



SEN POLICY

Curragh Post Primary 2020

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Section 1: Introduction, Vision, Rationale, Aims, Objectives & Ethos of Curragh Post Primary School

Introduction:

Curragh Post Primary School is a co-educational, multidenominational secondary school under the guidance of Kildare and Wicklow ETB. The school serves not only the community of the Curragh and surrounding areas such as Suncroft, Brownstown and Ballysax but also larger catchment areas such as Kildare Town and Newbridge.

All classes from first year through to sixth year are of mixed ability. A strong emphasis is based on the holistic development of the individual, which encompasses the individual's wellbeing, in an environment of equity, care and mutual respect.

Vision:

Our vision is of a caring, respectful, ambitious, equal, just, fair and resilient community. A community where the holistic development of all students is to the forefront of everything we do on a daily basis. An environment where students, staff, parents and the wider community have a strong sense of unity and belonging. Where all members can prosper in inclusive, receptive and liberal surroundings and share in each other's successes with pride.

Rationale:

This policy is a reflection of our current practice in the Curragh Post primary School in relation to facilitating and promoting a whole school approach to special educational needs. It details our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all our students and is underpinned by the ethos, aims and vision of Curragh Post Primary School and guided by relevant legislation:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998, 2003)
- The Freedom of Information Acts (1997, 2003)
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- The Disability Act (2005)



Aims:

In accordance with The Education Act 1998, The Education for persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 Curragh Post Primary School endeavours to:

- Affirm that students with special educational needs have the same right to avail of and benefit from, in their own way, an education as students who do not have those needs.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner.
- Provide a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school, having regard to the resources and personnel available.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible. (See Section 2)
- Set high standards for students with special educational needs and provide them with appropriate guidance, continuously encouraging them to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the special educational needs of students and are aware of the recommendations and support strategies they should consistently facilitate to support students.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Facilitate and encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision making process in relation to their children's education.
- Foster positive partnerships with parents in order to achieve appropriate and consistent support in school and at home.
- Co-operate and work closely with the National Council for Special and Inclusive Education (NCSE) and other relevant agencies and third parties with regard to the education of students with special educational needs.

Objectives:

- To facilitate the holistic development of students in an inclusive environment.



- To promote, encourage and develop the positive physical and mental wellbeing of student with special and educational needs.
- To enable students with special educational needs to live a full life and to realise his/her full potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum.
- To enable students with special educational needs to function as independently as possible in school and indeed society itself.
- To promote and facilitate the learning of skills needed to continue learning in their adult life.
- To ensure that parents/guardians are involved in decisions about their children's education.

Mission statement:

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

"Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development, in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect."



Section 2: Inclusion in Curragh Post Primary School

Curragh Post Primary School endeavours to ensure an inclusive and supportive environment for the whole school community. The school models and encourages all members of the community to practise the acceptance of diversity and will take proactive steps to guard against unfair treatment as a consequence of disability or special need.

Special educational needs (SEN) are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 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..."

As per our school admissions policy, Curragh Post Primary School welcomes students with special educational needs (SEN) and aims to ensure that provision for education "of people with such needs, shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment." (Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, 2004)

The application process for a student with special educational needs will be the same as that of any other student. Upon acceptance of an offered place in CPPS, additional information may need to be obtained to properly assess the needs of an SEN student. For example, if the student has already received educational, medical or where appropriate psychological reports, these documents will be requested at this point. This information supports the school in identifying the student's priority needs and put provisions in place to support and develop the student, from the onset of first year.

We recognise and champion the fact that all our students are entitled to an education appropriate to their needs, including those who may be gifted and talented. We aim to ensure that all our students reach their full potential by providing a level of challenge equal to each student's ability. One of the ways in which we strive to deliver just that, is by consistently striving to broaden the school's curriculum, to cater for all.

The school now facilitates the junior cycle, level two learning programmes, level one learning programmes, traditional leaving certificate and leaving certificate applied. The broad curriculum available allows us as a school, in collaboration with parents and external agencies, to deliver a curriculum specific to individual need.



Within each of the programmes aforementioned, Curragh Post Primary school sets ambitious and challenging expectations of learners in line with their ability. Often programmes are combined to ensure students are challenged to realise their true potential. For example student's completing two or three subjects at level 3 (junior cycle) and the five priority learning units in the level two learning programme.

