



Coláiste Phádraig CBS
SEN Policy



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Introduction and Mission Statement

As a special educational needs department, our mission is to foster and develop an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all students. In the context of the EPSEN Act 2004 this includes students who have:

‘A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.’

Aims

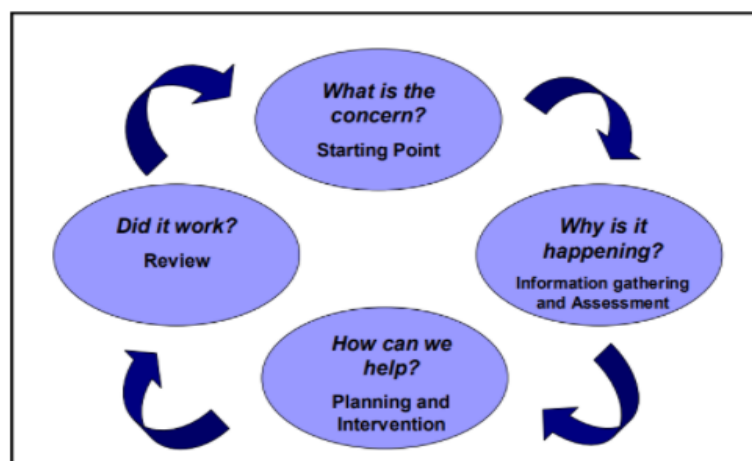
1. Enable the student to develop social and personal skills thus enhancing self-esteem.
2. Enable the student to live a full life and to realise their potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate balanced and broad curriculum.
3. Enable the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential
4. Enable the student to continue learning when they leave the school.

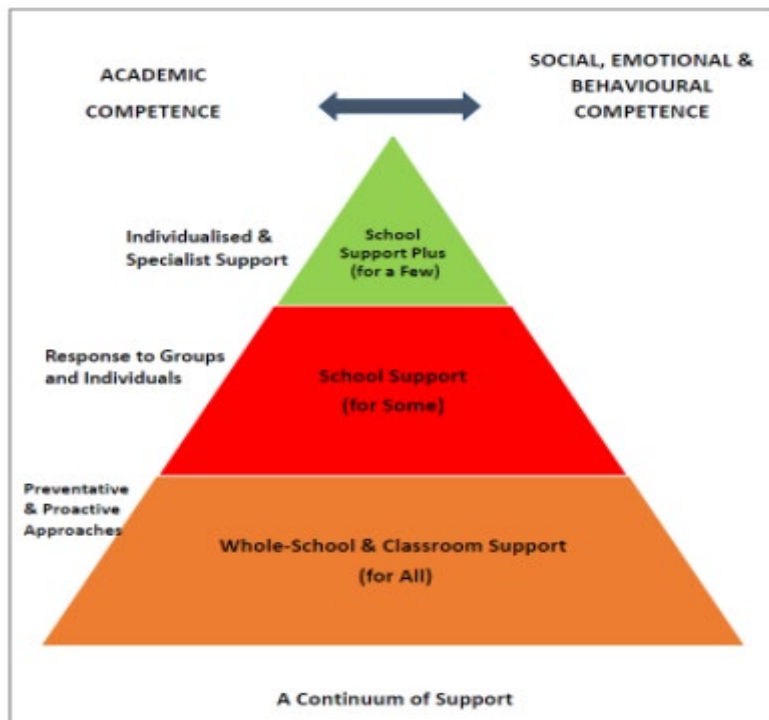
Objectives

1. To identify the student’s individual needs at the earliest possible stage so as to make provision for their needs thus raising their attainment levels.
2. To work in close partnership with, and involve parents/guardians of students who have additional educational needs.
3. To involve students, parents/guardians in the identification and review of targets that are specific, achievable, realistic and time-related.
4. To liaise with appropriate outside agencies, to support the needs and provision for students who have additional educational needs.

Continuum of Support

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Coláiste Phádraig, is underpinned by recognition that additional educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Our response to the needs of students is organised according to The NEPS Continuum of Support. We acknowledge the approach of support for all, support for some and support for a few.





Identification of Needs

The first means of identifying pupils with additional educational needs is from parents / guardians who indicate on their acceptance letter any area of difficulty. Parents / guardians are invited to submit copies of any professional reports to the school and contact is made either in person or virtually to discuss any concerns before the student starts school.

The following is a list of tests and sources of information that may be used in developing a rounded picture of the student and how best to support them.

