

CBS Thurles Special Education Needs Policy 2018/19



CBS THURLES

Mission Statement

'Thurles CBS is a place of learning where students are prepared for adult life, academically, emotionally, spiritually and culturally.

We strive for a safe environment, free from bullying. We aim to promote the Christian values inspired by the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice.

We seek to create an atmosphere of respect for the needs and talents of all members of our school community, while challenging all to reach their full potential'.

Glossary of Abbreviations:

SEN: Special Education Needs

SENO: Special Education Needs Organiser (external to school)

SENCO: Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (internal)

SSF: Student Support File

SSP: Student Support Plan

PPP: Personal Pupil Plan (for students with SNA access)

IEP: Individual Education Plan (older term for SSP)

SET: Special Education Teacher

SNA: Special Needs Assistant

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

CAT: Cognitive Ability Test

RACE: Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations

DARE: Disability Access Route to Education

SEC: State Examinations Commission

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

DES: department of Education and Skills

Introduction:

For the purposes of this policy the SEN team will/may include A. Ely (co-ordinator), SETs, K. O'Brien (principal), O. Kelly (DP), relevant year head and J. Tobin (guidance). We are also supported by the NEPS psychologist attached to our school. This policy will outline

- Information about CBS Thurles
- The rationale/context for such a policy
- Links with outside agencies
- The roles and responsibilities of personnel involved
- The Continuum of Support under the revised model of allocation
- Identification of students with SEN (enrolment and testing procedures)
- The organisation of support currently available
- Preparing, implementing and reviewing student support plans.
- How this information is shared among our staff or relevant personnel (GDPR)
- Materials and resources

School Information:

Thurles C.B.S. was founded in 1816 by William and Thomas Cahill. It is an all-boys secondary school under the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice and now operating under the patronage of ERST (Edmund Rice Schools Trust). We believe it is important that students gain the opportunity to develop their Christian faith if they so wish, while also respecting all students' beliefs equally.

In light of our mission statement asserting that "we seek to create an atmosphere of respect for the needs and talents of all members of our school community, while challenging all to reach their full potential", it is our aspiration to provide suitable SEN provision to the relevant students.

Core values of the Edmund Rice School Trust Charter include creating a caring school environment, promoting partnership in the school community and excelling in teaching and learning. These values underpin the provision of all teaching and learning in our school, including support given to students with additional educational needs.

Aims and Principles

- To ensure that students with SEN are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is respected and developed.
- To ensure that all members of staff are aware of the SEN of students and of the contribution they (the staff members) can make in this area.
- To increase the literacy and/or numeracy skills of SEN students to the best of their ability.
- To ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation but in the context of the whole school.
- To endeavour that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- To enable students to access the curriculum and to develop students' self-esteem, confidence and feelings of achievement and fulfilment in accordance with the school's mission statement and related policies.
- To assist the general teaching staff with the educational management of students with SEN where appropriate.
- To encourage and foster positive collaborative partnerships with parents in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home.
- The school will endeavour to seek from all available agencies the required resources (including staff, funding and materials) to meet the educational needs of SEN students.
- To co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of outside agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in supporting students with SEN.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- To review and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with SEN.

Rationale:

The stimulus for the creation of this policy is to ensure that all students with additional educational needs are included and receive the optimum educational experience in CBS Thurles. We also aim to state overtly within this policy the supports available to pupils and the process involved in accessing these supports.

Context:

This policy is in accordance with and within the context of;

- Circular 14/17
- Circular 30/14
- The parameters of the Department and Educational and Skills regulations – most recent guidelines can be found @ <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education->

[System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Post-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Students-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools.pdf](#) (2017)

- Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (2016)
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education Act (1998)
- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)
- Available funding and resources as administered by the Board of Management

Links with outside agencies

CBS Thurles has established links with the following groups/agencies that are of use in the inclusion of students with additional educational needs.

