure that student files are kept up to date and are stored in a confidential manner
- to provide for the Professional Development of teachers in regard to Special Needs
- to assist in the development and implementation of differentiated programmes for students who are gifted


## **LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

This Policy is grounded in the legal framework as outlined in the Constitution, the Education Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004.

## **CONTENT**

## **SEN PROVISION: JUNIOR CYCLE**

A guiding principle of Presentation Secondary School Listowel is that each student should be given all the support necessary to achieve ~~his~~ **her** full potential.

 Classes are organised on a mixed ability basis.

Special Needs students benefit from this arrangement as withdrawal, small groups and team teaching can occur at these times. All optional subjects in both Junior and Senior Cycle are mixed ability in nature.

## MODEL

The Model of SEN provision is focused on the individual needs of the student. It is firmly based on the following principles:

- The support of students with special needs in the school is a whole-school responsibility.
- The Special Needs Coordinator oversees a support team (of SEN Team, teachers and SNAs, i.e. Special Needs Assistants) that assists the class teacher to meet the needs of students with special needs.
- Parents/guardians are involved in the process of supporting their children through their partnership with the class teacher/s, the support team of SEN personnel, Year Head, Class Tutor and school management
- The Principal/Management provides a structure and environment that supports and monitors the learning of all students and is particularly sensitive to the learning needs of students with special needs

The provision for special needs students is carried out in a number of ways, including, withdrawal of students for extra support on a 1-1 basis, the creation of small class groupings and team-teaching. Learning support time is provided to a student whose scores in literacy and numeracy are under the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, but there is a degree of flexibility around this. Resource time is allocated to those students with assessments and without assessments. Some students have modified programmes and timetables appropriate to their individual needs.

Prioritising the needs of students informs the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Staff are briefed and informed about the **IEPs nature of a student's needs** by the Special Needs Coordinator **and, based on this information, teachers produce IEPs relevant to the student and to the subject being taught.**

Once developed, Individual Education Plans for the students concerned set clear learning/behavioural/social targets. IEPs are agreed with the individual student and his parents/guardians, and are reviewed and updated when necessary. Each Year Head/Class Tutor and subject teacher involved with the student has access to the I.E.P. **in the SEN folder on Sharepoint, Office 365.**

Teachers in mainstream classes are in regular communication with the SEN Coordinator and provide differentiated work/tests when required.

## **Policy regarding Bright and Gifted students**

Bright and gifted students are accommodated at in a variety of different ways. These mainly include a combination of differentiated learning and the provision of extra tuition and study outside of school hours and/or term time.

## **Procedures for identifying students with SEN**

### *SCREENING FOR LEARNING SUPPORT*

All First Year students sit standardised testing in intelligence, literacy and numeracy and the results of these, together with information gathered from the Primary Schools, parents, psychological and other assessments, are used to identify who will require learning support. The *CAT* screening test is administered to 1st Year students prior to coming to the school or at the beginning of the academic year. Other tests, including the NGRT and DRT, are carried out at this time.

### *LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS: ORGANISATION*

Students who are identified from the above process, are usually withdrawn from class 2 – 3 times per week. There is a certain amount of flexibility involved in the withdrawal of LS students due firstly to the needs of the individual and secondly, the flexibility within the timetable and staffing considerations. However, typically, students are usually taken from Languages. Students would usually have language exemptions. Should weaknesses be identified where exemptions do not exist then parents are informed and a consultation process begins. Team-teaching is also an option for the Learning Support student, depending on the personnel.

### *RESOURCE SUPPORT STUDENTS*

Resource students are allocated a time allowance individually for support. This allocation can be organised on a 1-1 basis, or the hours may be pooled for a group of students, depending on their needs.



*RACE: Reasonable Accommodations ~~and Concessions in Exams~~ in the Certificate Examinations*

Reasonable accommodations ~~and concessions~~ may be available to students with diagnosed special needs when sitting state exams. The student's application is **completed by the SEN Coordinator**, processed through the Principal and sent to the S.E.C.

Arrangements may include the provision of a reader or scribe, use of a word processor or a tape recorder, use of a separate centre, a waiver in spelling and grammar.

A separate application is required for the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate exams. ~~Parents/Guardians should note that if a RACE has been granted for the Junior Certificate there is no guarantee that this means an entitlement of RACE in the Leaving Certificate.~~ **Accommodations sanctioned for the Junior Certificate may, if requested, be reactivated for the Leaving Certificate.**

The SEN Department prepares the relevant students for the possible accommodations in the learning support class and by providing them with practice in the mock exams preceding the State Exams.

## **SEN Department**

- The Department comprises the Coordinator, SEN Team, Learning Support Teachers, and Special Needs Assistants.
- The Coordinator of the Special Needs Department oversees the provision of learning support services **in collaboration with the Principal** within the school and has specific responsibility for the effective inclusion of students with special needs.
- She performs functions delegated by the Principal as conferred on them by the Act EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 18).
- LS Teachers are responsible for the **creation and** implementation of individual students' IEPs

The SEN Department/Team consists of one fully qualified teacher who hold a Diploma in Learning Support and Special Needs Education. There is also a large team of teachers working in the area, some of whom have availed of CPD in the area.

The Special Needs Department is conscious of the importance of whole staff involvement in its day-to-day work. External agencies such as NEPS, Health Service Executive (HSE), KIDS, SESS and other professionals are invited to work with the school on a regular basis.

