

Moyle Park College



Additional Educational Needs Policy

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1. Introduction

Moyle Park College is a Catholic voluntary secondary school established in Clondalkin by the Marist Brothers in 1957. 'Respice Finem' conveys the school's philosophy of setting objectives and ideals and working towards them. The management and teaching staff of Moyle Park College, in cooperation with parents/ guardians, are committed to the provision of a broadly based education. The college is dedicated to achieving a balance between the academic, social, cultural and spiritual components of education within the tradition established by St. Marcellin Champagnant, founder of the Marist Brothers.

This policy document aims to outline the structure of additional care support (ACN) for students with special educational needs or additional care needs in Moyle Park College and the philosophy which underpins it. This is written in the context of the *Education Act* (1998), in particular sections 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 21, and 33 and the *Equal Status Act* (2000). It also takes into account the *Education for Persons with Special Needs Act* – EPSON (2004) and the *Persons with Disabilities Act* (2005). It also takes into consideration the *General Allocation Model* (2018) as set out by the National Council Special Education (NCSE).

We base our model on the Continuum of Support Framework: "*A continuum of support framework recognises that students' care needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified care needs*" (DES, 2017). Using this framework helps to ensure that support is incremental, moving from whole-school support to more targeted support to more intensive support, as required. This model is premised on the principle that students with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support." (*School Inclusion Model Pilot Frontloaded Allocation of Special Needs Assistant Support for Students in Primary and Post Primary Mainstream Classes* (2020) p.4.)

2. School Prospectus

This document should be read in conjunction with the school prospectus.

3. Inclusion

It is the policy of the school that the term “all” students in the vision statement includes students with special educational needs or additional care needs. The principle aim of this policy document is to enable these students to access, participate in and benefit from the education normally provided in the school to the fullest extent possible. To achieve this aim, these students require additional support, which can only be adequately provided where the school is given the necessary additional resources by the Department of Education and Skills and NCSE.

4. Definition

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 students with special educational needs are: students whose educational difficulties or additional care needs prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education normally provided for students of the same age”.

See *School Inclusion Model Pilot Front Loaded Allocation of Special Needs Assistant Support for Students in Primary and Post Primary Mainstream Classes* (2020) p.4:

“Additional care needs are needs that represent a significant barrier to students’ ability to learn and participate in the school environment. They are described as additional care needs because they arise to the extent that some other or more intensive extra support, over and above what teachers can reasonably be expected to meet, is essential to include students with additional care needs and to provide better outcomes for them. In this document the term ‘care needs’ is used in its broadest sense to include students who may require therapy support, ISL support, Braille support and so on. It should not be taken to refer only to those who require personal or nursing care”.

5. Key Objectives

The general educational objectives for students with special educational needs are the same as for all students. Key objectives are functional literacy and numeracy and social skills training. The main aim is to help each pupil reach their full potential according to their capabilities.

6. Admission to the school

In line with the Education Act of 1998 and the Equal Status Act of 2000, the College will not discriminate in its admission to the school of any student. As per our school admission policy, Moyle Park College welcomes students with special educational needs (SEN) and endeavours to “provide that the 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 applicant. However, in order to assess the needs of an SEN student, the school authorities will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the student’s needs and the school’s ability to meet those needs. A copy of the student’s educational, medical, or where appropriate psychological reports will be requested prior to enrolment. The student, parents or guardians must accept and commit to the expectations of a second level school. Details of professionals and outside agencies who have assessed the student must be provided in the application form and parents/ guardians are asked to give the school permission to contact those professionals and agencies to provide maximum support for the student.

Moyle Park College will strive to ensure that an education appropriate to their needs is provided for students with special educational needs and will seek to: identify the needs of students in advance, acquire the necessary resources, and do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities if required. All students with additional educational needs are supported in the use of ICT and any assistive technology being used by them.

We aim to ensure that Moyle Park College provides an inclusive and supportive environment for all our students, supports the acceptance of diversity and will take proactive steps to guard against unfair treatment as a consequence of disability or special need. Team Teaching is an important teaching mechanism within the school and is also used to support students with additional educational needs in order to provide resource and learning support that promote inclusion and the enjoyment of learning for everyone. We recognise that all our students are entitled to an education appropriate to their needs including those who may be gifted and talented and we endeavour to facilitate all our students reaching their full potential by providing a level of challenge equal to each student's ability through differentiation, additional materials and an accelerated rate of learning.

Moyle Park College Admission Statement

Moyle Park College will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

7. Wheelchair Access

It is the school objective to make the school buildings, general classrooms and specialist classrooms more accessible to people with physical disabilities and to take measures when necessary, to ensure that these students have real access to the full curriculum.

