

## Thoughts for the SEN department re plan

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- Procedure from the time a teacher presents with a student with a problem...and before the student goes on for assessment
- Procedure for giving exemptions in Irish
- Procedure for tailoring curriculum for students with SEN but not exempt Irish
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# Sligo Grammar School



## Special Educational Needs Department Plan / Policy

**2006-2007**

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## **Mission Statement**

The Special Educational Needs department seeks to provide academic and pastoral support to students with SEN through early identification specialist tuition and comprehensive liaison with parents, form teachers and subject teachers.

## **Students with Special Educational Needs**

Students whose educational needs are provided for by the SEN department:

- Students who have been assessed by a psychologist and identified as having a Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD)
- Students who have general learning difficulties and who have an educational psychological report.
- Students who have a non-specific learning difficulty and who are identified by subject teachers as being unable to cope adequately with the demands of the curriculum

Students whose educational needs are the primary responsibility of other departments:

- Students whose learning difficulties are diagnosed as being caused by behavioural or motivational difficulties (form teacher)
- Students who are not native English speakers (EFL department)
- Students with physical difficulties (form teacher)
- Students who are exempt from learning Irish but do not have a special educational need.

## **S.E.N management**

### **1) The flow of information between the SEN co-ordinator and the class teachers, the form teachers, the administrative staff and principal.**

- The SEN coordinator (SENCO) will acquaint the staff annually with policies and procedures of the SEN department.
- The SENCO will maintain a list that identifies students who have SEN. This list will be issued to all staff at the beginning of each school year and updated throughout the year, if necessary.
- Subject teachers should familiarise themselves with the details of any SEN student they teach by liaising with the SEN department
- Form teachers should liaise with the SEN co-ordinator to familiarise themselves with details of the individual education programme (IEP) being followed by each SEN student.

### **2) The flow of information between the school and the parents of each student with Special Educational Needs**

- Parents are encouraged from as early as possible to contact the school regarding any special educational need their child may have.
- Parents are encouraged to pass on any assessment or report on their child's special need, to the school.
- The SEN department will arrange any meetings which may be required, with parents prior to enrolment
- The SEN team will welcome meetings with outside agencies and parents of students new to the school.

### **3) Procedures for facilitating effective collaboration between the school and outside agencies such as NCSE, NEPs, etc**

- The SEN team meets with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) at the beginning and end of each school year to ascertain how many resource hours the school has for that year and which students are entitled to resource.
- The SENO is in contact throughout the academic year with regard to new applications, which may be made, or to facilitate the application for grants for equipment.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) undertakes the assessment of students. This is done by referral from the school and from parents.
- The SEN department welcomes any intervention or advice from specific agencies, where appropriate, depending on the type of disability or special need specific to any student at a given time.

### **4) Liaison with other educational institutions to facilitate induction, progression and transfer of students with special educational needs.**

- Where necessary, the student, parents and any outside agency involved will be welcomed to the school prior to starting, to make transfer to this school as easy and successful as possible.
- Where a student is transferring on to another institution then that transfer will be made as easy a transition as possible.
- It is the right of the parent to pass on the educational psychological assessment to other bodies. The SEN department will not pass on any students psychological reports without the consent of parents.

**5) The extent to which the school seeks the necessary resources, both material and personnel, for all students with a disability or special educational need.**

- Where appropriate, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will apply for grant aid for assistive technology for the student. This is done through the SENO.
- The SENCO will apply on an annual basis for resource hours through the SENO.
- Where a student receives a grant for laptop, that laptop remains the property of the school. The student has the use of this equipment for the duration of their schooling here, unless that student is seen not to need the laptop or abuses it in some way. The student signs a form to such ends and this is kept on file.
- The school has resourced a special needs assistant (SNA) to assist with various tasks with specific students. This SNA post is for the use of the school and not assigned to any one specific student.
- Each year when the department of Education informs the school of the special arrangements available for the Junior and Leaving Certificate exams, parents of all students presenting for the state examinations will be notified by letter. In cases where parents wish to avail of the special arrangements an application will be submitted on their behalf by the SENCO

## **Curriculum provision**

### **1) The schools ability to meet the special educational needs of all students; the adequacy of policy and resources for the school's special educational needs provision**

- Up to junior certificate, where the student can have an Irish exemption, in line with Circular M10 94, that student can attend the learning support/resource class in lieu of the Irish class.
- Up to junior cert and where the student does not have an exemption, then some arrangement can be made for that student where possible to attend the SEN department. Withdrawal is not an option as it is deemed more appropriate for the student to be with the class teacher for all mainstream classes.
- After junior cert, and where the student presents with learning difficulties, where possible that student will attend the SEN department during the free periods, which arise in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> form.

