

Special Educational Needs Policy

Boherbue Comprehensive School

1.0 Definition of Special Educational Needs:

Special educational needs is defined as '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 Educational Needs Act 2004.)

1.1 Rationale

The Board of Management, Staff and Parents of Boherbue Comprehensive School are committed to creating a learning environment which is inclusive and supportive of all pupils in line with the mission statement:

Boherbue Comprehensive School by virtue of its position in the community endeavours to give the best education and service to its pupils and community, based on Christian values that will help all who come into contact with the school to reach their full potential.

Inclusive education relates to "the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of local mainstream educational institutions (Booth and Ainscow 1998).

1.2 Aims and Principles

At Boherbue Comprehensive School we are committed to fostering and developing an inclusive learning environment in which all students, whatever their educational needs, are enabled to experience success and to achieve their potential within our school community.

The school will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Science, both financial and personnel, to make appropriate provision and accommodations for students with special educational needs so that these students are able to participate in school life in so far as the school's resources allow. We endeavour to develop a partnership with parents/guardians to assist us in providing for students with additional educational needs so they will reach their full potential. Special Educational needs provision is designed so that all students are enabled to:

- realise their full potential as unique individuals through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum
- function as independently as possible through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential;
- enhance their basic skills and learning strategies to a level which enables them to participate fully in the school community
- acquire the basic personal, social, literacy, numeracy and IT skills needed for life.

- develop in a caring and safe environment in which they can enhance their individual talents.
- enable them to experience success.
- develop a positive self image / self esteem and a positive attitude to school and learning.
- enable students to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.

Access

Every effort is made on the part of school management to ensure that the building offers a high degree of accessibility for students with disabilities. Consideration of these disabilities and of the special needs of all students have been taken into account in finalizing all school policies and procedures

Categories of SEN:

SEN students fall into two broad categories as follows:

- **High Incidence**
- **Low Incidence.**

To date, the school has provided for the following categories of students with Special Educational Needs:

- Borderline/ Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties—Attention deficit disorder (ADD), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Specific Learning Difficulty—Dyslexia, Dyscalculia
- Physical disabilities—Dyspraxia, Cystic Fibrosis.
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (hearing & visual impairments)
- EAL students
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g. Asperger's Syndrome).

Identification of students with Special Educational needs:

Many students will have their special educational needs identified prior to their transfer to post primary school. The information gathering process incorporates a range of formal and informal procedures:

- An Open Night assists parents and school personnel with the sharing of information re educational, medical or other needs.
- Enrolment Form: Parents are required to complete an additional SEN form and to forward any relevant professional reports to the school including Educational psychologist's reports, O. T. Reports and Speech and Language reports.
- Regular communication exists between Boherbue Comprehensive School and the feeder Primary schools. Primary schools are required to forward an Education passport for each incoming student following confirmation of enrolment (Circular 45/2014). This includes the 6th class end of year report. Principal and SEN Coordinator visit feeder Primary schools in May prior to entry.
- Parents of students with SEN are invited to meet the SEN Coordinator.
- Testing: Cat 4 assessment is carried out prior to entry to 1st Year. NGRT (New Group reading test) is carried out in September of 1st Year and again in May to assess reading ability and progress. A Maths competency test is carried out in 2nd year. Diagnostic testing as necessary - pupils in need of extra support may be identified using standardised tests e.g. WRAT 4 test, WIAT- T, YARC.
- Parents/ Guardians may contact the school directly if they have any concerns regarding existing students.
- Classroom teachers and Year Heads may refer students for consideration for learning support in the event of difficulties arising in class.
- If a student has not been identified as having a Special Educational Need until after enrolment, the permission of parents may be sought to have the student referred to the appropriate professionals (N.E.P.S Psychologist, Occupational Therapy services, Speech and language therapist, etc.). The student may receive support until such an assessment is carried out.
- For students with a high level of need, transition meetings may be arranged between primary and post-primary schools in advance of transfer.
- Students may visit school to familiarise them with school environment and to help reduce anxiety.

Levels of Support:

Support may be provided through SNAs, in-class support, team teaching, as well as group or individual support dependent on DES allocation.

The Continuum of Support:

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the main principle is that resources are deployed to address identified needs of students so that those with the highest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.

Special Education Circular 0014/2017 sets out the revised allocation model. The Continuum of Support framework assists schools in identifying and responding to students' needs:

It recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs.

It ensures that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions, to more intensive and individualised support, that are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

It functions as a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention, enabling schools to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. This includes academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

The Continuum of Support includes the following levels of support:

Whole School and Classroom (Support for all)	<p>Identification of those needing additional support can be informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake screening • Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport • Teacher observation records and assessment • Learning Environment Checklist • Student Support Team (Care team) involvement • Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy • Student consultation • Parental consultation
School Support (Support for Some)	<p>Where students continue to present with significant difficulties, despite whole-school interventions (such as differentiated teaching, a mentoring programme or social skills group), School Support (for Some) is initiated.</p> <p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and may be further informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of behaviour <p>Support at this level can take many forms, for example: team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, peer mentoring, inclusion in social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems.</p> <p>A Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support Plus (Support for a few)	<p>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.</p> <p>Data generated from this process are used to plan an appropriate intervention and serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A Support Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised, and to involve longer term planning and consultation.</p>

Curricular Modification

Curricular modifications are considered for individual students where deemed absolutely necessary. Consultation between all relevant parties is deemed essential when making such decisions. Where possible, the timetabled periods which become available due to such curricular modifications will be used to implement learning support interventions.

Resources:

- The SET team have access to a designated classroom (C5) containing a comprehensive range of resource materials.
- The SET team have access to two computer rooms.
- iPads and Chrome books are also available to be signed out for use in SEN classes.
- Teachers are provided with information and strategies which may be used for a range of different abilities, to enable planning for students with special educational needs.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of the Board of Management:

To oversee school policy in relation to students with SEN including the Admission policy and the SEN Policy.

