

COLÁISTE POBAIL BHEANNTRAÍ

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

“Ní neart go cur le chéile”

‘In partnership, through a comprehensive curriculum, we aim to provide quality teaching and learning in the pursuit of excellence, to promote intellectual, spiritual and personal development in an atmosphere of respect thus enabling students to contribute positively to their community.’

Contents:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Inclusion
- 1.3 Special Education Needs Mission Statement
- 1.4 Rationale
- 1.5 Aims

2. SEN Team & Categories

- 2.1 Categories of SEN
- 2.2 Roles & Responsibilities of Internal SEN Team
 - 2.2.1 Resource Teacher
 - 2.2.2 Learning Support Teacher
 - 2.2.3 The Principal
 - 2.2.4 The Deputy Principal
 - 2.2.5 Mainstream Teachers
 - 2.2.6 Mainstream Teacher with Resource Hours
 - 2.2.7 Year Heads and Class Tutors
 - 2.2.8 Guidance Counsellor
 - 2.2.9 The Chaplain
 - 2.2.10 School Completion Programme (SCP)
 - 2.2.11 Student with SEN
 - 2.2.12 Special Needs Assistants (SNA)
- 2.3 Roles & Responsibilities of External SEN Team
 - 2.3.1 The Board of Management
 - 2.3.2 External Agencies
 - 2.3.3 The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
 - 2.3.4 The Parents

3. SEN Model of Organisation

- 3.1 Identification Process
 - 3.1.1 Mainstream Students
 - 3.1.2 SEN Classroom/Unit & ASD Unit
 - 3.1.3 Models of SEN Support
- 3.2 Programme Planning
 - 3.2.1 Individual Education Plans (IEP's)
- 3.3 Timetabling
 - 3.3.1 Mainstream
- 3.3.2 SEN Classroom/Unit
- 3.4 Access to curriculum
 - 3.4.1 Mainstream

- 3.4.2 SEN Classroom/Unit & ASD Unit
- 3.5 Access to Resources
- 3.6 Examinations

4. Communication

- 4.1 SEN Team
- 4.2 SEN pupil register
- 4.3 Liaison with parents
- 4.4 Record Keeping

5. Enrolment and Assessment

- 5.1 Enrolment policy
- 5.2 Transition from Primary to Second level
 - 5.2.1 Mainstream
 - 5.2.2 SEN Classroom/unit

6. Liaison with outside Agencies

7. Further Areas for School Development Planning

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Enrolment Policy
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Anti-Bullying Policy
- 8.3 Appendix 3: Pastoral Care Policy
- 8.4: Appendix 4: IEP Template
- 8.5: Appendix 5: Record Keeping Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí is a post-primary school that operates under the Co-Trusteeship of County Cork VEC and the Diocese of Cork and Ross. The college is co-educational and multi-denominational. Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí opened its doors in October 2011 and was officially opened on the 7th April 2012. Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí was established through the amalgamation of St. Gobans College, Bantry and Ard Scoil Pobail Bheanntaí.

1.2 Inclusion

Colaiste Pobail Bheanntaí welcomes pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) and in line with the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 recognises “the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment”. We will endeavour to ensure that these students are free to participate in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable. The school accepts that no student should be bullied or singled out for unfair treatment as a consequence of their disability. Pro-active steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is non-judgemental and supportive.

Please see Enrolment Policy Appendix 1

Please see Anti-Bullying Policy Appendix 2

Please see Pastoral Care Policy Appendix 3

1.3 SEN Mission Statement

In line with the overall school mission statement, (see cover page), it is our aim to promote and facilitate a whole school approach to SEN, and recognise each pupil as a unique individual.

1.4 Rationale

This policy aims to outline the commitment which this school has in creating a learning environment which is inclusive and supportive of all pupils in line with our mission statement and within the principles of relevant legislation. We see this policy as a reflection of our current practice.

