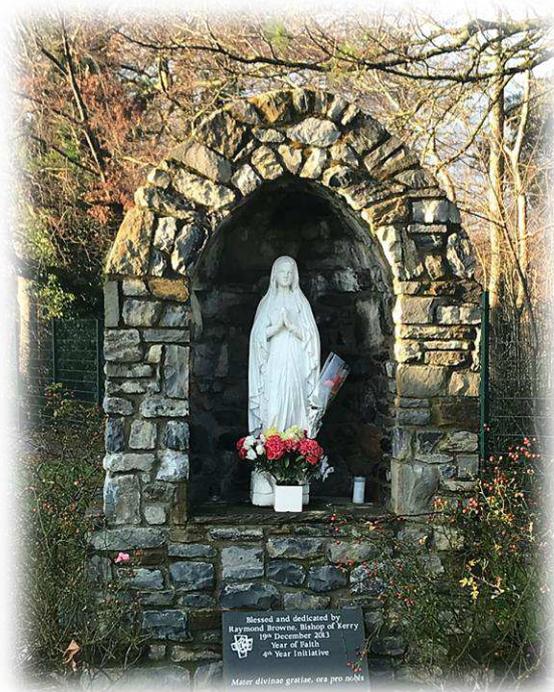




**PRESENTATION
SECONDARY SCHOOL TRALEE**

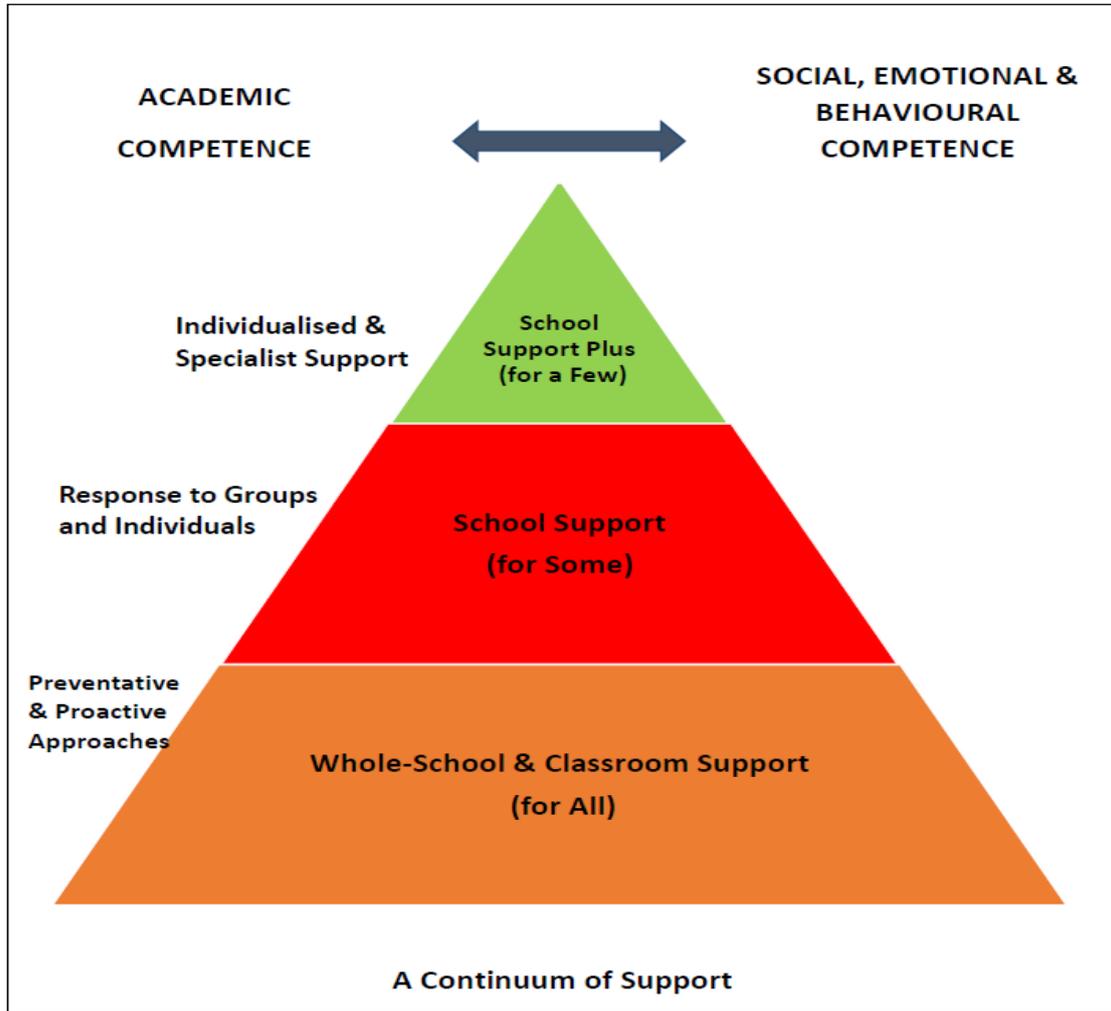
COURTESY FRIENDLINESS CO-OPERATION

Special Educational Needs Policy



Reviewed	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review date
January 2019	February 2019	January 2021

“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.’

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1. Introduction.

The student body of Presentation Secondary School is a unique and diverse population that is perpetually evolving, as is the nature of people and education. In order to provide clarity to the entire community of Presentation Secondary School, the Administration and Special Education Need Team (SEN Team) have set forth to formalise its position on Special Needs Education in the shape of the following Special Needs Policy.

In accordance with the Education Act of 1998, Presentation Secondary School aspires to ‘provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs, and without prejudice to the generality to the foregoing, uses its available resources to ensure that the educational needs, are identified and provided for, and ensures that the education provided by it meets the requirements of education policy.’ Each student at Presentation Secondary School is evaluated and assessed, both upon their entry to our community and throughout their school careers. This school has an ongoing commitment to meet the specific needs of each student in the most individually appropriate manner possible.

Our policy has been informed by the following legislation:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000) and Equality Act (2004)
- The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- Circulars 14/2017 and 35/2017

1.1: Background:

Presentation Secondary School is under the trusteeship of CEIST.