- NEPS
- NEWB
- HSE
- SENO
- NCSE
- CAMHS
- Barnardos

Roles & Responsibilities

SEN coordinator (SENCO)

The SEN coordinator is required to work in conjunction with the Principal & Deputy Principal to ensure the provision of support within the resources of the school to pupils with special educational needs.

Role and responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- To coordinate and devise a school SEN plan
- Creation of a register of students who are in receipt of supports in the school and make this available to staff.
- To interpret educational assessments, CAT 4 testing and other testing carried out.
- To develop and maintain a SSF for each student who is on the register of students in receipt of support
- To advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.
- To assist the Principal in the allocation of resources
- To create and maintain master timetable of where students are receiving support under the continuum

- To provide RACE accommodations in house exams where possible given the resources available. To meet and prepare these students and establish single centres for recording and scribing where necessary.
- To liaise with outside professionals such as NEPS, CAMHS and others where necessary.
- To liaise with parents regarding these agencies and assist in filling in necessary paperwork for referrals.
- To meet with parents in order to plan and to review interventions. Meetings with parents for incoming 1st years in April and update of plans in September/October
- To receive results of CAT 4 standardised tests and review same with SEN team and NEPS psychologist.
- To ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents, etc. referral forms for teachers are available in the staffroom and SENCO is available for meetings when necessary.
- To be a member of the student support team.
- To advise and collaborate with SNA's around the care needs of relevant students.
- To develop and review PPP plans in collaboration with the SNAs and parents.
- To facilitate a weekly meeting of the SEN team.
- To be available on open night to meet with parents of prospective students with SEN
- To collate all paperwork and assessments that are sent into the school by parents in relation to students with additional educational needs
- To draw up new support plans for new students in the school who are on the register
- To communicate information to SET personnel involved (plans will be scanned onto VSware)
- Testing of students using the NGRT. Certain students are identified on the CAT 4 and the rest will be carried out with these students.
- To work with the career guidance department regarding RACE applications. Results will be communicated to SEN department
- To ensure that safe practice is applied to the securing of documentation relevant to individual pupils and that privacy is respected, notwithstanding the need to communicate information with relevant staff.

Pupils

- Pupils availing of additional support are required to have respect for the provision, insofar as they will endeavour to apply themselves and be active participants in their own learning.
- Pupils in CBS Thurles are expected and encouraged to collaborate with their teachers.
- Pupils are invited to assist in the development of their own SSP (where appropriate) and to provide feedback on an ongoing basis on how well they are progressing.
- Pupils must be mindful that applications for Reasonable Accommodation must be made through the guidance department within the school

Parents

- Parents must inform the school of their son's additional educational need prior to enrolment so that the SEN department can assess whether or not provision is available.
- Parents are invited to assist in the development and/or review of their son's SSF/SSP at the commencement of each academic year.
- Parents are welcome and encouraged to communicate with the SEN department on an ongoing basis.
- Parents are requested to attend parent-teacher meetings.
- Parents are expected to facilitate and support the school's efforts in the best interests of their child.

Subject Teachers

All teachers in CBS Thurles are involved in supporting the teaching and learning of their pupils.

- Subject teachers are expected to acquaint themselves with the learning needs of their pupils through consulting the register of students receiving support through the continuum and thereafter referring to the SEN department for further information.
- Subject teachers are required to provide learning experiences that best suits individuals in their class through differentiation.
- All teachers are encouraged to provide assessment for learning that best suits all individuals in their classes.
- Classroom teachers are expected to consult with the relevant SET to discuss pupils on their class-list who are receiving support.
- All teachers are asked to accommodate the withdrawal of a pupil from their classes as appropriate.