8. Transition from Primary Schools to Secondary School

Regular communication exists between the Principal, Career Guidance Department, SEN Department and the main feeder primary schools.

Parents/ guardians are asked to inform the school of any special education or medical needs and to forward any relevant medical, health and educational reports when making an application for a place in the

college. Information evenings for incoming first years take place to provide information to prospective parents. The SEN department presents at these evenings and a brochure is distributed to detail procedures. All students complete a CATIV test on school grounds during their final year in primary school.

Transfer of students into other year groups

Students who enrol in the school at any other time than the beginning of 1st year will be assessed by the SENCO and if it is deemed that there may be a Learning Difficulty, a request for a psychological assessment will be sent to Psychological Support Services. As there is usually a waiting list for assessment at the NCSE, the same procedure is followed as above for incoming 1st years. Likewise, if there is a psychological assessment from the previous school, the same procedure is followed as above.

9. The Learning Support/ Resource Department: Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Role of Board of Management at Moyle Park College

The BOM has responsibility to ensure:

- that students with SEN will be educated in an inclusive and integrated environment
- that parents/guardians of students with SEN will be involved in the making of all significant decisions regarding their child's education
- that the school will cooperate with the NCSE
- that teachers and others involved with students with SEN are aware of their role in identifying and catering for these students

9.2 Role of the Principal

- takes measures to ensure that the special educational needs of students will be met
- consults with the relevant parties in the school or outside it to ensure that an SSF is drawn up for each student with SEN
- ensures that the SSFs are implemented and shall seek the resources to do so
- ensures that the SSFs are reviewed at regular intervals and that

- parents are kept informed of the progress of their child
- in consultation with the special education needs coordinator, arranges for assessments to be carried out by the psychological support services

9.3 Role of the Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator (previously known as the SEN coordinator), in conjunction with the Principal, oversees the day to day operation of our school's SEN policy, including formulation, implementation and review.

This role also includes the following duties:

- liaises with feeder schools, teachers and parents/ guardians of incoming students
- supports the school's management team in terms of management and responsibility for the provision of SEN within the school
- To participate in the transition programme of new students
- To apply for ISAs and assistive technology to SENO
- coordinates management and timetabling of the SEN team
- coordinates and allocates duties for SNA's
- liaises with and advises colleagues with regard to SEN
- co-ordinates the formulation, implementation and review of Student Support Files (SSF)
- identifies and monitors and tracks students with SEN
- coordinates provision for students with SEN e.g. withdrawal of students for individual/group instruction, in class support etc.
- oversees the records, reports and registers of students with SEN
- liaises with parents/guardians of students with SEN
- contributes to the inservice/upskilling of staff as appropriate
- facilitates the identification of Irish and 3rd language exemptions
- coordinates the application for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)
- liaises with external agencies and support services as appropriate.
- liaises with primary schools in the exchange of information

9.4 Role of the Learning Support Teacher:

- The learning support teacher works with students who have been allocated resources by the NCSE. The students are withdrawn in small groups or one to one for additional classes in literacy or numeracy as appropriate
- The learning support teacher teaches small groups of students (who have SEN's and an Irish exemption, or have English as a Second Language).

- The LS teacher teaches these students utilising various methods that may not be possible in a larger class, e.g. small groups and individual attention
- The LS teacher is able to teach general subjects in a way that visual or kinaesthetic learners can benefit from, e.g. utilising drawings and a more hands-on approach. He/she may use a multi-sensory approach when teaching and has experience in teaching phonics to assist with students with Specific Learning Difficulties.
- The LS teacher works with SEN Co-ordinator to develop SSF
- The LS teacher ensures a range of provisions are in place for SEN students primarily focused on literacy, numeracy, subject support and in class support.
- Where possible in mainstream classes, general education and special education teachers work together to plan lessons, teach, monitor student progress, and manage the class. It's an approach that makes it easier to teach all students the same content and hold them to the same educational standards.

9.5 Role of the Subject teachers:

- The subject teachers are familiar with the NCCA Guidelines for Teachers of SEN (see www.ncca.ie), the Student Support File and the Continuum of Support Document
- The subject teachers liaise when possible with the resource teacher and parents/guardians of any child with SEN
- The subject teacher ensures their classes are an inclusive learning environment with differentiation in learning styles catered for.
- Where possible in mainstream classes general education and special education teachers work together to plan lessons, teach, monitor student progress, and manage the class. It's an approach that makes it easier to teach all students the same content and hold them to the same educational standards.