One of the most recent and innovative teaching mechanisms used in the Curragh Post Primary School to support students with SEN in an inclusive manner, is team teaching. Through team teaching, an additional adult supports students within the class group. Team teaching is extremely conducive to high levels of individualised differentiation within lessons. Timetabling of such lessons are dependent on student and curriculum need as well as available personnel and resources. For further information in relation to the models of team teaching used in the Curragh Post Primary School, please see Appendix A

Additional Curragh Post Primary School policies and supports that are relevant to the area of special educational needs and advocate inclusion are:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour (School Matrix)
- Wellbeing Policy



Section 3: Categories of SEN

The various categories of special educational needs, the definitions of these categories and the criteria for the allocation of additional resources as well as the procedures for application are set by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and are as follows:

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Mild general learning disability
- Specific learning disability
- Moderate learning disability
- Severe or profound general learning disability
- Autism/autistic spectrum disorder
- Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome
- Specific speech and language disorder
- Multiple disabilities



Section 4: Our SEN Team

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special educational needs, lies with the Board of Management and the Principal of the school.

In order to facilitate the organisation and provision of education for students with special educational needs in Curragh Post Primary, we have identified both the internal and external SEN team members below.

Curragh Post Primary School's Internal Team:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- Special Educational Needs Programme Facilitators
- Subject Teachers
- Team Teachers
- Special Educational Needs Assistants (SNA)
- Students

Curragh Post Primary School's External Team:

- CPPS Board of Management
- Parents
- External Agencies
- External Support Services
- The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)

During the Academic year, 2020-2021 our internal SEN core team comprises of the Principal, SEN co-ordinator and one special educational needs programme facilitator/subject teacher.

As the Curragh Post Primary School is a developing school, we envisage the core SEN team will grow in size, in line with the growth in school capacity and in turn student population.



Section 5: Systems & Processes of Communication in Relation to SEN

Communication is executed in a timely fashion and is both respectful and confidential in nature. Communications also follow best practice guidelines in relation to data protection and school policies.

Communications within the core SEN team:

The core SEN team will meet once weekly to ensure best planning, practice and evaluation in relation to SEN provision. This meeting will be formal in nature and so minutes will be noted. Minutes will then distributed with all members of the core team via secure email. For SEN core team meeting minutes template, please see Appendix B.

Communications between the core SEN team and all staff:

Staff will be communicated with regularly and in a variety of formats in relation to SEN issues. For a schedule of SEN - Whole staff annual communication please see Appendix C.

Outside of the standard communication outlined on the schedule enclosed, staff will be notified of any other necessary and relevant information in relation to SEN, as and if a need should arise.

Communications with Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians will be communicated with regularly and in a variety of formats, for example by telephone, email, letter or face-to-face meetings. For a schedule of standard annual communication between the Curragh Post Primary School SEN team and parents/guardians please see Appendix D.

Outside of the standard communication outlined on the schedule enclosed, there may be occasions where further and more frequent communication between school and home is required. For example, seeking educational or medical assessments or the involvement of an external agency. The SEN core team is set up in a way where adapting, in an efficient manner, to engage in further communication where necessary is feasible.

Communications with Students:

For a schedule of standard communication with students regarding SEN needs and provision, please see Appendix E.



Communications with external agencies:

Curragh Post Primary School will with parental consent, communicate with any external agency working with a young person in our care as often as required. The sharing of information between school and third party will follow best practice guidelines in relation to data protection and school policies.

All communication between school and any other party mentioned above will be recorded and stored in the associated students file.



Section 6: SEN Model of Organisation

1. Identification Process & Screening

When an acceptance of an offered place is made to the Curragh Post Primary School for entry or transfer, parents/guardians are requested to disclose any specific needs their child may have. All relevant documentation and information in relation to those needs should be forwarded to the school in a timely fashion and preferably before entry. Where diagnosis/reports are deemed inadequate or out of date, the school may request that parents/guardians obtain an up to date diagnosis/report. In general, the NCSE do not rely on reports, which are older than 4 years.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to meet with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal and/or another core member of the SEN team to discuss their child's specific needs.

In relation to incoming first years, a request for primary school passports will be sent to appropriate feeder schools. 'My Child's Profile' and 'My Profile' should also be included and returned to the Curragh Post Primary School in a timely fashion, preferably before entry.

All feeder schools are also visited by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal and/or another core member of the SEN team, where feasible. This visit is an opportunity for all incoming first years to become familiar with some new faces from their prospective secondary school. It also allow us, the secondary school, to see incoming first years in an educational setting and prepare to support them in their transition to secondary school.

All incoming first years are invited to visit our school for one school day in an induction event known as, 'A Day in the Life'. This event usually takes place during term 2. This is yet another opportunity for us, the secondary school, to see incoming first years in an educational setting and prepare to support them in their schooling. Most importantly, it offers our incoming first years an opportunity to meet their teachers and fellow classmates and get a taste for teaching and learning in most subject areas.