1.5 Aims:

The aims of the SEN policy are:

1. Promote the emotional, social, educational and physical well-being of students by developing self esteem, self confidence, personal responsibility and ability to live and work with others.
2. Ensure that all relationships within the school be imbued with a spirit of care
3. Ensure that education takes place in an inclusive environment.
4. Strive that students with SEN leave school with the life skills they need to participate in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives where possible.
5. Involve parents/guardians in decisions about the education of their children

2. SEN Team & Categories

2.1 Categories of SEN:

To date, the following categories of Special Education Needs have been provided for:

- Borderline/Mild General Learning Disabilities
- Moderate General Learning Disabilities – Down Syndrome
- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties – ADD/ADHD
- Specific Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia
- Physical Disabilities – Dyspraxia, Cerebral Palsy
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (Hearing and Visual impairments) - Laurence-moon, Bardet-biedl Syndrome
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders – Asperger's Syndrome

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Internal SEN Team

2.2.1 Resource Teacher:

The Resource teacher has responsibility for all school matters regarding the SEN students enrolled in the resource classroom. This responsibility spans from initial enquires to the school until the students' graduation. The Resource teacher has responsibility for assessing and recording students' needs and progress, setting specific targets and assisting main stream teachers in adapting the curriculum where necessary. The Resource teacher also has a responsibility for meeting and advising parents and meeting with relevant professionals.

2.2.2 Learning Support Teacher:

The learning support teacher has responsibility for diagnostic assessment, programme planning, consultation with parents, teachers and pupils, communication with whole school staff and for teaching, monitoring and evaluating students' progress. The learning-support teacher can facilitate the management, organisation and co-ordination of interventions for all students receiving learning support and may, as appropriate, provide advice and support to other staff members. The Learning Support teacher collaborates with the Resource Teacher in relation to students with SEN enrolled in the Resource room.

2.2.3 The Principal:

The Principal has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of inclusive school policies and procedures in relation to the education of students with SEN. The Principal is available to liaise with the Learning Support Teacher, the Resource Teacher and the parents of students with SEN when necessary. The Principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff.

2.2.4 Deputy Principal:

The role of the Deputy Principal is to work with the Principal in establishing and promoting whole school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with SEN. In particular this may involve the principal delegating authority and responsibility to the Deputy Principal to work and liaise with other members of staff, parents and various agencies to put in place

structures and plans to meet the particular needs of students with SEN so as to enable each student to reach their potential.

2.2.5 Mainstream Teachers:

Within the framework of a whole-school approach to inclusion, mainstream teachers have the primary responsibility for teaching all students, including students with SEN, within their class groups. The mainstream teacher may become aware of the possibility of general and or specific learning difficulties and will bring this to the attention of the SEN department. Consultation occurs between the mainstream teacher and the SEN teaching team in setting individual student targets and in outlining and recording student progress. The mainstream teacher is welcome to contribute to the learning targets set out in the SEN students' IEP.

2.2.6 Mainstream Teacher with Resource hours:

The role of the mainstream teacher with resource hours is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of the SEN student. Teachers with resources hours liaise with the Learning Support Teacher, the Resource Teacher and other relevant members of the SEN team as well as with the individual student to assess and formulate individual programmes which provide curricular and other necessary support to the SEN student.

2.2.7 Year Heads and Class Tutors:

Each class tutor and year head has a responsibility to their own class group /year group. The class tutor is responsible for dealing with individual student issues within their class group they may then refer the issue to the year head who has a wider responsibility. The class tutor/ year head take responsibility for minor and or early signs of discipline issues within their class group as well as with other issues that may arise. They are the primary point of contact with parents. The class tutor/year head may refer to or collaborate with the Deputy Principal thereafter.

2.2.8 The Guidance Counsellor:

The core responsibility of the guidance counsellor is to provide learning experiences that assist students to develop self-management skills that will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. The guidance counsellors' role within the SEN team consists largely of the following functions:

- Counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Personal and social development
- Career information management
- Consultation with parents and staff
- Consultation with community organisations
- Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience
- Referrals to other professionals and agencies
- Evaluation of the guidance and counselling needs and services

The input that the guidance counsellor has with a student with SEN varies from student to student depending on personnel circumstances and need.

2.2.9 The Chaplain:

The Chaplain is available for guidance and support during the school day.

