



CBS Secondary School, Dungarvan

Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy

Introduction

Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in Dungarvan CBS is an integral part of the continuum of support within the school. The main aim, in line with the Dungarvan CBS Mission Statement, is to help all students reach their potential within an inclusive school environment. The SEN Department emphasises the individual needs of each student in our care. We appreciate that each student learns in different ways and at different rates, so a variety of teaching methods are employed across the school and within the SEN Department.

Definitions

Special Educational Needs:

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. Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) Inclusion: Inclusion is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school. National Council for Special Education (2011)

Scope of the Policy

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy applies to all students with SEN including those with exceptional ability. The requirements of identified SEN students are taken into account by all involved - parents/guardians, teachers, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, ancillary

staff, etc., and across all areas of school life, e.g., class work, homework, pastoral care, study, extra-curricular, etc. As part of the continuum of support the following applies:

1. The student is taught by the subject teacher who may provide differentiated material or learning environment where needed.
2. The student is part of a class where team teaching is taking place.
3. The student is withdrawn for small group or one to one teaching.

Mission Statement:

Dungarvan CBS is a community that embraces Christian values. The education it provides is rooted in a deep sense of faith. We aim to create a positive inclusive environment which enables everyone to reach their full potential. We promote mutual respect within the school community and strive to provide a happy and secure atmosphere which fosters a love of learning. We encourage the development of the whole person, by fostering the personal, spiritual and moral development of every student. The realisation of individual talents and academic excellence is paramount. We aim to create a friendly, healthy, safe and caring environment which affirms our pride in the school. We promote the development of the necessary skills so that students may become responsible members of society. It is our wish to see every student leave Dungarvan CBS with moral integrity and a heightened sense of social conscience.

Rationale:

Our model of support for SEN students is based on the research which shows that students with extra challenges should receive their education in the least restrictive environment possible making learning more relevant and meaningful to all. We endeavour to make our school an educational setting where all students are supported, whatever their needs.

Objectives:

- To ensure an inclusive learning environment for students with special educational needs (SEN).
- To explain how SEN students access learning support and resource (i.e., SEN teaching).
- To maintain a line of communication between parents/guardians, staff, students, and outside agencies, where applicable.
- To identify, plan, evaluate and review supports for SEN students in Dungarvan CBS.

Legal framework:

Dungarvan CBS sets out to provide education for all its students with reference to legislation regarding students with SEN as listed:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR)
- The Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Who deals with child protection concerns?
- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The Guideline for the Continuum of Support for Post-primary Schools (NEPS)

Aims of SEN Support:

- To implement cohesive and inclusive practices that help us embrace the heterogeneity of the student body.
- To ensure that students of all levels and abilities may access the curriculum to the best of their ability through a Whole School Approach including support from the SEN Department.
- To ensure all students are given the opportunity to achieve their individual potential.
- To develop a team approach involving all with an interest in the student's progress i.e. subject teachers, Year Head, Tutors, Guidance team, SEN Teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), ancillary staff, school management, outside agencies, parents/guardians and students.
- To develop and enhance the inclusive teaching strategies within the classroom enabling SEN students to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.
- To support this by ensuring that students are identified, lessons are differentiated, and work is monitored by subject teachers as part of on-going support and/or resource provision.
- To ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of SEN students and of the contribution staff can make in this area.
- To ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to SEN students.
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to SEN students.
- To show all SEN students are integrated in every aspect of school life.

Identification and Planning for SEN Support:

- **Gathering information**
 - **on incoming students:**

The Education Passport from primary schools, as well as visits to primary school and contact with parents prior to entry.

1. CAT4 scores in literacy and numeracy.
2. The Year Head for incoming 1st Years in conjunction with either the Principal or a member of the SEN Department contacts feeder schools to gain insight into the needs of the incoming students.
3. Information from Educational Psychological Reports or other outside agency reports are consulted, if available.

- **All students**

1. Information from Educational Psychological Reports, other schools attended or other outside agency reports are consulted, if available.
2. Consultation with parent/guardian and student is sought to gain a deeper understanding of a student's needs.
3. Information from observations by Year-heads, Tutors, subject teachers and Guidance Counsellors is collated.
4. Examine referrals from subject teachers, tutors, parents/guardians, Guidance Counsellors, relevant outside agencies, educational psychologists.

- **In school Assessment and Screening**

- **Incoming Students**

1. Screening/assessment of all incoming 1st Years each Jan/Feb prior to entry using CAT4 to identify all those at or below the 10th percentile, including those who have previously diagnosed difficulties. Identify if this group has literacy needs or numeracy needs or both.
2. Identify those with SLD with/without a language exemption.

