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Special Educational Needs Policy Document Secondary School

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Mission Statement:

It is the belief of St Kilian's school community that all students should receive the opportunity to fulfil their potential both academically and socially. The Special Educational Needs (SEN) department seeks to provide academic and pastoral support to students with special educational needs. It is recognised that students are individual and unique in their interests, abilities and learning needs and this diversity is acknowledged and valued.

Rationale:

This policy aims to support all members of staff in providing a positive and inclusive approach towards the learning and progress of all SEN students. In accordance with the Education Act 1998, The Education Welfare Act 2000, The Equal Status Act 2000-2004 and The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, the school supports the policy that students with special educational needs have equal rights to avail of and benefit from education as children who do not have these needs.

Goals:

To identify students with special educational needs and provide for their needs in an inclusive way.

To ensure that SEN students are offered equal access to educational provision as students who do not have special needs.

To ensure that SEN students reach their full potential both academically and socially.

Definition:

"Pupils with special educational needs include all those whose disabilities 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 arising from their disabilities and /or circumstances and will require educational provision to be made for them." (*Department of Education and Science Appendix 11 Glossary of terms, Circular letter M08/99*)

Students are provided for by the SEN department if they have a learning/physical/sensory difficulty which calls for a special educational provision to be made for them which is in addition to or different from the curriculum plan within the mainstream class. Gifted students are also recognised as having special educational needs and the school recognises their needs and aims to provide appropriate provisions.

The following categories of students with special educational needs are provided for by the SEN department:

- Students granted resource hours by DES.
- Students assessed by psychologist as having Specific Learning Difficulties.
- Students who have non-specific learning difficulties and who are identified by teachers as being unable to cope adequately with the demands of the curriculum.
- Students with physical or sensory impairment requiring additional intervention to support them in accessing the curriculum.
- Students identified as Gifted or High Achievers.

Policy Content:

- **SEN Team:**

The SEN team will comprise of the Special Needs Coordinator, Resource Teacher, Learning Support Teachers and others as required.

It will meet once a term or as the need arises.

It is responsible for identifying students with special educational needs.

- **First Year Intake:**

Parents of students transferring from other primary schools either in Ireland or abroad are asked to complete the Pre Enrolment form outlining any special needs the student may have. The student's previous school is also contacted. If students are thus identified as having special educational needs a copy of the most recent psychological report is requested.

All information is confidential but may be used by SEN department. Copies of reports are kept in the Learning Support room and on the student's file in the general office, subject to the school's Data Protection Policy. Students also sit the Cognitive Abilities Test No 3 and the results are used to identify students with SEN. Throughout the process parents and staff are kept informed.

- **Other Intake:**

Previous schools and parents are required to complete the Intake Questionnaire and students with special educational needs are identified. Throughout the school year teachers may complete a SEN referral form and thus identify pupils who may require SEN provision.

Educational Provision:

The Educational Provision falls under the following categories:

- **Learning Support (LS):**

Access to the learning support teacher is determined by the educational needs of each student. Information is gathered from the following sources: subject teachers, form teachers, year heads, parents, previous schools and test results. Allocation of LS hours is accordance with the needs of each student. Each student will receive a minimum of one period a week. Once the student is referred to LS the parents will be contacted and invited to meet with the LS teacher. Each student allocated learning support will receive an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) (short version). Priority is given to those students with Educational Psychological reports. The LS teacher in conjunction with parents and teachers will compile this plan. The student's strengths and needs are identified and prioritised and become the basis of the IEP. Targets are set for the student and reviewed each term.

ICT is an integral part of the learning and teaching in SEN classes.

The work of the SEN department is focused on the literacy and numeracy needs of the pupils.

- **Resource Hours:**

Students allocated resource hours or an SNA, will receive an IEP (long version). This will be compiled by the SEN team in conjunction with parents, teachers and other agencies. The student's strengths and needs are identified and prioritised and become the basis of the IEP. Targets are set for the student and reviewed each term.

- **Record Keeping:**

All records are retained in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. All reports are kept in a secure cabinet and information only circulated on a need to know basis.

The assignments undertaken in resource teaching/learning support will be kept in individual folders in the Resource/Learning Support rooms.

- **Liaison with Teachers:**

- The SEN department will notify staff annually of the procedures of the SEN department.
- The SEN department will maintain a list of students who have special needs and at the start of the year this information will be shared with relevant teaching staff.
- Teachers are invited to liaise with the SEN staff to familiarise themselves with details of Educational Psychological reports or IEP's.
- Teachers are free to seek background information on students from SEN staff.
- The SEN department will endeavour to support teachers by providing them with specific information on exam accommodation granted by DES and well as with useful resources to assist them in meeting the needs of SEN students.
- Subject teachers liaise with the SEN department in the provision of differentiated teaching and assessment for SEN students.

Communication with Parents:

- The SEN team is available to meet with parents who wish to discuss their child's progress.
- The parents of students receiving tuition within the SEN department will receive reports at the end of each half year.

Review

Reviewed November 2014. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner if the need arises.

Special Needs Education

Within the all subject departments, St. Kilian's aims to apply the following teaching methods in relation to special needs:

- Always ask questions in a clarifying manner, and then have the students with learning disabilities describe his or her understanding of the questions.
- Use the interactive white board with an outline of the lesson or unit of the day.
- Provide clear photocopies of your notes and overhead transparencies, if the student benefits from such strategies.
- Use a coloured background on the interactive white board to assist those with dyslexia.
- Provide students with chapter outlines or study guides that cue them to key points in their readings.
- Ask questions in a way that helps the student gain confidence.
- Keep oral instructions logical and concise. Reinforce them with a brief cue words.
- Repeat or re-word complicated directions.
- Frequently verbalise what is being written on the interactive white board.
- Eliminate classroom distractions such as, excessive noise, flickering lights, etc.
- Outline material to be covered during each class period unit. (At the end of class, summarise the important segments of each presentation.)
- Establish the clarity of understanding that the student has about class assignments.
- Give assignments both in written and oral form.
- Have practice exercises available for lessons, in case the student has problems.
- Have students with learning disabilities underline key words or directions on activity sheets (then review the sheets with them).
- Have complex homework assignments due in two or three days rather than on the next day.