Presentation Secondary School Tralee has a long standing tradition in Catholic Education for girls between the ages 12 & 18, in close conjunction with our sister primary schools, both geographically and in ethos. Our current dwelling was built in 1984, however the Order of Presentation arrived to Tralee over 250 years ago. Today, our school is a voluntary non-fee paying post-primary school. Funding is received from the Department of Education and Science through the receipt of an annual capitation grant. Our present enrolment is c.660 students, but this number fluctuates annually.

Presentation Secondary School is a Catholic post-primary school offering quality education in a Christian environment to families who wish their daughters to be educated in an atmosphere of faith. Our objective is to pursue our school community as a happy and productive environment. Each student is encouraged to respect the dignity of one another. Collaboration, co-operation and communication are encouraged as an ongoing process between pupils, staff and home communities, which enhances the partnership where growth and education can take place. Pupils are encouraged to recognise, develop, enhance and use their gifts and creativity in a spirit of community and self-development.

1.2 Inclusion:

Presentation Secondary Tralee 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 endeavour to ensure that 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 need. Pro-active steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is non-judgemental and supportive. Please see Enrolment Policy, Transition Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and Pastoral Care Policy.

1.3 SEN Mission Statement:

In line with the overall school mission statement, it is our aim to promote and facilitate a whole school approach to SEN, to recognise each pupil as a unique individual, endeavouring to develop each pupil to reach their own individual potential.

