

***Curragh Post Primary School
Special Educational Needs Policy***

Introduction and Scope of this Policy:

This document sets out the policy of Curragh Post Primary School in respect of students who have special educational needs. The Education Act 1998 defines the term ‘special educational needs’ as ‘the educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students’. The Education Act 1998 also defines the word ‘disability’ and its meaning in this policy is the same as defined in that Act.

The policy applies to students who are exceptional; gifted students, student with learning difficulties, students with disabilities and students who are at risk - personal, emotional, social or educational; in short pupils who may need additional help or support to enable them to derive the maximum benefit from school.

Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:

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

Mission Statement

Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Féidir Linn.

Ráiteas Misin

Luachanna ár scoil ná na buanna, taillainne agus fireann na scoile i bhfobairt san atmaisféar cothromais, comhbhách agus coimhease. An féidir linn é a dhéanamh? Is Féidir Lin seo a dhéanamh.

Définition de notre mission

Notre établissement a pour vocation de valoriser les capacités et les talents de ses étudiants et de son personnel dans leur évolution, dans un esprit d'équité, de sollicitude et de respect mutuel. Pouvons-nous accomplir cela? Oui, nous le pouvons.

This Special Educational Needs Policy is another important framework within which “the development of whole people, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society” is enhanced in our school. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy. While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school. In a spirit of service and care, this school, where possible, tries to engage with alternative approaches to education especially for those who are most disadvantaged.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community.

Rationale:

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- to make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the needs of students who may have special educational needs,
- to assess the school’s capacity to cater for the needs identified and
- to specify what additional resources may be required by the student and / or the school and
- to provide for the needs identified, in as far as resources allocated to the school permit.

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Legal Framework:

Section 9 of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that

“A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit -
(a) ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, are identified and provided for,” and later on

(j) subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school.

Section 15 (2) (d) states that Boards of Management shall “publish.....the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected”

Section 15 (2) (f) states that Boards of Management shall “within the resources provided to the school in accordance with Section 12, make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with special educational needs.”

Goals:

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

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

Within the constraints of available resources, all students with special educational needs, who are admitted to the school, shall have access to, participate in and benefit from an education suitable to their needs. The school shall seek adequate resources, equipment and accommodation from the Department & Science and other relevant agencies. The school will make every effort to maximise the resources available to students with special educational needs. These may include visiting teachers, resource teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, counsellors, technical aid and equipment, etc. The school will endeavour to provide access and accommodation for such personnel in the school building.

Assessment of Need:

The school will assess the special needs of students upon entry to the school and will reassess the needs of students from time to time. The school will also make an assessment of its capacity to respond adequately to those needs. Where a student's condition or circumstances change in the course of their school career, such a student may merit re-assessment and a re-evaluation of suitable provision.

Students who are new to the school:

Application for entry to the school is made on a standard application form. A special educational needs form is distributed to parents / guardians, along with the application for enrolment form, a subject options choice form, various other forms and school documents. The form is designed to elicit general relevant information about the special needs of students and parents are required to make known their child's needs on the form. Shortly after the school receives this special educational needs form, the school arranges a meeting between the principal and the parents / guardians to discuss the issues, collect psychological reports, Irish exemption certificates, etc, which are submitted, by the principal, to the relevant special educational needs organiser as part of the application for additional resources to meet the needs of students.

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In addition, the school may contact the student's current National or Secondary School to ascertain their knowledge of the student's needs, including special educational needs. Where relevant information is not made available by parents or guardians, the school may determine that it is unable to make an accurate assessment of the needs of the student and may decline to accept the student into the school.

Where, following consultation, the Principal, acting on behalf of the Board of Management, is satisfied that the school can cater for the needs of the student, the student will be accepted into and retained in the school subject to the following:

- the completed documentation and application for additional resources is submitted to the Special Educational Needs Organiser by the Principal as early as possible;
- Parents/guardians co-operate with the school to ensure that the students needs are met as fully as possible and that they supply further information from time to time as may be required;
- The necessary resources are made available to the school by Kildare Wicklow E.T.B., the Department of Education & Skills and any other relevant agencies;
- The student is well behaved and in particular, that the behaviour of the student will not / does not interfere with the progress of lessons or with the rights of other students to their education.

Where a student is refused admission, parents will be advised of their rights of appeal. Once admitted, decisions will be made as to the appropriate provision for the student.

Current Students:

The school will review the needs of students from time to time, including those who were deemed at entry to have special educational needs and those who were not.

Special Needs Provision:

The school will seek appropriate resources from the Department of Education & Science and other relevant agencies to meet the needs identified. Where such resources are received, the school principal will ensure that individual students / small groups of students are withdrawn from classes, subject to timetabling restraints, for additional teaching / learning support advice / assistance with named teachers. Where possible and prudent, the same teacher will work with the student(s) throughout the relevant academic cycle, i.e. Junior Cert. and / or Leaving Cert.