2.2.10 School Completion Programme (SCP):

The SCP has an important role to play in the lives of students who may be deemed at risk of leaving school early. The SCP team has an educational support role within the school for students who may have difficulties with school, especially in the area of attendance.

2.2.11 Students with SEN:

Where involvement is appropriate, the student may:

- Be involved in the IEP meeting
- Provide information about his/her own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns.
- Assist in the identification of priority learning needs, targets and strategies
- Give feedback which will contribute to the monitoring and recording of progress.

2.2.12 Special Needs Assistants (SNA):

The SNA has responsibility for the care and well being of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promotes independence. The SNA has direct involvement with the student with SEN in that they are there to assist, communicate, encourage and support the student and also to help the student with their organisational skills. The SNA plays a role in keeping the student with SEN focused during class as well as observing the student during the school day.

The SNA also has a role in collaboration with the Resource Teacher and/or the Learning Support Teacher. The SNA provides information on the student with SEN day to day progress during after school meetings with the Resource Teacher and/or the Learning Support Teacher. The SNA is also available to assist and free up class time for the Resource teacher and within mainstream classes the mainstream teacher as the SNA provides the extra support needed by the student with SEN in a manner of note taking, keeping the student focused and noting down of homework where necessary.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of External SEN Team:

2.3.1 The Board of Management:

The Board of Management has the responsibility for overseeing the development, implementation and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of students with SEN.

2.3.2 External Agencies:

In some cases external agencies eg. Neps, Co-Action, CAHMS may be involved in the assessment of a student with SEN and may contribute to the development of an Individual Education Plan. Apart from providing general advice and support to school staff the agency is often consulted about individual

students. The agency may gather information about a student, their skills and abilities, and may plan a programme of support. This information and support is communicated by means of phone calls, texts, emails, receipt of reports and also meetings.

2.3.3 The Special Education Needs Organiser: SENO

The SENO may refer a student to the Resource class and thereafter may be involved in transferring information regards the student with SEN from the primary school or second level school in the case of a transfer between second level schools.

2.3.4 Parents:

Parents, through their unique knowledge of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning difficulties or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted parents are consulted and their permission sought, by means of written permission. Parents of students enrolled in the Resource room are encouraged to contact the Resource Teacher by means of phone calls, text, email or by having a meeting as issues arise, communication is encouraged at all times. Parents of students with SEN enrolled in mainstream classes are encouraged to contact the class tutor or Learning Support Teacher to discuss their issues. Parent Teacher meetings occur yearly and also provide an opportunity for parents to speak to all teachers involved in their child's education.

3. SEN Model of Organisation

3.1 Identification Process

Special Education Needs students are identified for enrolment in the following manner:

3.1.1 Mainstream Students

New Students

- The transfer of information in the transition from primary to second-level is very important. The enrolment form requires information pertaining to identifying students with SEN. Each year an open day is held to assist parents and the school with the process of sharing information about prospective students. Parents are requested to inform the school of any special educational, medical or other need. This information is provided by means of the school enrolment form. (See appendix 1)
- Students with SEN may be identified following consultation with the feeder primary schools. Regular communication exists between the management of Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí and the feeder primary schools within the area.
- Pupils in need of extra support are identified using the standardised tests including Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) that first years take during their first term in Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí.

- Parents of students with SEN can also make contact with the school. Once contact is made the Resource Teacher/ Learning Support Teacher is available to the parent for further contact and information depending on whether the student will be enrolled in mainstream or within the SNU classroom.
- SENO Referral

Existing students

- If parents/guardians have concerns they may contact the school secretary who will direct them to the appropriate department. If the concern relates to a student enrolled in the SNU classroom then the issue is referred to the SEN Co-ordinating Teacher. If the student is enrolled in mainstream then the issue is referred to the Learning Support Teacher and/or the Year Head.
- Classroom teachers and year heads may become concerned and highlight the need for a student to be considered for learning support in the event of noticeable difficulties arising in class. This concern is brought to the Learning Support Teacher who informs school management which, subsequently, may apply for additional resource hours.
- If a student has not been identified as having a special educational need until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought to have the student assessed by the appropriate professionals (NEPS Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, etc.) The student may receive learning support until such an assessment is carried out; this is allocated on a basis of need and resources available.

