

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY**

### **Rationale for Policy:**

This Policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us 'to nurture the academic and personal development of each individual in a caring and safe environment within our school community' and 'to enhance the self-esteem of each individual in an atmosphere of mutual respect'. Furthermore, our ethos advocates 'special concern for those who are emotionally, materially or intellectually disadvantaged'.

### **Definition of Special Needs:**

A person has special educational needs if there is 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'... EPSEN Act 2004.

The policy applies to students who are exceptionally able, students with learning difficulties, students with disabilities and students who are at risk – personal, social or educational.

### **Aims of Policy:**

The policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that the school:

- Makes an accurate and appropriate assessment of the needs of students who may have special educational needs.
- Assesses the school's capacity to cater for the needs identified.
- Specifies what additional resources may be required by the school and by the student.

**Goals:**

The School will strive to have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- to identify the special educational needs of all incoming students
- to review the special educational needs of current students
- to seek to provide for the needs identified

The school staff will strive:

- To enable each student to live a full life and to realise his/her full potential as a unique individual through access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- To enable each student, while valuing his/her strengths and abilities, to function as independently as possible.
- To provide a safe and caring environment where all levels of intelligence are encouraged and valued.
- To foster an atmosphere of respect and acceptance where students can develop their own learning strategies in relation to their interests and capabilities so that they can be involved in their own learning and have opportunities to recognise their own difficulties and to develop skills and strategies to cope with them.
- To prepare each student to participate in the State Exams and to achieve their best results.
- To enable each student to continue learning into adult life.

**Bullying and Harassment:**

In St. Paul's teachers are ever vigilant for signs of bullying. Our contribution to preventing bullying in the Learning Support area is to foster an atmosphere of encouragement and confidentiality among all L.S. recipients so that everyone's right to an education is safeguarded.

**Objectives:**

- To endeavour to develop positive self-esteem.
- To endeavour to develop positive attitudes about school and learning.
- To be aware that all students are gifted and that all students' special talents are recognised and celebrated.

- To enhance the students' learning experience by making their time in the Learning Support class enjoyable and worthwhile, and that the atmosphere of acceptance and differentiation experienced there may be fostered throughout the school.
- To provide all students with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each stage of their development.
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resource where possible.
- To provide relevant information re special needs e.g. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, etc. at staff meetings.
- To promote collaboration among teachers, pupils and parents in the implementation of special needs programmes.
- To support mainstream teachers in teaching special needs students in mainstream classes and to provide support for any student who needs temporary assistance for a specific length of time.
- To monitor the progress of special needs students throughout the school.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. B.O.M.                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To approve the policy and support implementation.</li> <li>- To ensure implementation of the policy.</li> </ul>  |
| 2. Principal/<br>Deputy Principal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To facilitate implementation of the policy.</li> <li>- To ensure implementation of the policy.</li> <li>- To facilitate review of policy at appropriate intervals.</li> </ul>                    |
| 3. L.S./R. Teachers               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be familiar with the Special Needs Policy and to fully implement it.</li> <li>- To liaise with relevant officials e.g. N.E.P.S., S.E.N.O. and visiting teachers for Special Needs.</li> </ul> |
| 4. Parents                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To support, co-operate and assist in implementing the policy by regular involvement at parent-teacher meetings and by appointment whenever necessary.</li> </ul>                                 |
| 5. Students                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To co-operate with teachers and all partners in implementing the policy.</li> </ul>  |

6. S.N.A. - To liaise with teachers and designated child during the school day according to the duties specified by their terms of employment.

### **Process:**

#### **Pre-Entry:**

1. All students with special needs are identified as follows:
  - On acceptance of a place in the school, information is sought from parents with respect to learning support and special needs requirements of students. This can only be done when this information is documented on the Enrolment Form. Where a student has availed of any special tuition, resources or equipment at primary school, the parents are required to make this known to the Principal of St. Paul's.
  - The Principal makes contact with primary school re-release of any available reports on incoming students (always with the permission and co-operation of parents). It is the parents' responsibility to have up-to-date reports available for Principal for children transferring into St. Paul's. Primary Schools will be contacted to enable the timely forwarding of transfer reports and results of standardised tests.
  - The results of these tests
    - a) Provide screening for students in need of Learning Support and
    - b) Determine if a student may need to be assessed by a psychologist.

#### **In School:**

- Mainstream teachers may make recommendations re provision of learning support or further testing.
  - Regular discussion with learning support/mainstream teachers/year heads may identify further needs.
  - Relevant information regarding students with special needs is disseminated at staff meetings.
  - Teachers to differentiate their teaching to make learning accessible to all.
2. All pupils identified as having special needs will have their needs addressed and met within the resources available to the school. This will be done in collaboration with all concerned. Students who are noted as having learning difficulties will be catered for in Learning Support classes, where possible, following recommendations of subject teachers in consultation with Principal, Year Head and Learning Support Team.

3. Individual Education Plans are prepared for all students for whom resource hours have been recommended.
  - I.E.P.s are prepared and implemented in collaboration with the student and all partners.
  - I.E.P.s are reviewed regularly with a general review at the end of each year.
4. Individual Care Plans are prepared by the Special Needs Assistants for each child who accesses their support. They are reviewed regularly.
5. Monitoring of progress of all special needs students will take place as follows:
  - Observation of progress by any/all partners.
  - Progress check by subject/class teacher or special needs co-ordinator.
  - Class teacher assesses progress regularly.
  - I.E.P. reviewed regularly.
  - Care Plans reviewed regularly by SNAs.
  - Meeting of I.E.P. team where relevant.
  - Monitoring process to be reviewed on receipt of guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills.
6. Parents will be contacted once their son/daughter is identified as having special needs. Principal/Special Needs and L.S. teachers will liaise with parents regularly to discuss needs/progress/review. It is very important that all parent(s)/guardian(s) bring their son(s)/daughter(s) to all appropriate professional appointments so that all their children's needs are being addressed in a holistic way.

### **The Exceptionally Able Student**

- Teachers encourage pupils to take higher level subjects whenever possible.
- Career Guidance teacher is involved in subject choices.
- Staff and parents are informed of students who are very able (beyond the norm).
- Staff to differentiate teaching for exceptionally able students.
- National competitions are encouraged and supported.
- Extracurricular activities are facilitated and encouraged.

### **Monitor and Review**

The Special Needs Policy will be reviewed every two years.

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

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