- To review curriculum provision and programmes on offer
- To ensure Reasonable accommodation is being made for students with SEN
- To contribute to the development of awareness of staff members as to their responsibilities, teachers, SNAs etc.
- To support in-career development
- To arrange for policy on storage, dissemination and transfer of confidential reports/ records. The school is obliged to act in accordance with the Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003) in relation to the management and maintenance of data on individual students.)
- To ensure that resources are appropriately used including staff
- To ensure parents are provided with opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their child's education.

Role of the Principal

- Development and implementation of the schools policies and procedures
- Whole school approach to assessment and screening
- Effective engagement with feeder primary schools to support transition
- Key function in the deployment of staff, allocation of resources, organisation of students and timetabling.
- Effective sharing of relevant information on students needs with all subject teachers
- Facilitate CPD for all teachers in relation to SEN.
- Ensure that all staff are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities
- Effective involvement of parents, students and external professional s/ agencies.

Role of SEN Co-ordinator

The SENCO assumes an overall responsibility for co-ordinating the school's provision for the inclusion of students with special educational needs:

- To coordinate data gathering, screening and testing.
- To coordinate transition planning for students with Special educational needs.
- To take a lead role in planning, implementation, and review of Student support plans.
- To Support the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject teachers, year heads etc.
- To liaise with other agencies, NEPS and allied health professionals.
- To liaise with parents and students.
- To assist in programme planning
- To make applications for specialised equipment/ assistive technology/ resources.
- To facilitate Record keeping

- To advise on and to facilitate the making of applications for Reasonable accommodations in certificate examinations (RACE)
- To facilitate the arrangement of psychological or other assessment,
- To liaise in the management, procurement and maintenance of specialised learning and teaching resources for students with special educational needs
- To encourage teachers to avail of In-career development opportunities.
- To liaise with the Guidance Counsellor with regard to standardised/ diagnostic testing/ DARE applications etc.
- To be involved in the review of individual students' progress
- To provide useful advice and support to mainstream teachers, as required, in regard to the selection and implementation of appropriate means of assessment in subject areas for students with special educational needs

Role of the Subject teacher:

- First line responsibility for the education of all students.
- Subject teacher must use Support plans to inform targets and subsequent planning for the individual needs of the student.
- Plan lessons carefully to address the diverse needs
- Provide a range of differentiated learning experiences.
- Provide students with opportunities to be active participants in their own learning
- Independent and collaborative tasks and reinforcement of skills' development.
- Cooperative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms.
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence.
- Embed ICT in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Subject teachers liaise with the SEN Department (SENCO and Learning support teachers) with regard to students with Special educational needs regarding the implementation of an agreed learning support programme.
- Subject teachers need to identify students experiencing difficulty and refer them accordingly- see referral form in staff room.

Role of the Special Education Team (SET):

The SET team may be timetabled for:

- Co-operative teaching with mainstream teachers in mainstream classes
- withdrawal of students for additional classes in literacy, mathematics (or both), as appropriate
- Specific support for students with special educational needs in other areas, such as the development of organisational skills, social skills and life skills etc.
- The LS/Resource teacher liaises with the subject teachers with regard to implementation of an agreed support programme.

Role of Parents/Guardians:

Provision for Special educational needs is seen as a partnership between school, students and parents/guardians, and values the contribution that they make.

Role of the SNA

SNAs are recruited specifically to assist schools in making suitable provision for a student or students with special care needs arising from a disability in an educational context. A key goal of SNA support is to help students develop independent living skills. As these skills are acquired the level of SNA support is reduced. The SNA works as part of the SEN Support team in liaison with Management, SENCO, class teachers and Learning support teachers.

- The SNA assist First Years in general with the transition from Primary to Second level as follows:
- Supporting students in class in order to facilitate their attendance at school and minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the student or their peers.
- Supporting students with mobility issues around the school and in boarding and alighting from school buses
- Supporting individual students with their organisational skills on a daily basis with the aim of making students more self-reliant and independent.
- Ensuring that students have necessary class requirements to enable them to participate in the class e.g. Books, materials, ingredients etc.
- Supporting students in classes where Health and Safety may be an issue.
- Ensuring students have recorded homework correctly.
- Supporting students with particular difficulties e.g. typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment
- Assisting in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from class.

Role of the Year head

- To support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and to contribute to the work of the special educational needs support team as required.
- To facilitate the inclusion by monitoring progress of students with SEN within the year group.
- To contribute to the collection of relevant information on new entrants with special educational needs.

Role of The Guidance Counsellor

- To ensure that counselling and guidance for students with special educational needs, in accordance with their individual needs, are included in the school guidance plan.
- To assist students with special educational needs in making career decisions.
- To assist with arrangements for the successful transfer of students to the post-primary school and in gathering information about students collaborate in assessment processes
- To assist in making teachers aware of relevant information about students with special educational needs and to advise on how these students can be helped in school.
- To advise students of college access programmes e.g. DARE.

Role of the Visiting Teacher Service

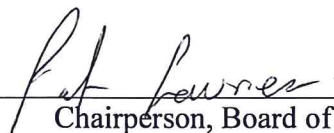
To provide support for students who are visually or hearing impaired and enrolled in mainstream schools

Procedure for acquiring an exemption from Irish

- Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate. (Circular 12/96). The Guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to.
- The school will make application for an exemption from Irish when a written request is made by the parents of the student and the school is furnished with a copy of a psychological report not more than two years old or other supporting documentation.

REVIEW This policy document will be subject to review by the staff, students, parents and Board of Management.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 26/2/2019

Signature: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 26/2/19