The Curragh Post Primary School also schedules a transition programme, inclusive in nature, which ensures SEN students are supported in their initial experiences in school. As part of the induction and transition programme for incoming first years, all students complete the NGRT or New Group Reading



Test and the CAT4, a test of cognitive ability. Both tests are used to gain further insight into both literacy levels and the cognitive capacity of all students. The test results are analysed by the SEN team, priority needs, current strengths and areas for further development are noted.

All of the information collected above is then condensed into a student profile summary, stored in student files and distributed to all staff to inform planning as well as teaching and learning. A whole school SEN register is also composed by the SEN team and distributed as above.

Finally, it is important to note that needs may change and indeed arise at various different points throughout a child's schooling. An SEN referral form is available to all staff and parents, should they become concerned about the potential of a specific need arising for a child. This form should then be forwarded to the SEN team for further investigation.

2. Provision-Timetabling, Planning and Duration

SEN timetabling is scheduled after the mainstream timetable has been organised and issued to teachers. It is scheduled across three blocks annually:

Block 1: Sept.-Oct.

Block 2: Nov.-Feb.

Block 3: March-May

The block scheduling of SEN provision allows us to cater for the specific and changing needs of students and the curriculum as they arise.

All SEN timetables offer academic, social and emotional support through various modes such as team teaching, small group support, 1:1 support and SNA support. For a comprehensive list of all current support programmes facilitated in the Curragh Post Primary School, please see Appendix F. Duration of provision is dependent on student and curriculum need and can vary from 8 weeks to 12 weeks. The aim is always to fade out any additional supports put in place and encourage and promote independence in as far as possible.

All modes of support aforementioned must be planned for by the supporting teacher with the student's specific needs in mind, as outlined in their student support plan. For planning templates in relation to team teaching support, SNA support and both small group and individual programme facilitation please see appendices G and H. All planning documentation are submitted to the SEN team within a fortnight of commencement.



3. Assessment-Monitoring and Tracking

Assessment of SEN students should be both continuous and summative in nature as is for students without SEN needs.

In relation to the assessment of SEN students in additional provision:

Depending on the priority need being supported and the skill or content teachers are aiming to develop in a student or group of students, throughout provision blocks, will heavily influence the format of assessment. The mode of support will also influence the format and frequency of student assessment. For this reason, each individual teacher will decide the format of assessment.

Assessments should of course be appropriately differentiated to ensure students could not only access it but also can flourish and be successful, to an extent relative to their ability.

Professional judgement, based on quantitative and/or qualitative assessment by a teacher in relation to a student's progress in additional provision, should be noted and forwarded to the SEN team before the end of the current SEN block. Progress will then be communicated with parents and students.

The SEN team will then transfer and note progress on the students SSF and amend or develop new targets as appropriate.

4. Evaluation of Provision- Teacher and student

At the end of each SEN block, students and teachers complete an evaluation of provision. This is vital in establishing how effective or ineffective the provision may have been but also in allowing the SEN team gain insight into what works best for that student or indeed what does not work at all. For current evaluation templates used, please see appendix J.

The appropriate teacher ideally will complete evaluations within the second last week of current provision. It will then be forwarded to the SEN team for analysis and consideration, in the final week of current provision. Evaluations will then be stored by the SEN team and used to inform future planning in relation to specific students or modes of support.

5. Access to Curriculum- Junior Cycle, L2LP, L1LP, Leaving Certificate,LCVP and LCA



All students are provided with the opportunity to access the mainstream curriculum in both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate.

The school also offers individualised curriculums, tailored to both challenge and reward all students at an appropriate level. For example, where appropriate the level two and level one learning programmes can be facilitated. Students can also complete a combination of level 3 and level 2 programmes and indeed level 2 and level 1. Leaving certificate applied is also offered and senior cycle.

6. Access to Resources

All school facilities and resources are available to our SEN students as indeed they are to all students.

Room 1- offers an intimate and calm space for 1:1 or small group support. The Behaviour for Learning Teacher is based in room 1 and so this room can become a familiar and secure place when supporting students with social and emotional needs.

Room 7- the schools computer lab, offers access to IT and has become a base for IT support classes offered to students with the use of assistive technology.

The Quiet/Sensory Room- offers students who require time out or movement breaks a space to relax or release some energy, by using our trampoline and balancing equipment.

Room 15- is usually used to facilitate support programmes for medium sized groups.

7. Examinations- In-house and SEC Exams

All in-house examinations facilitate an additional examination centre for students who may require access to a reader, movement breaks, additional time, use of assistive technology, etc. Use of viewfinders, specialised glasses, coloured over-lays are also all catered for.

Applications will be made to the State Examinations Commission by the SEN team according to the calendar of dates provided by RACE each year, on behalf of any eligible junior or senior cycle student. The examinations officer will be notified of all accommodations granted so that supports can be put in place for the state examinations.



This SEN policy will be reviewed annually.