As the need arises and in consultation with the parents / guardians of the student(s) involved, the school may reduce the number of subjects a student is required to study. Normally, this measure will be taken after a process of supporting and advising the student has run its course and the demands on the student remain onerous / unbearable.

Certain categories of student may be entitled to additional support e.g. newcomer students, traveller children, etc. The school will take steps to assess the needs of those students and will use the resources provided to meet those needs.

Teachers are encouraged to use "Differentiation" where possible in their classes and, in particular, in assigning homework to students.

Students of exceptional ability are catered for in their regular banded class groups. However, in some Year Groups, Maths classes are run concurrently, at least, to enable split classes to be formed. In the

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Senior Cycle, Irish and English classes are run concurrently, at least, to enable separate split classes to be formed.

Success Criteria:

Students with special educational needs are identified, assessed and receive appropriate provision. Suitable programmes are in place for individual students and for groups of students at both Junior & Senior Cycle.

Targets are set for each individual availing of special needs provision. Teachers in the learning support area will develop an educational plan with and for the student. Their progress is measurable and measured regularly. Parents / guardians and the school authorities are informed of progress as appropriate. Pupils receive appropriate professional support and that support is available on-site where possible.

Review Procedures:

The policy will be reviewed regularly and by the full staff every four years. Any staff member who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on December 16th 2013.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

Review Date: February 2017

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Appendix 1

Special Needs Survey

(Parents / Guardians)

As part of the school's enrolment application procedures, the school asks parents / guardians to complete the form below. As the form indicates, the school arranges a meeting between the principal and the parents / guardians to discuss the issues, collect psychological reports, Irish exemption certificates, etc. which are submitted, by the principal, to the relevant special needs organiser as part of the application for additional resources to meet the needs of students.

Special Needs Information

Dear Principal,

I / We wish to formally apply for specific additional teaching resources to meet the needs of our son / daughter _____, on whose behalf we are applying for enrolment in Curragh Post Primary School.

Our son / daughter has

A Physical Disability

Explain. _____

A Hearing Impairment

Explain. _____

A Visual / Sight Impairment

Explain. _____

A General Learning Disability

Explain. _____

A Specific Learning Disability

Explain. _____

A Speech & Language Disorder

Explain. _____

An Emotional or Behavioural Disorder

Explain. _____

An Autistic Disorder

Explain. _____

Any Other Disability

Explain. _____

Please contact me / us at a later date to discuss our son / daughter's needs. At this meeting, we will supply copies of all relevant documentation that we have to you.

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We accept that failure to supply additional documentation as requested by the school or failure to make a reasonable arrangement to meet with the school to discuss this application for admission and this application for additional teaching resources for the aforementioned child(ren) may result in our child(ren) being refused admission to the school.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Additional Considerations:

Please note that

- The school has established contacts and structures locally to ensure co-ordination between primary and secondary schools with respect to special needs students in mainstream education. Report cards are received prior to admission and information is openly exchanged in confidence.
- School management prepares an annual “***Learning Support Handbook / Register***” to pass on relevant data on pupils to teachers.
- All pupils at Junior Cycle in this school follow the Junior Certificate programme.
- Instruction is provided for all pupils in mainstream, class size groups for all non learning support classes.
- In consultation with the Deputy Principal, the school Principal makes applications for assessment or assistance from the school’s N.E.P.S. Psychologist.
- Health Board / H.S.E. Referrals: In consultation with the Deputy Principal, the school Principal makes these referrals.
- Attendance Data is maintained by school management. Reports are made as required to the N.E.W.B. Year Heads and school management link with the School Completion Programme Coordinator and the Home School Liaison Officer, as well as the Education Welfare Officer, to reduce / eliminate absenteeism and to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- The school will make every effort to provide the best possible education for your child with the resources available to it.
- However, it may not always be possible to implement every recommendation made in an assessment report. Students with a psychological report stating a Specific Learning Difficulty are advised to attend one-to-one tuition outside of school (through ACLD or a private practitioner).

Parents / guardians have a serious responsibility to ensure that the programme on offer in this school is the most suitable for their child. Where there is any concern, parents must contact the Principal or Deputy Principal, the Year Head, the subject teacher and / or the Guidance Counsellor as appropriate.

In particular, where parents / guardians wish to seek special consideration for their child for the State Examinations, the parent / guardian should meet with the Guidance Counsellor at **the First Year Parent-Teacher Meeting or as soon as a psychological report becomes available** for students in Junior Cycle and, at **the Fifth Year Parent Teacher Meeting** for Senior Cycle students.

The Department of Education and Skills decides eligibility on an individual basis.

Appendix 2 *Roles and Responsibilities in developing and
implementing SEN policy.*

(This section for Internal Use only)

Role of Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To ensure that adequate resources are sought and provided, well maintained and used well.
- To provide for appropriate Staff Development.
- To decide on appeals by parents / guardians with respect to decisions made by the principal.

