

Special Education Policy

Preamble:

Catholic University School; as required by the Education Act 1998 (Part II 9(a)); its Enrolment Policy and its Mission Statement, is committed to providing an education for all of its students in a caring and supportive environment.

The aim of the school is that all students achieve their full potential. In order to achieve this goal some of our pupils may require supplementary support, additional resources, classroom support or the provision of specialised equipment.

Special Education Support also includes students with exceptional ability.

Special Needs Team:

The Principal, in accordance with resources committed by the Board of Management, will assign responsibility for the delivery of special education support to a Special Needs Co-ordinator who should liaise with the Guidance Counsellor, the Principal and Deputy Principal. The Special Needs Co-Ordinator will also liaise with the Education Support Service Unit of the DES, the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) attached to the school and other relevant external bodies.

The Special Needs Co-Ordinator is responsible for organising and managing learning support under the direction of the Principal.

Definition:

Students who fall within Special Needs Definition include:

- Pupils with diagnosed learning difficulties
- Pupils with emotional behavioural issues
- Pupils with physical and sensory difficulties
- Pupils with other special needs including those with exceptional ability

Assessment:

Students qualifying for resource support from the Department of Education must be assessed externally by an educational assessment carried out by a qualified psychologist. Internal assessments may identify weaknesses and be the basis for further referral or maybe used to identify students requiring support from the school's resources.

It is the expectation of the school that parents will fully inform the school of any educational assessments carried out or of other relevant reports.

Where a student is assessed externally the Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator will apply to the DES for resource support and ensure that it is delivered in accordance with the resources allocated by the Board of Management. The school will where resources allow implement and support recommendations made in educational assessments. Where students are using their own laptop or similar IT aids, the school, except in exceptional circumstances, will not accept liability for the loss or damage done to these items which are required as personal property.

Delivery of Service:

The Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator will timetable support for students who are eligible. This timetable will be formulated by agreement with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Where a student receiving support has an exemption in Irish, the support will normally be delivered during this time. Where this is not the case, the support will be delivered by agreement with parents and the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Where it does not prove to be possible to provide support allocated by the DES, the DES must be informed of this and the time allocated may be taken back.

Special Consideration:

The DES in certain circumstances on the basis of educational assessments or other assessments may grant special consideration to students in State certificate exams. This may involve the provision of a scribe, a reader, the approved use of technology and may involve the use of a separate exam centre. Application for these resources is the responsibility of the Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator who will apply to the relevant section of the DES.

The school where possible will replicate such provision but will normally not be able to provide such resource without the direct support of parents, e.g. provision of scribe or reader.

Whole School:

Learning support provision is seen in the context of a whole school approach. The Special Needs Co-Ordinator takes primary responsibility for learning support provision and provides information to subject teachers as necessary. In consultation with the Principal, provision will be made to provide teaching staff with the necessary training and knowledge to optimise the special education services.

The Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator will ensure that careful records are kept of all students in receipt of resource support and that best practice as outlined by the Special Education Service Unit of the DES is operational at all times.

This will include the drafting of individually educational plans (IEP) for students receiving support.