Special Education Teachers (SET)

Teachers involved in providing additional education at special tuition times and during withdrawal periods are required to;

- Make themselves familiar with and where appropriate be involved in the creation of the SSPs and Special Tuition Group Plans.
- Implement and work towards the targets set out for each individual student.
- Liaise with subject teachers for an overview of classwork being covered, upcoming tests, review of tests and any other relevant information needed to best support the individual pupil.
- Record work covered on the Monitoring Sheet and progress being made towards targets.
- Be available at parent-teacher meetings to discuss progress of students and take on board any feedback or suggestions from parents in the best interest of the pupil.
- Ensure that homework given to students on that day is NOT completed during the SEN time. Exceptions to this can be made on an individualised basis in consultation with the SEN department. Homework preparation and explanation is encouraged however.

Guidance Department

- The guidance department will communicate with parents and invite same in to make applications for the RACE process.
- Guidance will carry out relevant assessments and then applications to the department for RACE accommodations.

- The nature of supports being put in place for successful applicants will be communicated to the SEN department as soon as available to that they can be in place for the mock examinations in February.
- DARE applications are also carried out by the Guidance department.
- CAT 4 assessments are carried out by the Guidance department in February for incoming first years and results of which are communicated to the SEN department.

Special Needs Assistants

- Special needs assistants are appointed to cater for the care needs of students with additional educational needs.
- The allocation of SNA support to students shall be made by the school management in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the NCSE and the DES.
- SNAs work closely with the SEN coordinator. At the commencement of each academic year the SNAs will liaise with SEN department in the development and/or review of PPP plans.
- SNAs will work with SEN department and individual subject teachers in the implementation of the PPPs as they relate to individual students. They will record relevant information/incidents in the space provided in the PPP plan which will be reviewed at dates agreed.
- In particular the SNAs play a very important role in ensuring health and safety of the students allocated to them and in social and emotional development of these students.

Board of Management

- The Board must ensure that the school has a comprehensive special educational needs policy in place that has been developed collaboratively with all relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure that it is evaluated on a regular basis.
- The board must ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with additional educational needs.
- The board must ensure that the Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the whole school plan.
- The board must ensure that adequate classroom accommodation is provided for the delivery of support teaching in the school.
- The board must provide for adequate secure storage for all confidential documentation relating to students with additional educational needs.

Principal

- The principal must monitor and ensure the day to day implementation of the Special Educational Needs Policy on an ongoing basis.
- The principal may delegate, at his/her discretion, aspects of this responsibility to the school's SEN coordinator.
- The principal shall keep the board of management informed regarding issues of relevance to the SEN department and the students with additional educational needs.
- The principal must assign staff, that is, SETs, special tuition teachers and SNAs to work with pupils who present with additional educational needs.
- The principal must allocate time for SEN department meetings.
- The principal must provide for training (CPD) where relevant.
- The principal will, in consultation with the SEN department make applications for assistive technology where relevant.

- The principal will provide (within the limited resources of the school) examination assistance (extra shared centres) to identified pupils during in house examinations at Christmas and summer. This will be communicated to parents and is not a guarantee of accommodations in state examinations.
- The principal will provide accommodations (within the limited resources of the school) to students during mock examinations that reflect as close as possible the accommodations applied for/approved for State Examinations. Accommodations may be limited or restricted due to lack of available personnel and/space available.

The Continuum of Support

In accordance with the best practice guidelines from the DES, our school endeavours to follow the cycle shown above. These steps are indicated below:

What is the concern and why is it happening?: Identification of students with SEN

Standardised testing (CAT 4)

In the February of 6th class, students who have enrolled for first year for the coming academic year, are invited to sit the CAT 4 assessment. These results are then analysed by the SEN team with the input of NEPS educational psychologist and students are flagged for monitoring.

Further testing (NGRT, WRAT 4/WIAT III)

Further testing (NGRT reading test is used when it is recommended in the CAT 4 that a spelling age be determined, WRAT/WIAT spelling and/or maths are used for further investigations or to aid the application for an educational assessment) or immediate attention.

Meetings with parents of incoming 1st years who have existing assessments from outside agencies

As part of the enrolment process parents are asked to submit any relevant reports and assessments for any existing diagnosed learning difficulty or information regarding any additional learning need. At this point parents may meet with the SENCO.

