



SANCTA MARIA COLLEGE

Louisburgh Co. Mayo



Special Educational Needs Policy

Our Mission Statement:

Sancta Maria College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST whose core values are inclusive of the Mercy philosophy of education.

We welcome, care for and support all within the school community through the promotion of

- Respect
- Being just & responsible
- Quality teaching and learning
- An inclusive community
- Life-long learning

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized.

It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.

CEIST is committed to on-going whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, staff, parents and the wider community.

Operating Context:

A Board of Management operates Sancta Maria College within the following guidelines:

- In the context of, and within the parameters of the Department of Education & Skills [D.E.S] and its regulations and programmes.
- Within the rights of the trustees as set out in the Education Act.
- Following the religious and educational policies of CEIST.
- Within the funding and resources available.

Rationale:

Every young person, including those with special educational needs, has the right to share with his/her peers as complete an educational experience as possible.

Pupils with special educational needs include all those whose difficulties and /or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging. Such pupils have special educational needs which will require special educational provisions to be made for them within an inclusive curriculum.

Definition:

Special Educational Needs are defined as:

"The educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of the exceptionally able student."

Goals:

1. Compliance with relevant legislation: Education Act 1998; Equal Status Act 2000; Education (Welfare Act) 2000. Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.
2. Equality of access to and participation in the school
3. Parental choice in relation to enrolment
4. Inclusivity
5. Compliance with Admissions Policy.

Transferring to Sancta Maria College:

The Home/School Liaison Co-ordinator, through his/her visits to the primary schools and to the parents of students, will help and advise with regard to subject options.

Parents will meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal at enrolment of students.

Open evenings allow parents and prospective students to visit the school, acquire information and meet the staff.

Procedures:

The Board of Management will take steps at an early stage to identify children with special educational needs who may be applying for admission to Sancta Maria College.

The Board will request a copy of the student's medical/psychological report/Individual Education Plan, if available.

The Board may request immediate assessment in order to assist in establishing the educational and training needs of the student relevant to his or her difficulty and to profile the support services required. The Principal will assess the needs of the student, having consulted with the relevant psychological, parental, educational and/or medical advisers.

Having gathered all the relevant information, the Board will assess how needs can be met.

If further resources are required, the Department of Education and Skills will be requested to provide the resources, e.g. Special Needs Assistant/Teacher, specialised equipment, furniture, transport etc.

The Principal, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, or designated teacher, shall meet the parents to discuss the

student's needs and the school's capability of meeting those needs.

There may be individual cases where the Board of Management, having examined all the options open to it, may be forced to decline an application on behalf of a student with a disability. This would arise where the Board would be unable, due to the unavailability of resources, to discharge its statutory obligation to provide an education appropriate to the students' needs. The Board may alternatively postpone the attendance of the student until such time as resources are in place.

Curriculum and Planning:

Students with a physical disability who have learning difficulties arising from the disability may need resource teaching. Others may need assistive technology only. Students with severe physical disabilities may have needs for care support from a special needs assistant.

Students attend mixed-ability classes, however, learning support if necessary will be provided where the relevant student(s) will attend appropriately dedicated classes.

Students may be withdrawn from a subject deemed inappropriate in the light of the special educational needs of the child.

Alternatively, relevant students may be withdrawn at various times from subjects in order to avail of the support available.

Development of self-esteem and of values such as kindness, integrity and respect are paramount and all students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities.

In setting homework for students with special educational needs, teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include

consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. For some students, the continuing involvement of parents is very valuable. Subject teachers will collaborate where possible with the Learning Support team to ensure class tasks are manageable, and

individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the students. In general, and in so far as is appropriate, the curriculum will be that of the Department of Education and Skills and at a level deemed appropriate

Performance Criteria:

- The class teacher will assess performance at regular intervals through the medium of written and oral examination. Standard Forms of testing, e.g. Drumcondra, Level iv, Neal, Norman-France etc will be used in order to assess percentile and other rankings
- Reports are issued at midterm, Christmas, Summer and also after the Pre- Junior and Pre Leaving certificate examinations.
- Each year group has an annual parent- teacher meeting.
- There is an information evening for those progressing to Transition Year and Fifth Year.
- Individual progress reports are issued when the need arises.
- The Academic Monitor checks the academic progress of all our students on a regular basis.
- The Class Teacher will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the Principal to identify areas of support for selected students.
- A member of the SEN team will liaise with parents regularly by the most appropriate method, e.g. telephone, email, text etc.

Bullying and Harassment

Any issues or allegations related to Bullying are dealt with under our Anti-Bullying policy. (Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy)

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management will ensure that the policy is developed, approved, implemented and reviewed.

The Principal, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Learning Support and Resource Teachers, Guidance Counsellor, Tutors, Year Heads and other key staff will implement the policy and evaluate progress.

The Principal will, if necessary, seek the support of NEPS and/or other appropriate bodies.

Reasonable Accommodations:

The D.E.S. has made special arrangements in the Certificate Examinations for candidates who would have difficulty in communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical disability, including visual and hearing impairments, or a specific learning difficulty.

Application for special arrangements will be made by the Principal / designated person.

Certification:

Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, L.C.V.P

Guidance

Under the School Guidance Plan all student including those with special educational needs are advised on relevant courses that may suit their individual needs.

This policy will be subject to review at regular intervals

Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed and revised in the light of changing circumstances by all the relevant partners in the school

community.

The effectiveness of the Policy will be judged in the light of the academic, intellectual and social development of the student with special educational needs through the continuous monitoring of student progress.

Review:

This code was ratified by the Board of Management on November 30th 2010. It was proposed by Ms. A. Heneghan and seconded by Mr. T. Rogers. This code will be reviewed and revised in the light of changing circumstances, if such changes occur. Otherwise it will be reviewed in 2013/14.

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