### ***COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS***

Parents are key players in the education of their children in an inclusive setting. Fostering a good relationship with parents is a priority and every opportunity is taken to involve parents in decisions regarding their children.

Parents are consulted by phone/email and are offered formal/informal meetings.

### ***ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

The Principal

- Takes such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of a child who is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.2).
- Has responsibility for the development of IEPs, their dissemination, implementation and

review.

### *The Special Needs Coordinator*

- Is responsible for dealing with DES submissions and concessions
- ~~Liaises with the relevant post holder for RACE~~
- Helps to process the Irish Exemptions
- CAT 4 Testing of incoming First Years
- CAT 4 Testing of Fifth Years (not mandatory)
- WIAT 111 testing of First, Second, Third and Fifth Year - English
- WRAT1V testing of First, Second, Third and Fifth Year - English
- WRAT1V testing of First and Second Year – Maths
- WIAT 111 testing of Sixth Years for RACE – where required
- WRAT1V testing of Sixth Years for RACE- where required
- Robbin Hedderly Handwriting Speed testing – Third and Sixth Years: RACE
- Writing Accuracy testing – Third and Sixth Years: RACE
- Applications for RACE on behalf of students to SEC
- NGRT Testing (First Years)
- DRT Testing (First Years)
- DARE Applications
- Consultation with parents re DARE and RACE
- Applications to NCSE for SNA Support on behalf of SEN students
- Applications to NCSE for assistive technology on behalf of SEN students
- The distribution of RTH for SEN students **in collaboration** with the Principal
- Monitoring of LS and communicating with parents regarding RTH
- Formal and informal meetings with parents of SEN students
- Facilitate transition meetings for parents of incoming students with SEN or AEN
- Meeting with other professionals regarding student needs i.e, physio/OT/SLT/visiting teacher/Inspectorate etc.
- Form completion for students in need of a psychological assessment (NEPS or private consultation)
- **Form completion for students attending CAMHS**
- Auditing of exemptions – Irish and MFL
- Attending workshops/ seminars etc. that are SEN related (during school day and outside of school hours)

- Presentation at staff meeting at beginning of the school year **and on other occasions if required** for the purpose of information as it relates to students – incoming and/or those in situ
- Preparation of PPPs for students with SNA access
- Collating IEPs for students RTH
- Collating Care Plans for students with SNA access
- Support for SNA Team
- **Update SEN folder on Office 365 to transfer relevant information**
- Is a member of the Pastoral Care Team
- Meets the following on a regular basis:
  1. Principal
  2. SEN Team
  3. Teachers re Language Exemption
  4. Post of Responsibility holder for Special Arrangements in Public Exams
  5. Year Heads/Class Tutors
  6. Pastoral Care Team
  7. SNAs
  8. Counsellor

to ensure good organisation and delivery of service.

- ~~• Has contact with whole staff by means of input into Staff Meetings, availing of transfer of relevant information via the School Network and liaising with individual teachers re students' needs~~
- ~~• Has regular contact with parents and relevant professionals from outside agencies.~~
- ~~• Is a member of the Pastoral Care Committee.~~

## **PSYCHOLOGISTS**

- The NEPs Psychologist works with the SEN Coordinator **and the Principal**
- Psychologist may be included in the preparation of IEPs in accordance with the EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 8.4).
- Psychologist provides general advice and support to school staff and parents; Psychologist is consulted about individual children.
- Psychologist may gather information about the students, their skills and abilities and may advise on a programme of support including referrals to appropriate services and specialities.

## **PARENTS**

- Notify the Principal if they are of the opinion that their Daughter has special educational needs and request him to take such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of their son EPSEN Act 2004 (Sections 3.1(a) and 3.2).
- Are entitled to be consulted and if they so wish to participate in the preparation of the IEP EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.9(a)).
- After the preparation of the IEP, parents are entitled to be informed and to receive a copy of the plan. EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.10).
- Are entitled to a report from the Principal of the outcome of a review of their child's IEP

## **STUDENTS**

The school recognises the importance of including the student, where appropriate, in the development of his IEP. Where involvement is appropriate, the student may:

- be involved in the IEP meeting;
- provide information about her 'own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns;

- assist in the identification of priority learning needs, targets and strategies;
- give feedback which will contribute to the monitoring and recording of progress.

### **THE SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANT (SNA) ( SEE Policy on SNAs also)**

The SNA has a direct involvement in supporting the student with identified and specific special educational needs and, therefore, has a valuable contribution to make to ~~his~~ **her** education???? . It is important that the SNA is given the opportunity to:

- share information with the SEN teaching team about the student's talents, strengths and needs;
- support the implementation of targets relating to the care and access needs of the student;
- provide feedback which will contribute to monitoring and reviewing the student's progress. See SNA Policy Document.

## **Other Teachers**

It is the responsibility of **all** teachers in the school to be aware of **all** students with special needs.

This involves:

1. liaising with the SEN team with regard to individual students with SEN in their classes.
2. carrying out the work laid out in the IEPs where appropriate
3. Differentiating Class work, Homework and Tests where suitable

The school staff needs to be aware of the varying degrees of information about students that is sufficient to ensure that an appropriate duty of care is in place at all times .

All teachers , however, do not need to know all the details about the nature/degree of every student's disability and/or special needs.

### **MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION**

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the Policy on Special Needs is implemented in the school
- **The Policy is reviewed every year.**
- The review is carried out in consultation with the Board.
- Assessment and monitoring of the Policy are carried out on a regular basis by the SEN Team