1.4 Rationale:

This policy aims to outline the commitment in creating a learning environment which is inclusive and supportive of all pupils in line with the school's mission statement, 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:

- 1.5.1 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.
- 1.5.2. Ensure that all relationships within the school be imbued with a spirit of care.
- 1.5.3. Ensure that education takes place in an inclusive environment.
- 1.5.4. 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.
- 1.5.5. 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 /ODD / SEBD / DMS-5
- Specific Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia
- Physical Disabilities – Dyspraxia, Cerebral Palsy
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (Hearing and Visual impairments)
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders – Asperger's Syndrome
- Students with Exceptional Needs
- Stickler's Syndrome
- Ehlers Danlos Syndrome
- Irlen Syndrome
- Absence Epilepsy

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Internal SEN Team

2.2.1 Special Educational Needs Team:

The SEN Team has responsibility, under the direction of the Board of Management, 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 SEN Team 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 SEN Team also may meet with parents and relevant professionals, where deemed necessary by management. The SEN Team 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 SEN Team also recognises the invaluable role of the SNA in achieving our goals and collaborates with the SNA Team.

Currently, Presentation Secondary Tralee does not have an SEN Co-ordinator. The SEN Team is made up of 3 qualified personnel, the supporting staff and SNA's, under the supervision of Management.

2.2.2 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 SEN Team and the parents of students with SEN when necessary. The Principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff.

2.2.3 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 unique individual potential.

2.2.4 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. Essential 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 integral in their contribution in identifying and setting the learning targets set out in the SEN students' ILP.

2.2.5 Mainstream Teacher with Learning Support 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 Learning Support hours liaise with the mainstream teacher and other relevant members of the SEN team as well as the individual student to assess and formulate individual programmes which will provide curricular and other necessary support to the SEN student.

2.2.6 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 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.

2.2.7 The Guidance Counsellor:

The core responsibility of the guidance counsellor is to provide learning experiences that assist students to develop self-management skills which will hopefully lead to effective choices and decisions pertaining to 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.
- Act in accordance with the Critical Incident Policy, when and if the need should arise.

2.2.8 Students with SEN:

Where involvement is appropriate, the student may:

- Be involved in the ILP 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.

2.2.9 Special Needs Assistants (SNA):

SNAs are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs.

Special needs assistants are recruited specifically to assist the school in providing the necessary non-teaching services to students with assessed care needs. The allocations of posts are reviewed each year.

SNAs may be assigned by the school in the case of a student with assessed educational needs compounded by a significant medical need, impairment of physical or sensory function. SNAs may also be assigned to students whose behaviour is such that they are in danger to themselves or others.

Clear instructions and support are given to the SNAs by the Principal in relation to the duties that they are expected to carry out.

They should communicate effectively with teachers on all aspects of the student's provision.

When engaged in assisting a student in relation to a particular learning task, this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.

SNAs normally carry out their duties within the school premises. On occasion an SNA may be required to accompany a student to a venue outside of the school, providing assistance, coordination and reassurance.

SNAs are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential.

SNAs are involved in the development of the student's Personal Pupil Plan (PPP.) The PPP is attached to the ILP of the relevant student.

The duties of the SNA are assigned and supervised by the Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management, in accordance with Circular 30/14. There is a Communication book in place which allows for effective communication between parents and the school.

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 regarding 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 meetings.

2.3.3 The Special Education Needs Organiser:

The SENO may refer a student to the support team and thereafter may be involved in transferring information regarding the student with SEN from the primary school or second level school.

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, both parents (where practical) are consulted, their permission sought, by means of written permission. Parents of students with SEN enrolled in mainstream classes are encouraged to contact the class tutor or SEN Team to discuss their needs. 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 to ensure effective positive transition from primary to second-level is essential. 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, and supporting documentation where possible. 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. Passports are also received from the Primary schools. Regular communication exists between the management of Presentation Secondary Tralee and the feeder schools within the area.

Pupils in need of extra support are identified using the standardised tests including Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) that first years take in the March prior to their first term in Presentation Secondary Tralee.

Once contact is made, the Special Education Team is available to the parent for further contact and information depending on whether the student is enrolled in mainstream.

Existing students

If parents/guardians have concerns regarding their child's progress, they may contact the school secretary who will direct them to the appropriate person on the SEN Team.

Classroom Tutors and Year Heads may have concerns and highlight the need for a student to be considered for learning support in the event of noticeable difficulties arising in class.