- **All students**

1. In order to determine the type of intervention necessary and to identify specific needs, individual school-based assessments can be administered to students whose profiles show a discrepancy in their general assessments using DES approved standardised tests.
2. Arrange for Educational Assessments if necessary.
3. Screen for RACE applications
4. Teacher assessment
5. Where appropriate an application is then made to the NCSE through the local Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) requesting appropriate resources to support the students identified as having a special educational need.

Planning, monitoring and reviewing

- When data gathering and analysis are complete a proposal of how best to meet the student's needs is put together and shared with relevant staff in accordance with the GDPR guidelines.
- The SEN timetable is formulated for identified students in accordance with the Continuum of Support.
- Referral of students who wish to take up an exemption from languages to the relevant Year Head and Guidance Department.
- Ensure Resource Teachers and SNAs maintain relevant records.
- The SEN Department and SNAs meet on a weekly basis to record and assess progress of their allocated students.
- Observations by the SNA team are a valuable source of information.
- Suggested strategies from educational reports are implemented where feasible and depending on the resources available.
- Each Year Head attends the Care Team meeting at least once a term to keep all relevant parties updated.
- The Continuum of Support model is used by the SEN Department as follows
 - Stage 1 (Support for All) Teacher and/or parent concerns lead to classroom intervention.
 - Stage 2 (Support for Some). If targets were not met in Stage 1 then in-house testing will be carried out.

- Stage 3 (Support for a Few) Where a student's Special Educational Needs are severe and persistent then intensive support may be required and referral to outside agencies if necessary.
- The SEN Department liaise with Year Heads regarding academic tracking and progress in general. The November Progress, February and May examination reports are used in this process and are available to parents/guardians.
- All teachers will monitor students' progress through observation and class tests; where concerns arise, the class teacher can liaise with the Year Head, SEN Department or the Guidance Department as appropriate.
- Suggested strategies from Educational Psychologist Reports are implemented, where feasible and depending on the resources available.
- Learning Support teachers record material covered in one-to-one/group classes and monitor students' progress.
- The school facilitates parents/guardians wishing to discuss the needs of their child by appointment with relevant support personnel.
- Parents/guardians are recognised as the primary educators and as such play a pivotal role in the support and on-going monitoring of SEN students.

Curriculum Provision for SEN

The integration of SEN into the curriculum is based on the Continuum of Support Model. The aim is to be both flexible and responsive to the student's needs. Reduced timetables are facilitated in special circumstances in consultation with all relevant parties and available resources.

- **Support for All**

The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students in the class. A Student Support File/ Personal Pupil Plan is shared by the SEN Department for identified students with Level 2/3 Special Educational Needs. For students currently outside of the SEN department, the subject teacher starts their own student support file and documents any interventions made. In-class support may be assigned on a case-by-case basis whereby a Learning Support teacher comes into the classroom to support the classroom teacher in meeting the full range of needs of the students in the class.

Where students continue to present with significant difficulties, despite whole school interventions such as differentiated teaching, Support for Some is initiated. Subject teachers will share their Student Support File with the SEN Department.

- **Support for Some**

Support at this level can take many forms, for example, team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, behaviour reward and consequence and token systems. A support plan operates for an agreed period of time, and it is subject to review and is recorded in a student's file in the SEN office.

- **Support for few**

At this level, subject teacher(s), parents, and special education teachers, in collaboration with outside agencies, as required, engage in a more detailed and systematic approach to information gathering and assessment. This involves using a broad range of formal and informal assessment and diagnostic tools, including teacher observation, student interview, measures of cognitive ability and social, emotional, behavioural, and adaptive functioning, as appropriate. Data generated from this process may be used to make an application for SNA access. The SNA will be an integral part of the plan for these students. A Student Support File at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised, and to involve longer term planning and consultation. SNAs are assigned to provide appropriate care to students in their charge. They engage sensitively with SEN students to ensure that no stigma is attached. The aim is to gradually reduce the support needed so that the SEN student can gain maximum independence.

Intervention programmes

The following are some specific support programmes that are used to support SEN students:

- Toe by toe
- SNIP
- Peer reading
- SRA reading programme
- Accelerated Reader
- Spell/Write
- Let's Stand oral programme
- Talkabout social skills programme and Talkabout Teen: all years as appropriate.

This list is not exhaustive and changes from year to year.

Provision of SEN classes

The school has two SENCO teachers who provide support to SEN students as well as a range of other subject teachers depending on timetables.

- At Senior Cycle especially, subject teachers are asked to provide support to SEN students.
- Access to a Visiting Teacher for those students with hearing / visual impairment is facilitated.
- SNA Support is provided in the classroom, where students face challenges and in SEN Rooms where one-to-one support may be possible.
- The Guidance Department also provides social skills, study skills and stress management support.

