



Naas
Community
College

Naas Community College Educational Support Policy

Aims

Naas Community College is committed to providing an education for all its students in a caring and supportive environment. The College celebrates the uniqueness of each individual student and strives to ensure that all students, including those students with disabilities or special educational needs, reach their full potential in an inclusive environment. Furthermore, the College aims to integrate all students socially and academically.

This policy refers to Special Educational Need (SEN) as defined by the EPSEN Act (2004) as a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an 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.

It is the policy of Naas Community College to refer to students as having 'additional needs' not SEN and the department that is responsible for such students is referred to as the Educational Support Department.

This policy also refers to students requiring support with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and students who are exceptionally able and gifted.

RATIONALE

Naas Community College caters for a wide range of abilities, interests and aptitudes. This involves careful assessment, planning and teaching of all students needs. It is our policy to address all types of learning difficulties. We also are complying with the following legislation;

- The Education Welfare Act 2000

- Equal Status Act 2000
- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN)
- The Disabilities Act (2005)

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that all students including those with special needs are supported so that they can achieve their full potential.
- Provide an environment in which pupils with special educational needs feel welcome and included and become fully integrated into the school.
- Adopt a whole school approach towards the educational and personal development of students with special educational needs.
- Adopt an environment of equality where diversity is respected.
- Comply with legislation.
- Adapt and differentiate the curriculum by teachers where necessary.
- Participation of Students with Special Needs in the whole school experience.
- Provide training for teachers and SNAs.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Develop positive self esteem and positive attitudes towards school and the learning environment for all students.
- Set targets to improve the academic achievement of all students.

Educational Support Team

The Educational Support team comprises of the principal, Educational Support co-ordinator, resource teachers, learning support teachers, Special Needs Assistants and Guidance Counsellor.

The learning support team for 2016/2017 comprises of: Ciarán Keegan (Principal), Sarah Buckley (Educational Support Co-ordinator), Cliona O Sullivan (Guidance Counsellor), Chris McNairney (Learning Support teacher), Leonard Skelly (Learning Support teacher), Sammi Dunne (Learning Support teacher), Michele Williams (SNA).

Identification and assessment of Student with additional needs

Enrolment forms are processed in September and October and parents / guardians are requested to forward any relevant reports to the College. The Educational Support Co-ordinator meets parents / guardians and students in order to glean any other relevant information to identify student's individual strengths and the

difficulties they may be experiencing. The student's primary school and other relevant agencies and / or personnel may also be contacted, pending parental permission, should further information be sought.

All students entering First year are assessed prior to entry to the College in September. Formal testing generally takes place in January each year using the Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) or equivalent.

Literacy (New Group Reading Test or equivalent) and numeracy tests are carried annually to monitor literacy and numeracy levels of all students.

Mainstream teachers are requested to refer those students they believe to be struggling to access different aspects of the curriculum. Referral forms are available to staff through the Educational Support Co-ordinator. Completed referral forms should be emailed to the co-ordinator.

Other sources of identification / assessment

- SENO
- NEPS Psychologists
- Contact received from outside agencies e.g. HSE, Enable Ireland, DCD Unit, Occupational Therapists, Speech & Language Therapists, National Council for the Blind, Visiting Teacher for the Deaf
- Liaising with primary schools - educational passports and STEN scores
- Subject Teacher referral

Identifying, assessing and testing students will be ongoing so that the necessary supports are applied for and put in place for the students.

Resource and Learning Support Provision

Students identified as being eligible for learning support will be provided for through a variety of means:

- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Team Teaching
- Reduced curriculum
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all:

The Board of Management
Principal
Educational Support co-ordinator
Subject teachers
Resource & Learning Support Teacher
Guidance Counsellor
SNAs
Parents and Children

The Board of Management must:

- Ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- Approve the policy
- Consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy

The Principal must:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning-support and additional needs in co-operation with the Educational Support Co-ordinator
- Liaise with teachers, parents and students in the development of the school plan on learning support and additional needs
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on supporting students with additional needs on an on-going basis
- Keep teachers informed about the external services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning-support
- Liaise regularly with the Educational Support Co-ordinator
- Ensure compliance with current legislation
- Consult and liaise as required with relevant external bodies and agencies such as the Department of Education & Science, NEPS, NCSE, HSE and local agencies

The Educational Support Co-ordinator must:

- Inform and advise Educational Support team of resources, materials and levels of support required
- Maintain a list of students who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or additional educational services
- Co-ordinate information gathering for incoming students
- Process Irish Exemptions
- Process RACE applications
- Advise the Principal, Educational Support core team, Resource & Learning Support teachers on issues that may arise in the day to day implementation of the Learning Support programme in the school
- Make applications to SENO