If a student has not been identified as having a special educational need until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought in order to further assess the student. In-school interventions and

strategies will then be used, and the assistance of outside agencies may be engaged (e.g. NEPS, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist.). If a student has had a prolonged absence from school due to illness, bereavement etc., transient support is put in place for the student

3.1.2 Models of SEN Support:

In assessing and deciding which students will receive supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context, the following options are considered:

- Team Teaching / Zone teaching
- Support Teaching
- Access to SNA in all / specific classes
- Small group withdrawal for specific topics
- Individual withdrawal
- Reduced Curriculum in consultation with SENO/EWO
- Alternative programmes: L2LP

All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and student.

3.2 Programme Planning.

3.2.1 Individual Learning Plan (ILP) / Student Support File:

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

This process has been drafted in accordance with the Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools – supporting students with Special Students with SEN - 09/2017.

The I.L.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 and available
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review as often as necessary given the altering needs of the student.

“The Inclusion of Students with SEN Post-Primary Guidelines” [2007]

An ILP is put in place for each individual student with SEN and the following have an input in the formation of the students ILP:

The SEN Team, parents/guardians, student, the Deputy Principal, Principal, mainstream teachers, the SNA and the relevant agencies as previously mentioned.

3.2.2. Personal Pupil Plan:

A ‘P.P.P.’ is attached to the IEP/SSF of those who are in receipt of SNA assistance.

3.3 Timetabling.

3.3.1 Mainstream:

School management allocate class periods of learning support to both student and teacher.

3.3.2 SEN Students in the Mainstream Classroom:

Students are included in mainstream classes as appropriate taking cognisance of the student's ability and available resources.

3.4 Access to Curriculum.

3.4.1 Mainstream:

Both the Special Education Teaching Allocation Circular and Guidelines for Post Primary Schools inform best practice regarding the SEN student in the mainstream classroom.

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 allocation of support

3.6 Examinations.

Applications are made for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. Accommodations may then be granted by The State Examinations Commission. Advice is also provided regarding DARE.

4. Communication.

4.1 SEN Team:

The SEN Team and SNA's have regular meetings, formal and informal.

During the school day SNA's and mainstream teachers regularly communicate via the student's journal, if not directly with the SEN Team.

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.

Teachers may organise meetings with the Learning Support Teacher regarding students enrolled in mainstream education.

Senior Management Meetings occur within the school on a regular basis and issues regarding students with SEN may be discussed at these meetings.

SST and Care meetings identify students in need on a transient basis.

Meeting and communication occur with the SENO and EWO, on an informal and formal basis.

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 information is exchanged with staff at the start of each school year, and stored as part of the student's ILP.

4.3 Liaison with parents:

Liaison with parents/guardians is achieved in the following manner:

School Open Day, Parent-teacher meetings, Transition days, letter to the parents, Student Journal, Telephone calls, Text messages, ILP Meetings, Progress Meetings, Meetings with Multi-disciplinary team, Meetings involving community agencies, Meetings with Principal and SEN Team.

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 Principal's office, in a locked cabinet. Due to GDPR, parents will now be asked to send a soft copy of these reports and each copy will be stored electronically in the students file on VSWare. All ILP's are available on the Teacher Shared Resources System.

5. Enrolment and Assessment.

5.1 Admissions Policy:

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

5.2 Transition from primary level to second level:

See Transition Policy

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, Year Head and SEN Team make contact with and visit all feeder schools enrolling new students. These visits help to both build the students profile and access information and advice regarding the student requiring support. All relevant documentation is requested to be forwarded to the school. 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.

5.3 Assessment:

All SEN students are encouraged to take the first year screening test depending on their ability. We currently use the following tests: CAT (Cognitive Ability Test), WRAT 4, Neale Analysis. The purpose of the entrance exams is to identify learning needs that are yet come to light, to identify exceptional learning needs to ensure a mixed ability class setting. Where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student's individual needs are discussed. All screening occurs with parents' permission. All students undertake the WRAT 4 spelling and writing tests which helps the SEN team to identify students' needs.

6. Liaison with outside agencies and the community.

It is often the role of the SEN Team to attend meetings and liaise closely with a number of out of school agencies.