Other Supports:

- SEN and Guidance teams meet with the Principal once a week
- SEN team meets regularly during the week to discuss active cases.
- SEN team have scheduled planning sessions as part of the Croke Park Hours allocation.
- Extra-curricular activities are open to all and encourage inclusion.

- Differentiation occurs within subjects to encourage participation of students of all levels of ability in class.
- Varied methodologies are encouraged and supported to include all students e.g. using concrete materials, group work/ paired work, differentiation of class/homework and AFL strategies.
- Additional learning extension/stretched learning opportunities are provided for students at the top end of the spectrum.
- Confidential reports etc. are filed securely in the SEN Department & Main Office.
- Student Support Files are drawn up annually for students who have been identified as Stage 3
- Support for a Few. These are reviewed on an on-going basis and complement monitoring by the Year-heads and Tutors.
- Communications with outside agencies such as NEPS and Lucena occurs as the need arises.
- Applications are made for RACE based on the criteria set out by SEC. –
- The SNAs actively encourage the SEN students to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Visiting speakers e.g. “As I Am” promotes understanding of difference.
- Supported Study is available every day after school for students who need extra support. A teacher is in place to help this smaller cohort of students with homework and study.
- In cases of financial difficulty, access to after school supported study can be discussed with the Principal.

Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of the policy:

- SEN students are included into all areas of our school environment.
- SEN students are participating to the best of their abilities in class.
- SEN students are able to complete suitable assignments and tasks independently.
- Feedback from teaching staff, Special Needs Assistants, parents/guardians, pupils, psychologists and other interested parties, which shows progress in any area.
- Improvement in results of class tests over time.

Communication

- **Between School and home**

- Parent /Teacher meetings are held annually.
- Resource Teachers may be available in a quiet area during Parent/ Teacher meetings.
- The procedure for parents/guardians making contact with the school is to contact the Year Head/ Tutor.
- Progress reports are sent out in November.
- Full school reports are sent out twice yearly, after the February and May in-house examinations.
- Resource teachers communicate with parents/guardians by email and by phone, or in person when necessary.
- School journals are available for communication.

- **Within the school**

- Student Support meeting for all staff is part of the return to school schedule.
- Information is communicated through the Care Team's meetings.
- Resource teachers meet on a weekly basis.
- Year-heads and SEN Department liaise constantly to monitor the progress of each student.
- SEN Department is available to advise or research issues as they arise through the referral form system.
- Care meetings occur before each Parent /Teacher meeting.
- Resource teachers are available to staff during the school day for consultation.

- **Between school and outside agencies**

- Communication between the SEN Department and outside agencies only happens with the consent of the parents/ guardians.

Student Records:

The SEN Department keeps information on individual students on file in a secure place.

- The SEN Department shares information on individual students around learning, student academic strengths and academic challenges. This information is shared in accordance with the GDPR guidelines.
- A record is kept on file of each of the following for the duration of a student's time in school:
 - Student's assessment details
 - What resources each SEN student receives
 - Academic tracking in consultation with Year-heads
 - Parents/guardians of students applying to transfer from primary schools will be obliged to provide the Principal with details and records of any Learning Support intervention prior to entry. These records will be kept on file.
 - Records are kept of applications for RACE, Irish Exemptions, SNA reports, reports/letters furnished by parents/guardians and any other relevant material.
 - Minutes of meetings within the SEN department are kept on file.

Review and Evaluation of SEN Department

The SEN Department, together with the Year-head and Subject Teachers, evaluates its work by:

- Class test results
- Term tests results
- Reviews by individual teachers for each SEN student
- Observations by Subject Teachers and Tutors
- Consultation with students (to encourage ownership of their learning) and parents/guardians
- Personal Pupil Plans and Student Support Files contain the dates / timeframes for targets and review

Applications to Outside Agencies

The SEN Department applies to outside agencies for the following:

- Resource materials such as laptops, hearing aids etc.
- SNA access
- Guidance and counselling
- Full educational assessments
- Special arrangements/consideration in State Examinations e.g. Separate centres, access to scribes, and access to helper for practical examinations i.e. RACE. This is done in co-operation with the Guidance Department.

Board of Management

This policy will apply after the relevant bodies have been consulted and the Board of Management (BOM) has ratified it.

- To ensure that all students with SEN are identified and assessed.
- To ensure that the school has an up to date SEN policy in place, monitor the implementation of that policy and ensure its evaluation and regular review.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN
- To ensure the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies and ensure that parents are informed of their child's SEN and how these needs are being met
- To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education.
- To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of EPSEN
- To promote inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled in all of the school community.