In late April all parents who have submitted assessments or paper work are invited for a one to one meeting where the student support file is opened.

Referral form

A referral form was designed in the schools and is available to all teachers. They can fill this out with regard to students that they have any concerns about and bring this to the attention of the SENCO.

NEPS referral

The NEPS psychologist is a regular visitor to the school and with the correction forms and permissions offers help support and guidance to the SEN team.

Students can be referred for educational assessment to NEPS. Generally, these students are identified as the result of screening and not having had a previous assessment completed- for various reasons. In other situations, students can be referred to NEPS at the discretion of the principal or on the recommendation of other outside agencies (CAMHS, other psychologists)

How can we help?: Organisation of Supports/provision currently available

Our response to the needs of students is organised following the NEPS's Continuum of Support. The following outlines the type of support in place and shows the level of support from the NEPS Continuum at which each intervention lies.

Team teaching

In accordance with best practice and to endeavour to accommodate where possible the inclusion of all students under the Support for All category (see triangle above), learning support is often offered in the classroom. This is achieved through the provision of team teaching. A suitable teacher will attend the class and work with the subject teacher for the best possible outcome of the student.

Team teaching can also be put into place to support a learning support group depending on the needs of the students as a whole in that group.

Small maths and English groups as a learning support resource are established in 2nd and 3rd year.

Tuition for those exempt from Irish

Group withdrawal at Irish time is offered to all students with an Irish exemption in place as a result of a learning difficulty. Within this group, students will be at the Support for Some level and receive guidance on an individual basis depending on their needs, e.g.

organisation, study skills, preparation of homework, revision for upcoming tests, review of tests, etc.

Group withdrawal during subject time

Group withdrawal is intended to be used where students' needs are greater than the support offered in the mainstream classroom setting. Students receiving this support are again at the Support for Some level. It may be in addition to the withdrawal offered to students with an Irish exemption, or be offered to students who continue to study Irish but need support across other areas of the curriculum. Operating in consultation with the relevant subject teachers, withdrawal may operate as an extra to the subject or, where the withdrawal is from a non-exam subject, as an additional support in a required subject area.

Individual withdrawal

Additional teaching support on an individual basis can be used where group withdrawal would not suit the needs of the individual. It is intended that individual withdrawal be short-term, intensive and focused on needs that cannot be normally addressed in a mainstream class setting. Students receiving individual support are classed either on the Support for Some level or the Support for a Few, depending on the complexity of their needs. Where possible it will correlate closely with subject teaching while at the same time benefiting the particular student.

Any student who receives support through special tuition or withdrawal will have a Student Support Plan tailored to their needs. The SSP process involves:

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- SEN provision
- Priority Need
- Setting targets for each priority learning need
- Identifying the strategies and resources required
- SET monitoring students' achievements of targets on the monitoring sheet
- Setting the date for review

SNA support

CBS Thurles is an inclusive school and welcomes boys with disabilities and additional needs. We will use resources provided by the department to make reasonable accommodations for such students. The school's ability to accommodate students with particular needs is dependant in the resources necessary for the needs of the individual students being made available by the DES. Students receiving SNA support do so within the Support for a Few level on the Continuum.

The duties of Special Needs Assistants are set out in Circular SNA 12/05 and Circular 71/2011. These duties allow for the support of individual pupils, the SEN coordinator, individual teachers and pupils under the direction of the SEN coordinator, the Deputy Principal & Principal. The support of a designated SNA allows the resource student and/or subject teacher to concentrate on curricular support while the SNA offers correlating social, emotional and health and safety support. PPP plans will be devised collaboratively by the SEN department, the SNAs and the parents of each student in receipt of SNA support.

Did it work?: Review

A review occurs typically each academic year. However, it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances. These SSPs aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner. CBS Thurles has created a one-page SSP document to ensure only the most important information is included and that the SSP is user-friendly and operates practically as a working document.