Role of Principal / Deputy Principal

- To decide, following consultations with the Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support Teachers, parents / guardians and other parties on suitable provision for students with special educational needs in the school;
- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents / guardians, Board;
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date;
- To prepare and maintain a Special Educational Needs Register and to ensure that it is available to all members of the teaching staff at all times;
- To implement the Special Educational Needs Policy / plan and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy;
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies.
- To arrange appropriate Staff Development;
- To ensure that alternative programmes are devised where necessary;
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate;
- To ensure that, within the limited resources available to the school, appropriate special arrangements are made for house and state examinations in accordance with current Department policy and practice.

Role of Teaching Staff

- To implement the policy and individual education plan as appropriate, taking into account the special needs of students;
- To co-operate with school procedures for identifying the needs of students;
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments;
- To seek advice from the Learning Support Teacher(s) as appropriate;
- To keep themselves informed about entries in the Special Needs Register and to bring concerns and information to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support Teachers or Home School Liaison Person as appropriate;
- To keep parents / guardians informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and School Reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required;
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

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Role of Learning Support Teachers in relation to students with Special Learning Difficulties

- To coordinate the school's response to students who have special learning difficulties;
- To assess the nature and extent of learning difficulties experienced by students;
- To initiate enquiries regarding the suitability of current provision for individuals and groups of students;
- To discuss with the Principal referrals to the department and other relevant agencies;
- To make referrals to the department and other relevant agencies, having taken the Principal's advice;
- To advise the principal on issues relating to the assessment, admission and retention of students with learning difficulties in the school;
- To devise a programme / plan to alleviate the difficulties identified and ensure delivery of the programme / plan;
- To advise subject teachers about how best to cater for the needs of the student and advise the school generally on the students needs;
- To advise parents / guardians on other strategies available to them including referral to voluntary or statutory agencies;
- To liaise with parents / guardians, teachers, school authorities and the Psychological Services of the Department of Education and Science to ensure that the needs of such students are met as far as practicable;
- To review the progress of pupils regularly throughout the year and to amend programmes in the light of such review;
- To advise parents / guardians about the progress of pupils; to keep parents / guardians informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and by meeting parents / guardians from time to time as required;
- To advise students on appropriate study and exam techniques;
- To report to the Principal each year outlining the work undertaken during the year, the progress of students, achievements for the year, the challenges for the year ahead and additional resources required;
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of Guidance Counsellor

- To provide a range of services for all students. These may include Counselling, Social & Personal Development, Careers Information, Study Skills and examination techniques, Consultation for parents / guardians, Referral services, Preparation for working life, Assessment services and Evaluation services;
- To provide an internal referral service for students. Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Home-School Liaison Officer, Year Head and / or Chaplain;
- To seek assistance from outside authorities, from other qualified professionals. Having discussed the matter with the Principal, the Guidance Counsellor may initiate such referrals and maintain appropriate contacts with the other person(s) or agencies and report the outcome to the Learning Support Teachers;
- To conduct the assessment of incoming first years;
- To advise the principal, following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher(s) on issues relating to the assessment, admission and retention of students with special educational needs in the school;
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To initiate enquiries regarding the suitability of current provision for individuals and groups of students
- To report to the Principal each year on these matters.

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Role of students

To co-operate fully with the school in the implementation of the policy;
To offer suggestions for improving the service to students with special needs.

Role of Parents / Guardians

To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation;
To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concerns they may have in relation to the school's provision for the special educational needs of students;
To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Monitoring Procedures (who will do what when):

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Special Educational Needs Group (Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support Teachers) which will dedicate one meeting for that specific purpose in September, February and May of each year.

The creation of Individual Learning Plans and Achievement Records will be prioritised in the next school year.

The needs of students who have been identified at any time as requiring special support in our school will be reviewed from time to time as appropriate.

Throughout the school teachers are asked to discuss with the relevant Year Head / Deputy Principal and / or Principal any concerns they may develop about the special educational needs of any of their students.

*Appendix 3
Teachers*

Some Additional Information / Advice for

(This section for Internal Use only)

General

Learning Support for students is an integral part of school life.

A variety of resources are located in this room and are available to all teachers.

Our policy is to give educational support to children having difficulty achieving in the normal classroom environment.

Terminology

S.L.D. – Specific Learning Disability

This is diagnosed mainly in the school setting as dyslexia and A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder).

G.L.D. – General Learning Disability

This is commonly known in the school setting as a “slow learner”, generally an all round weak student.

Screening Test

This is a general test given to a large group to highlight individuals having difficulties.

Diagnostic Test

This is a specific test given on a one to one basis to highlight specific difficulties.

Some Helpful Classroom Strategies

1. Write all homework on the board.
2. Ensure students record it into their homework journals.
3. Give plenty of time for students to record this information. Students with learning difficulties tend to write slower than others.
4. Be aware of poor organisational skills.
5. Many weak students have severe difficulty in recording information from overhead transparencies – Could you copy them and give them to these students?
6. Ask questions you know they will be able to answer. Facilitate a positive learning experience.

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7. Be aware that these students are often uncomfortable in mixed ability classes.
8. Do not lower your expectations of them, just alter them.
9. Try to give them time one to one.