Principal

- To appoint a SEN Co-ordinator and work closely with the co-ordinator to inform the Board of Management.
- To consult with the SEN Co-ordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds.
- To establish a Special Educational Needs Support Team in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN.
- To promote a whole school approach to Special Educational Needs, 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 SEN students.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN.
- To process applications for Irish Exemptions.
- To provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion.
- To manage the implementation of policies and practices.
- To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions.
- To assign roles and responsibilities.
- To direct the work of the SNAs.
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Appendix 1: Definitions of SEN Categories (from NCSE)

General learning Difficulty / GLD

- Borderline mild general learning disability. This category consists of children who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a borderline mild general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 08/02).
- Mild General Learning Disability. This category consists of pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a mild general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 08/02). Mild GLD: IQ score of between 50 and 70 on a standardised test of intelligence.
- GLD: Moderate general learning disability - IQ score of between 35 and 49 on a standardised test of intelligence. This category includes pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).
- Severe/Profound GLD: Severe and profound general learning disability -IQ score of less than 35 on a standardised test of intelligence. This category includes pupils who have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability. In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities (DES Circular Special Education 02/05). A formal diagnosis of a general learning disability also requires that a student is experiencing a significant impairment in the area of adaptive functioning or general life skills.

Specific learning disabilities include:

- Specific learning disability / SLD: This category includes children who have been assessed by a psychologist as: being of average intellectual ability or higher having a degree of learning disability specific to basic skills in reading, writing or mathematics which places them at or below the 2nd percentile on suitable, standardised, norm-referenced tests.*
- Children who do not meet the above criteria and, who in the opinion of the psychologist, have a specific learning disability are more properly the responsibility of the Learning Support teacher and/or the class teacher (Circular Sp Ed 08/02).

- Dyslexia: is a difficulty in learning to read. This may mean that the child finds it hard to learn to read words or to understand what is written.
- Dyscalculia: is a difficulty with numbers. This may mean that the child finds it hard to understand how numbers work or learn to count or add, subtract, multiply and divide.
- Dysgraphia: is a difficulty with writing/spelling. This means that the child finds it difficult to write legibly and may have problems with spelling. They may find it hard to order their thoughts when writing a story or essay.

Physical disability

- Pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as: dyspraxia, congenital deformities, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brittle bones or severe accidental injury. Because of the impairment of their physical function they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities.
- Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support. They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severe dyspraxia.
- Pupils with a physical disability who have learning difficulties arising from the disability may need resource teaching where there are consequent significant learning difficulties.
- Others may need assistive technology only (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Hearing impairment

- This includes pupils who have a hearing disability that is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech.
- This prevents the child from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction.
- The great majority of these children have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher.

- This category is not intended to include pupils with mild hearing loss (DES Circular Special Education 02/05). Note:
- Hearing loss is measured in decibels and can be mild, moderate, severe or profound (Special Education Review Committee (SERC) Report, 1993).
- Levels of hearing loss as defined in the SERC report are illustrated in the following table:

Minimum audible intensity Level of impairment

- 20-30 decibels Mildly Hard of Hearing
- 30-60 decibels Moderately hard of hearing
- 60-89 decibels Severely hard of hearing
- 90 decibels or over Profoundly Deaf

Blind/visual impairment

- Pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams, and the written word.
- Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from conditions such as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa.
- Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher (This category is not intended to include those pupils whose visual difficulties are satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses) (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems

- Pupils are being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorders that significantly impair their socialisation and/or learning in school. (This category is not intended to include pupils whose conduct or behavioural difficulties can be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures on discipline).

- Some pupils in this category may need resource teaching support. Care support from a special needs assistant may be required where a pupil's behaviour is a danger to himself or others or where it seriously interferes with the learning opportunities of other pupils.
- In certain circumstances, some pupils may require both supports (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems (severe EBD).

- A child with severe EBD must be in the care of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist for a severe clinical disorder. A very small number of pupils would be expected to fall within this category.

Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

- This category includes pupils who have been assessed and classified by a psychiatrist or psychologist as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria.
- In the interest of the pupil with an ASD and in order that the needs of the pupil are adequately addressed, it is important, where feasible, that for a definitive assessment of ASD, a multi-disciplinary assessment team should be involved. The need for a multidisciplinary assessment is also in keeping with NEPS policy (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).
- Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome
- The level of additional support to be provided for pupils who present with a particular syndrome, for example Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome, will be determined following consideration of psychological or other specialist reports which describe the nature and degree of the pupils' special educational needs (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Specific speech and language disorder (SSLD):

This category includes:

- pupils assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence that places non verbal or performance ability within the average range or above.
- pupils assessed by a speech therapist on a standardised test of language development that places performances in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level.
- pupils whose difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db.
- pupils whose emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes of the difficulty experienced.
- This category is not intended to include pupils with speech and language delays and difficulties. Two assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case (DES Circular Special Education 02/05).

Multiple disabilities

- Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the low incidence disabilities described above (DES Circular Special Education 02/05) – taken from the NCSE information booklet.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____