3.1.2 SEN Classroom/Unit & Interim ASD Unit

SEN students are identified in the following manner for enrolment into the SEN Classroom/Unit and Interim ASD Unit.

- Referral from Primary School with appropriate assessment.
- Parental referral and concern by means of the school enrolment form and/or a meeting with the relevant personnel within the school.
- SENO referral to the school.

3.1.3 Models of SEN Support

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context the following options are considered:

- Team Teaching
- Support Teaching
- Learning Support (three forms; students entitled to resource hours, students with access to resource hours, students who access SEN services. This is decided upon by resources allocated to the school by the Department).
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal

- Curricular reduction
- Support from SCP

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is reviewed at the end of every year. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum. All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and student.

3.2 Programme Planning

3.2.1 Individual Education Plan (IEP)

According to “The Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines” (2007):

“The individual education plan (IEP) is an effective process through which a student’s special educational needs can be addressed and by which an appropriate education can be provided for him/her.”

The I.E.P 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:
 - Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances

“The Inclusion of Students with SEN Post-Primary Guidelines” [2007] See pgs. 96-100

An IEP is put in place for each individual student with SEN and the following have an input in the formation of the students IEP; the Resource teacher, Learning Support teacher, the parents of the student with SEN, the student with SEN, the Deputy Principal, Principal, teachers that teach the student with SEN, the SNA’s working with the student and the relevant agencies as previously mentioned.

(See Appendix 4 for IEP Template)

3.3 Timetabling

3.3.1 Mainstream

Once teachers and students have been given their timetables for the forthcoming academic year, school management in liaison with the resource co-ordinator allocate class periods of resource/learning support to both student and teacher.

3.3.2 SEN Classroom/Unit

In the SEN classroom all students' timetables are individual. Within the classroom they are visible to all. Students are included into mainstream classes as appropriate taking cognisance of the students ability and available resources. The SNU classroom timetables are then formulated.

3.4 Access to Curriculum

3.4.1 Mainstream

Some students with SEN are exempt from languages. If the student has been allocated resource hours, this time can be used to avail of these allocated hours. Other students may need notes to be photocopied before class or additional teaching support after class.

3.4.2 SEN Classroom/Unit & Interim ASD Unit

A Special Needs Unit operates within the school to cater for the needs of students with SEN, who, for varying reasons cannot avail of full-time mainstream education. In the SEN classroom great emphasis is placed on communication skills, interaction and self representation, basic literacy and numeracy skills, time and money management and life skills.

Where facilities and resources are available students from the SEN classroom are encouraged to access mainstream education. The choice of subjects accessed depends on individual psychological assessments, a student's interest/ability and consultation between management, staff, parents, SENO and relevant outside agencies.

The Interim ASD Unit, based in the St. Goban's building, opened on 7th January 2013 following recommendations from SENO and outside agencies to cater for the needs of one ASD student who for varying reasons at the time required access to a quiet room as per Senior OT , Co-Action recommendation.

3.5 Access to Resources

Resources are accessed and allocated in the following way:

- Sharing of school facilities
- Grants available for purchase of equipment and computer programmes
- Timetabling of specialist rooms where feasible
- Regular discussions regarding resource allocation

3.6 Examinations

Applications are made for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. The following are the range of accommodations available to the students which are applied for by the Learning Support Teacher as per circular criteria. Accommodations are granted by The State Examinations Commission.

- Reader
- Scribe
- Reader and Scribe
- Tape Recorder
- Special Centre
- Exemption from spelling and grammar in the language subjects
- Extra Time
- Use of Computer

4. Communication

4.1 SEN Team

- The Resource Teacher and SNA's have a meeting at the end of each school day where notes are taken on the events of the day and discussion and/or planning can occur for the following day. Notes are taken by the co-ordinating Resource Teacher in the class diary.
- During the school day SNA's and mainstream teachers with resource hours with students enrolled in the Resource room can avail of the class diary to update notes.
- Meetings between Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist and SEN classroom teacher occur; these are arranged on a need basis by means of a phone call or email.
- Meetings between class teachers and SEN classroom teacher, these can be informal or formal. In formal meetings notes are taken by the Resource teacher.
- Teachers may organise meetings with the Learning Support Teacher regarding students enrolled in mainstream education.
- Senior Management Meetings occur within the school on a weekly basis and issues regarding students with SEN may be discussed at these meetings.
- Meetings with SENO

These meetings maybe formal or informal. In addition there are also staff meetings, in-service training days and staff development days.