- Timetable the Resource & Learning Support hours
- Devise and regularly review IEPs
- Maintain records e.g. IEPs, Priority targets etc
- Organise timetable for Reasonable Accommodations for In house examinations
- Set the agenda for weekly meetings
- Chair the weekly meetings
- Advise parents on additional support services
- Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments and special provision for students with special needs
- Read and interpret professional reports and advise accordingly
- Provide advice to the subject teacher about students
- Arrange for classroom accommodation and resources, as appropriate

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should:

- Submit all relevant documentation for accessing support i.e. any psychological reports, OT reports, Speech & Language Reports
- Sign Parental Permission form for accessing resources such as additional teaching support, assistive Technology, SNA as required
- Encourage and support the child with additional needs to maximise the benefit of the support for the student
- Maintain contact with the Educational Support Co-ordinator
- Familiarise themselves with the arrangements in school that exist to support their child with additional needs

Parents / Guardians may access professional assessment of student privately where such an assessment cannot be organised by the school.

Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school by supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:

- ❖ supporting learning in English and / or Mathematics
- ❖ Book sharing / reading stories
- ❖ Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
- ❖ Discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills
- ❖ Implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in their child's Individual Education Plan and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- ❖ Talking positively about school and school work

Parents should keep the subject teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.

Students must:

- Complete homework set
- Participate in all appropriate assessment activities
- Participate actively and willingly in all Support and Resource classes

The Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher must:

- Assess and record child's needs and progress
- Maintain a record of work completed
- Liaise with subject teacher where necessary
- Seek out relevant information on each child's needs
- Plan a course of instruction to assist student with their needs
- Implement targets set out in IEPs
- Liaise with Educational Support Co-ordinator
- Advise subject teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of information technology and suitable software
- Meet and advise parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Attend short meetings with other professionals e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers of the deaf and teachers of the visually impaired etc.

The Guidance Counsellor must:

- Counsel in personal, educational and career development
- Assist with Personal and Social development
- Assist with Psychological testing
- Provide career information
- Support parents in finding suitable third level / post school placement where appropriate
- Consult with parents and staff
- Consult with community organisations
- Provide Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience
- Make referrals to other professional agencies

Subject Teachers

Mainstream teachers have a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with additional needs. They have primary responsibility for the progress of all students in their class, including those selected for supplementary teaching strategies.

Subject teachers must:

- Create an inclusive classroom environment
- Adapt learning materials for students with additional needs
- Differentiate classwork, homework and exams as appropriate

- Inform Management, Education Support Co-ordinator of any observations or concerns
- Work closely with SNAs to ensure students fully participate in the day-to-day life of the school
- Be fully aware of the needs of their student(s) and work with the student in the classroom
- Up skill and engage in CPD in the area of additional needs
- Be fully aware of the IEP targets of any of their students and support these targets in the mainstream classroom.

Special Needs Assistants must:

- Work closely with subject teachers to ensure that students fully participate in the day-to-day life of the school. (SNAs support teachers in a non-teaching capacity. SNAs may not act as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstance may they be left in sole charge of class).
- Be fully aware of the needs of their student(s) and work with the student in the classroom
- Inform Management, Education Support Co-ordinator of any observations or concerns
- Attend both staff and departmental meetings when appropriate
- Help the student to complete tasks assigned by the teacher
- Supervise and support students with additional needs at break times, before and after school
- Assist /escort students on school trips
- Provide feedback on the progress of students with additional needs to the relevant subject teachers, mentors and the Education Support Co-ordinator
- Assist students with additional needs in examinations
- Be flexible. SNAs may be assigned work (as per circular letter) in addition to or instead of their normal duties as determined by the Principal.

SNAs address the relevant care needs of the students in their care by:

- Helping them to mix with peers
- Supervising them when taking medication. e.g Diabetes
- Administering medicine
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, personal care
- Assisting with mobility needs
- Preparation of classroom or work area
- Assistance with Transport
- Assistance with out of school visits/ outdoor activities
- Assisting with social & communication difficulties
- Assisting with students physical or sensory needs. e.g. need help swimming
- Supporting IEP development
- Assisting when student is a danger to himself or others

- Assisting at assembly, dispersal times or breaks

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

Following consultation with all the parties this policy will be implemented.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Students with additional needs access and benefit from the supports provided by making real improvements in their academic performance and key areas such as literacy, numeracy, oral language, social and behavioural skills.
- Students with additional needs make measurable progress in each academic year.
- Students with additional needs play a full and active part in all aspects of the school.
- Students with additional needs have high levels of school attendance.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

The Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

This policy will be reviewed by the Educational Support team every January.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____