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the SEN department are met.

9.6 Inclusion Support Assistant

The Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA) is an important member of the support staff for children with special educational needs.

The ISAs support students and teachers within the classroom and the role of the Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA) is followed as outlined in Department of Education and Science Circular 07/2002 and 0030/2014 and National Council for Special Education 2018.

10. The Curriculum

It is school policy that all students, including students with special educational needs, should have access to the broad and balanced curriculum provided in the school. Students with special educational needs require more flexibility of choice and special care is taken with option subjects chosen. Key issues here are equality of access and parental and student choice.

11. In-school support

Support is currently provided to small groups, which contain both learning support students and students with special educational needs in one group. This additional support is organised by the SEN department. Support is delivered to students on the basis of need. A student support file (SSF) is created for each student and where needs are highlighted, appropriate support systems are put in place. Each SSF is individualised with individual priority needs and targets on each. SSFs are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the needs of the student(s) are being met. There is a weekly SEN department meeting to facilitate and expedite these reviews.

12. Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations

The SEN Department applies for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE) for students with learning difficulties or special educational needs each year in consultation with the parents, the student and the schools designated NEPS psychologist. Further details are available in the *RACE guide for Exam Students 2018* at www.examinations.ie

13. External Agencies:

13.1: National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) –

currently under the umbrella of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The SEN department is in regular contact with NEPS Psychologists whose support is almost exclusively aimed at students with special needs.

The Psychologist supports these students:

- In the application for resources
- In the application for reasonable accommodations in State Examinations
- By offering advice to students and parents/ guardians as well as to teachers
- By counselling students
- By carrying out Psychological Assessments free of charge.

Parents/ guardians may choose to have their child privately assessed.

The Psychologist serves a number of schools in the general area and in recent years visits our school approximately eight times a year.

13.2: Other external Agencies and Personnel

Other agencies the school has dealings with are:

- Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENCO) - NCSE
- Inclusion Support Service
- National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- Department of Child Psychiatry, ERHA.
- St. James Hospital
- The Schools Completion Programme
- Traveller Liaison Officer/ Exchange House
- Various Medical Specialists
- Visiting teacher for the deaf and blind (NCSE)
- Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapists (NCSE Demonstration Project)

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and other agencies may be involved that are not listed here.

14. Individualised Planning

The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 requires that each child diagnosed with special educational needs should have a student support file drawn up to meet the individual's needs. Relevant sections of this act include section 3, 4, 7 and 9. The SSF provides information about the unique educational needs of each student and appropriate systems of support are put in place. Staff are briefed and informed about these SSFs and relevant information is made available to them. This ensures that our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEPS Continuum of Support.

15. Evaluation

The evaluation of educational provision is a complex process whether normal provision or additional support is being evaluated. Basic success in the state examinations and basic literacy and numeracy are interlinked. The State Examinations are widely used in schools as a blunt measurement of achievement. The success of students with special educational needs in school in state examinations is highly valued, especially by the students themselves and by their parents/guardians.

Teacher observation, class tests and house examinations are important regular forms of formal and informal evaluation for students with special educational needs.

16. Parents/Guardians: Communication and Participation

Communication between teachers and parents/guardians has traditionally been excellent in Moyle Park College. The school believes parents/guardians play a positive, guiding and supportive role in student education. An objective of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill is *"to ensure that parents have a central role in all important decisions concerning the education of their children."* (Explanatory Memorandum p.1)

This is already the case for parents of students in Moyle Park College. It is essential that the school informs and involves parents/guardians when additional support is being provided. The school recognises its responsibility under section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to

informing and consulting with parents/ guardians on all matters relating to their child's education.

17. Students: Communication and Participation

The general body of students respond positively to the education provided in the school and students with special educational needs are particularly appreciative of the additional support provided.

18. Grievance Procedure

Parents/guardians /students who are concerned and who wish to discuss or make suggestions about any aspect of educational provision should approach the relevant teacher, form tutor, year head or the SEN coordinator.

If necessary, an issue can be dealt with by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Board of Management.

19. Additional Resources

The additional support outlined above is dependent on additional resources. Most of these additional resources are granted annually and it is school policy to seek a more permanent arrangement, e.g. (ex-quota Resource Post)

20. Conclusion

It is important to re-emphasise the principle objective of the additional education support outlined in this document, namely, to enable students with special educational needs to access, participate in and benefit from the education normally provided in the school to the fullest extent possible.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management. This policy is organic by its nature. It is envisaged that with changing perceived needs and with insights gained that it will need to be constantly appraised and, if necessary, changed.

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