4.2 SEN Pupil Register

At the beginning of the new school year all teachers and members of the SEN team receive a detailed register of all pupils with SEN. This register includes:

- Name of pupil
- Year/class group of pupil
- Category of difficulty
- Support available to the pupil
- Potential provision for State Exams

4.3 Liaison with parents

Liaison with parents is achieved in the following manner:

- School Open Day

- Parent-teacher meetings. These occur on a yearly basis and are organised by school management
- Letter to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone calls
- Text messages
- Meetings with Multi-disciplinary team
- Meetings involving community agencies
- Meetings with Principal and SEN Co-ordinator

4.4 Record Keeping

At present a full record of psychological reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual students file in the SEN co-ordinator's classroom/office in a locked cabinet. Files of students enrolled in the Resource room are kept by the Resource Teacher and files of students with SEN enrolled in mainstream education are kept by the Learning Support Teacher. As per the school's Record Keeping Policy. (See Appendix 5)

5. Enrolment and Assessment

5.1 Admissions Policy

- The college welcomes students with SEN as per the schools admissions policy. (See school website)

5.2 Transition from primary level to second level

5.2.1 Mainstream

Prior to the Open Evening parents are encouraged to meet with the SEN team to discuss any specific needs of their child either currently identified at primary level or concerns they may have going forward to post primary.

The Principal and SEN co-ordinator make contact with and visit all feeder schools enrolling new students. These visits help to both profile Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí and access information about students requiring support. All relevant documentation is requested to be forwarded to the school along with any advice and/or recommendations. This allows the school to put an appropriate plan in place to meet the needs of the incoming students from the start of the new school year.

Transition support programme

- On the Open Evening mentors are assigned to show new students around the school.
- During the transition programme SEN students are invited in to meet with SNU staff and students and help familiarise them with Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí

5.2.2 SEN Classroom/Unit

Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí has contact with all feeder schools within the community. Once an interest has been shown in a student with SEN enrolling in the SNU classroom, parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the SNU unit on a regular school day so as to get an insight in to how the unit operates. Following on from this in collaboration with the feeder primary school, based on human resources available, common practice is that the student with SEN would visit the school during a school day from national school and partake in the activities of the SEN unit. The rationale behind this is to help the student get used to his/her new surroundings. The number of visits and length of visits is very much dependent on both the student concerned and the resources available within the primary feeder school and Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí.

5.3 Assessment

All SEN students are encouraged to take the first year screening test depending on their ability. Our entrance exams are:

- CAT (Cognitive Ability Test)
- GRTII (Group Reading Test)

The purpose of the entrance exams is to identify learning needs that have not yet come to light, to ensure a true mixed ability class setting and to facilitate option choice where appropriate. As a policy, we do not disclose assessment test results to parents unless requested to do so. However, where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student's individual needs are discussed. All screening occurs with parents' permission.

6. Liaison with outside agencies and the community

It is often the role of the Resource Teacher or Learning Support teacher to attend meetings and liaise closely with a number of out of school agencies.

7. Further Areas for School Development Planning

1. Making in school referral system more formal with written referrals carried out in a step-by-step process:
 - Who?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - How?

Policy to be reviewed: Annually

Appendices

The related policies mentioned above are available on the school website.

Individual Education Plan Template

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN:	
NAME OF SCHOOL:	
IEP TIM FRAME:	
REVIEW DATE (MEETING):	
Name:	Name of Parent/Guardian:
Address:	IEP Co-ordinator:
Telephone:	Subject Teacher:
Date of Birth:	Resource Teacher:
Year:	Special Needs Assistant:
Special Educational Need:	
Present at IEP Meeting:	

Strengths:

Needs:

Sources of Information (School staff and other professionals, parents, test results etc.):