- Primary passports and pre-attendance meetings with primary resource and mainstream teachers
- Psychological / professional reports
- Intake screening for 1st years with CAT 4
- PPAD-E Literacy screening for 1st years
- WIAT III
- WRAT IV
- NGRT
- DASH
- MALT
- OWLs
- DRA
- Non-verbal reasoning assessment
- SPARCs
- Parental meeting before the student attends school
- Parental contact re: concerns at any stage of the year
- Student voice
- Teacher and SNA observations / referrals
- Care team referrals
- House and state exam results

Meeting Needs

Meeting the needs of students with identified difficulties in Coláiste Phádraig is on an individual basis, with the most appropriate level of intervention put in place for that individual. These interventions may include the following:

- Transition from primary to secondary programme
- Differentiation in mainstream setting
- Team teaching
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual one to one teaching
- Lunch club
- Breakfast club
- Homework club
- Behavioural interventions
- SNA support within the classroom
- SNA support in the resource room
- Use of appropriate assistive technology
- Virtual classes via zoom
- Involvement of outside agencies
- Curricular adaptation

Team teaching usually occurs during Maths and English classes, although it can occur when subject specialists are available in other subjects where there is an identified need within a particular group.

Withdrawal takes place during Irish time when a student is exempt from Irish or from Religion with parents' / guardians' permission. These withdrawal groups are under constant review and are flexible to take into account emerging and diminishing needs. Occasionally, pupils with the greatest level of need (support for a few), may be taught individually when it is the most appropriate method of delivery for that individual student. This is kept under constant review.

The use of room 21 for breakfast, lunch and homework clubs is a great asset to the students. It is used when a student needs a timetabled break or unscheduled time away from the classroom (in line with their support plan). Any unscheduled time in Room 21 is recorded and shared with the SENCO and link teacher.

Monitoring, Recording and Reviewing Needs

Monitoring of students with additional educational needs occurs on an informal level on an ongoing basis. More formally, monitoring occurs in the following ways:

- Use of formal assessments as above
- Engagement in school life, in classes and in SEN classes
- Observations by SNAs
- Parents' meetings
- Reports from teachers
- Care team feedback
- Attendance
- Use of house exam results
- Continuous informal checks

Record keeping is centralised in the SEN room in a locked filing cabinet. Records of permission, student support plans and records of parent meetings and other relevant information is retained in this central location.

Formal review of needs and student support plans occur in September / October and February of each year. Informally, the review process is ongoing to meet emergent needs and to identify when a student does not require any more support.

Roles and Responsibilities of the SEN team

The SEN team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN co-ordinator, the Special Education Teachers and guidance counsellors. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) is also a member of the Care Team in the school and works closely with Year Heads and mainstream teachers when the need arises. The team is advised by the NEPS psychologist, SENO as well as other agencies and professionals involved with SEN students in the school. The following are the roles of the different partners involved in the provision of SEN in Coláiste Phádraig: (Inclusion of Students with SEN Post-Primary Guidelines, 2007 and Circular 14/2017: General Allocation Model).

Role of the Principal

- Overall responsibility for ensuring that the additional educational needs of students are met
- Responsibility for establishing and promoting school-wide policies and procedures which support the learning of all students including those with additional educational needs
- To appoint an SEN co-ordinator and to work closely with the co-ordinator
- To inform the Board of Management of issues with SEN
- To consult with the SEN co-ordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and relevant funds
- To establish a “Additional Needs Support Team” in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN
- To encourage upskilling of staff by facilitating courses when possible

Role of the Special Needs Coordinator

- To liaise with the DES, NEPs and the SENO on all matters relating to the education of students with additional educational needs
- To analyse the needs of incoming first year students with additional educational needs
- To determine and organise reasonable accommodations in the state exams for students with additional educational needs (RACE)
- To liaise with NEPs regarding students who require psychological assessment
- To chair meetings of staff involved in the additional needs area
- To administer testing of students as appropriate
- To help administer the appropriate testing for first year students
- To organise / prepare individual learning plans for students with additional educational needs
- To maintain the personal files and records of work for all students with additional educational needs
- To work as part of the care team to look after the pastoral needs of students with additional educational needs
- To monitor the academic progress of all students with additional educational needs in the school
- To keep the principal / deputy principal informed of all decisions and actions taken in regard to students with additional educational needs and parents
- To manage the timetables and work schedules / practices for the Additional Needs Assistants
- To facilitate the practise of RACE in house exams and mock exams as far as possible
- To liaise with parents and students in the application for Irish exemptions (circular 52/19)

- Engage with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with additional educational needs and to facilitate extra visits to the school if necessary
- Assist in the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject teachers, year heads and other relevant staff
- Liaise with outside agencies such as NCSE, CAMHS, TUSLA etc.
- Liaise with outside professionals such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, psychologists, doctors, etc.
- Continuously identify and allocate support for students who require it but have no assessment
- To ensure effective and appropriate use of assistive technology
- In collaboration with school management deploy SEN staff
- In collaboration with school management allocate SEN resources
- Work closely with link teachers of students who are on the 'support for a few' level and advise where necessary
- To meet and discuss individual students with additional educational needs with parents/ guardians
- To field any queries of a general nature from parents, both attending and prospective students
- To assist new members of the SET team in preparing plans, identifying needs and best practice in their support of students with additional educational needs

Role of the Special Education Teacher (Circular 14/2017)

- Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention.
- Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student.
- Providing direct teaching to a student with SEN either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum.
- To provide team teaching/co-operative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student.
- Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate.
- Collecting and analysing school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance, behavioural records and information from subject teachers
- Collaborating with Year Heads to provide appropriate support to identified students.
- Planning, implementing and reviewing individual and/or group interventions.
- Seeking external professional advice, as needed.
- To advise SNAs around the care needs of relevant students

Role of the SNA (DES Circular 30/14)

Primary care needs:

- Assistance with feeding: where a child with additional needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
- Administration of medicine: where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: (including catheterisation) where a child with additional needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
- Assistance with mobility and orientation: on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)

- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with additional needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision
- Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times, etc.

