

Additional Educational Needs Policy

St Francis College



School Mission Statement

Saint Francis College in Rochestown, Co. Cork, Ireland, is a Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship of the Capuchin Franciscan Order. We aim to provide an environment which promotes in a harmonious manner the physical, academic, spiritual, social and moral growth of the whole person. We respect and value all of creation but particularly the dignity of each individual within the college community. We strive to fulfil this mission in a spirit of collaboration and partnership between Pupils, Parents, Teachers, Trustees, Management and the Community at large.

Rationale:

The Education Act 1998 points out those schools must:

....use available resources provided to the school by the Oireachtas to make reasonable provision and accommodation for pupils with disabilities or other special educational needs.

Section 2 of the EPSEN (Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs) Act 2004 states:

A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or*
- b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.*

Definition of Special Needs

The EPSEN Act 2004 defines special educational needs

‘.in relation to a person, 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..’

Additional Educational Needs Policy

This policy on additional educational needs outlines the aim of St. Francis College to provide inclusive education for pupils with additional educational needs. It enables pupils who may need additional help or support to derive maximum benefit from their time in

school. The school will also strive to identify pupils who may need to be assessed for additional educational needs. In the context of this policy the term ‘Additional Educational Needs’ shall include pupils with learning support and resource needs. The term Additional Educational Needs is now more commonly used. As per National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2014) proposed new model for allocating teaching resources for students with additional educational needs, the working group recommends that under the new model, there will no longer be a distinction between learning support and resource teachers who will instead be known as Support Teachers.

Guiding Principles

- Every child will have the opportunity to experience success in learning and achieve their full potential.
- Staff will work to overcome potential barriers to learning by employing inclusive practice in all school settings while setting high expectations.
- A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, differentiated where appropriate, will be set.
- Early intervention and assessment will be emphasised along with a commitment to working in partnership with other agencies and professionals to provide the best support for children with special needs.
- Staff will work in partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s) while also acknowledging the importance of the child being an active participant in his own learning and that achievements are maximised when pupils take ownership of their learning.
- Develop staff knowledge and expertise in the area of additional education through the provision of in-service by personnel in the field of additional education.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of pupils with additional educational needs.

The Additional Educational Needs Support Team

- The Principal/Deputy Principal
- Support Teachers
- Class Teacher and Year Head
- The Career Guidance Counsellor
- School Chaplin

Links with Outside Agencies

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO)
- National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE)
- HSE Social Worker Team
- Education and Welfare Office
- Visiting Teacher Service

Support Teaching

Support Teaching is given in accordance with the provision of hours by the Department of Education and Skills. As per Circular No 0014/2017, the new Additional Education Teaching allocation will provide a single unified allocation for special educational needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. This single allocation is being made to allow schools to provide additional education teaching support for all pupils who require support in school. The school will deploy resources based on each pupils' individual learning needs. Support teachers and subject teachers work in partnership thus ensuring that pupils are supported as effectively and inclusively as possible.

As per Department of Education and Skills guidelines and circulars, it is open to the school to decide whether one to one, group teaching, team teaching or a mix of all is the

best type of support for each individual pupil, depending on the nature of their needs. The decision how best to support a pupil in a sympathetic manner is made in conjunction with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupil's wishes along with recommendations from the relevant clinicians.

Where a pupil's difficulty has not been picked up at Primary Level the Second Level Support Team may recommend that the pupil should undergo a full educational assessment. Initially in-house testing is undertaken to ascertain if there are any indicators for the need for professional intervention. The formal assessments are done with parent(s)/guardian(s) consent by our NEPS appointed psychologist.

Support

Support is offered at Junior and Senior Cycle in the form of small group withdrawal, one to one support and/or team teaching.

Criteria for selection:

- Pupils who have received Support at Primary School
- Pupils identified at the entrance screening assessments
- Pupils identified by their teachers as struggling with one *or* more subjects
- Following meeting with the Principal where parental concerns are expressed
- Requests from parent(s)/guardian(s)/students for intervention

Parents/Guardians are consulted, and consent must be given before a pupil is withdrawn. The Additional Needs Department is in regular contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) in the form of a meeting or telephone call. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are invited and encouraged to attend any meeting concerning their son's progress.

Staff members are de-briefed at the start of the academic year regarding the specific disabilities, difficulties, additional needs a pupil may have. They are issued with a password protected document explaining the specific needs of these pupils. During the

academic year up-dates on new assessments are given at staff meetings or through the Year Head.

Transfer from Primary School

The Support Team visit the primary schools and liaise with the 6th class and/or support teacher(s) where information pertaining to the educational and social needs of the pupil is passed on. The school sees this liaison as an important step in ensuring proper identification of pupils with additional educational needs and the continuity that follows them. The visit helps to ensure a smooth transference of the pupil from primary to post-primary level. Where possible, visits to the school are arranged for pupils with additional educational needs, indeed all pupils, prior to their transfer to St. Francis College. The school website also has information for all in-coming pupils on the school day, timetable, uniform etc.

Assessment Procedures for In-Coming Pupils:

CAT 1V

Other Assessment Tools:

CATS IV taken in Transition Year

The Dyslexia Screening Test

WRAT 4

WIAT 111

The results of these tests are used to inform parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers and the NEPS psychologist of the pupil's specific strengths and weaknesses as well as accompanying applications for reasonable accommodations in the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate if required. Other screening and assessment tests are also used such as the Detailed Assessment of Handwriting Speed (DASH), calculation of spelling and grammar errors and word reading error tests.

Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations (RACE) are organised by the Support Team.

Programme of work:

Areas of work within the Support class are pupil lead, together with collaboration between the parent(s)/guardian(s), subject teachers and the Support teachers. The use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) such as laptops, voice recognition software, apps and reading pen that support and aid learning outcomes is encouraged. At all levels the system of Support is flexible and adapts to pupil needs.

Time-Tabled Classes:

Pupils are withdrawn from non-exam classes. If a pupil has an Irish exemption they may be withdrawn from Irish class.