Secondary Care Needs:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with additional educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with additional needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal.
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class teachers or support teachers.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff

Role of Mainstream Teacher (DES Circular 14/2017)

- To be aware of the School SEN policy and procedures (as outlined in this policy) for dealing with students with SEN, and ensure all students' needs are met.
- To seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with SEN.
- To participate in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in the area of SEN.
- To support/encourage independence in the student.
- To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students.
- To create a positive classroom environment for all students.
- To create opportunities for success.
- To use assessment for learning.
- To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.
- To assess/monitor progress.
- To consider the needs of students with SEN in all aspects of classroom planning.

- To identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with other students).
- To complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, etc. as required by the SEN team.
- Contribute to group or individual planning and review.
- Implement agreed strategies.
- Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies.
- Direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom.
- Inform parents of the progress of students through parent-teacher meetings and school reports.

Home School Links (DES Circular 14/2017)

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education. The quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents can provide valuable support to a child with SEN while the child is making the transition.

Coláiste Phádraig provides support to parents by:

- Liaising with parents prior to transfer.
- Informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate.
- Having an anti-bullying policy and keeping parents informed of issues relating to bullying if any occur
- Encouraging parents to contact the SEN co-ordinator.

The parents / guardians of a child with SEN can provide valuable information in relation to their child's learning difficulties and learning preferences. The SEN team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN with the acceptance of a place in the school. Coláiste Phádraig, at all times recognises the parent/guardian as the primary educator of the child.

- The school journal is used for home-school communication, and parent teacher meetings are held once a year for face-to-face communication, in person or virtually
- Students receive a written school report at Christmas and Summer
- The SEN co-ordinator and additional educational teachers are available to meet parents on request.
- Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/difficulties they observe in their child's learning as they progress through the school.

Involvement of Students

The SEN Department fully involve students in discussions around their learning needs.

- Students have input into their learning targets.
- Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self-monitor.
- Coláiste Phádraig believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning. This is in accordance with the Junior Cycle guidelines.

Communication with Staff

All staff are informed of additional educational needs students in first year before term begins. Any new staff are informed of all SEN pupils on their register upon starting in Coláiste Phádraig. Staff are informed of any student who has reasonable accommodations in exams prior to all house exams. Staff can, at any time during the year, refer a student to the additional educational needs department if there are any concerns with regard to a particular student. Advice is also available on any difficulty a student may have and staff are informed of any unusual difficulty a student may have.

The additional educational needs department also has developed a link teacher system whereby an experienced additional education teacher will have responsibility for liaising with staff and parents for a particular student who is on the 'support for a few' level (see below).

Role of the Link Teacher

A link teacher is an experienced SEN teacher who undertakes the overall support of a student who is on the 'support for a few' level. This is a voluntary role and is a point of contact with parents and outside agencies in matters relating to SEN. The link teacher works closely with the SENCO and keeps them informed of any issues arising. The role of the link teacher is confined to SEN matters only which may on occasion relate to academic, behavioural or counselling matters. In these cases, the link teacher may collaborate with the SNAs, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Subject Teachers, SENCo and Principal in achieving the most appropriate outcome for the student. The link teacher is the student's main SET.

Reasonable Accommodations in Exams

First years are generally left in main exam centres unless they usually use assistive technology as part of their normal school day or there are exceptional circumstances which include students with sensory issues or who need movement breaks.

Testing for reader, reading assistance, word processor and spelling and grammar waiver occurs from January onwards of second year as this is within the timeframe of application to the State Exam Commission for reasonable accommodations in state exams. The rationale of this time frame is to ensure that the student qualifies for the accommodation before putting it into place. These accommodations are then put in place from the summer exams of second year onwards.

Accommodations are put in place for each year group for house exams and mocks, dependant on resources available to the SEN department, including staffing.

Assistive Technology

Coláiste Phádraig are committed to supporting our students who use assistive technology. We work closely with visiting teachers and apply to the SENO when recommendations are advised in professional reports. When a student is not granted a Department of Education grant towards assistive technology, for example, in the case of dyslexia and/or severe issues in spelling (standard score of 8% or more and error rate of 25% on samples of work), the SEN department will facilitate a student using their own device. The use of a student's own laptop is granted in this case, in consultation with parents, SENCO and the student under very strict conditions while being cognisant of reasonable accommodations in exams criteria.