### **2) The degree to which the school supports active involvement by parents when their children with special needs are choosing programmes, subjects and levels.**

- Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any learning needs which their child may have before entering the school
- It is the role of the careers teacher to assist in the selection of the subjects and levels for students. Open Day for first years is the forum for such selection. The SENCO will be available on that day to assist.
- Parents will be given every help and opportunity to discuss specific difficulties in subject choice. Exceptions can be made in relation to subject choices.

## **Learning and teaching in Special Educational Needs department**

### **1. The provision for monitoring review and evaluation in the planning of work in the special needs department**

- There is a weekly departmental meeting wherein plans for each student are discussed
- There are termly plans made out in relation to all students and groups of students even if no IEP is required
- There is a mixture of formal and informal evaluation of every student in the special needs department
- The formal evaluation comprises of a Cloze 3 test (for reading) and Vernon spelling test in first year for every student on entry.
- Within the SEN department there is the LASS test and the Aston Index test, which can be administered when appropriate.

### **2. The appropriateness of the range of professional and material resources used to support teaching students with special needs**

- There are three SEN teachers in the department. One has a degree in psychology, one with a diploma in learning support and the third with a diploma in SEN. There is a fourth teacher on the general staff also with a qualification in SEN.
- The range of material resources is acceptable considering the students, which have presented thus far at the SEN department..

### **3) The physical environment of the special needs classroom in terms of suitability, attractiveness and stimulation for learning and teaching**

- The classroom is inappropriate because it is outside of the main body of the school
- It is inappropriate because it is often too small for the number of students attending.
- The office for the SENCO is in another building again further from the main body of the school, making meetings with parents and other interested bodies very difficult.
- The office should be close to the classroom to facilitate access to files.
- The SEN department either should have a bigger classroom or a number of rooms available to them for the various groups which are timetabled together.

### **4) The effectiveness of the liaison between staff, parents and other professionals**

- Liaison between SEN teacher is good as there is a weekly meeting.
- There is ample opportunity for SEN staff to meet during classes and when they teach together
- Formal meetings with parents happen once a year during parent teacher meetings.
- Informal meetings and phone calls can happen at any time during the school day. This is encouraged and it is hoped that with the onset of broadband e-mail contact will make communication easier.
- Contact with other staff is informal other than at termly staff meetings where time is very limited. This is a problem, however much communication happens in the corridor and at breaks.

- Communication with outside agencies is kept to a minimum and the principal monitors access to the staff time by these agencies generally. Occasionally the SENCO will meet interest groups but access to the staff as a whole for these groups is difficult.

## **Support for students**

### **1) The extent to which the school has documented appropriate policies, which are consistent with present statutory requirements, on the admission, enrolment and participation of students with SEN**

- The SEN plan and policy exists herein.

### **2) The level of encouragement and facilitation afforded students with SEN to participate fully in the life of the school**

- All students throughout the school are encouraged and assisted to participate fully in the life of the school.
- There is an SNA in the school who facilitates the participation of the SEN students in in-school excursions, games and travel.

### **3) The extent and manner of the school's identification of and provision for the educational requirements of students with SEN**

- In relation to identification, if a student is not already assessed and has a specific learning difficulty, this should become apparent on entry when the spelling and reading tests are administered. If at this stage a problem is identified, further testing is done. If a problem persists or seems to be serious enough to warrant a psychological educational assessment, then the SENCO will arrange for National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to be called in.
- If a teacher detects a problem in a student further up the school, he/she will inform the form teacher who will in turn if appropriate inform the SENCO and testing will commence.
- As according to the Education for persons with SEN Act, IEPs are drawn up for all students who have an SEN as identified by assessment.

### **4) Professional development of all staff members in the area of SEN**

- There are three teachers involved in the SEN department. One with a psychology degree, one with a diploma in learning support and one with a diploma in SEN. There is a fourth teacher on the staff with a qualification in SEN.
- Specific bodies have given talks, e.g. Autism Association, to class teachers of a particular student. However even to this extent it is very difficult to get time for all teachers to attend.

- TEACHER IN-CAREER DEVELOPMENT

NAME	DATE	TOPIC
Elayne McDermott	2000	Developing an inclusive curriculum (Certificate)
Elayne McDermott	2002	Teaching English to students with other languages (Certificate)
Alma Johnston	2003	Psychology (Degree)
Elayne McDermott	2003/2004	Higher Diploma in Special Educational Needs
Kate McKeever	2004/2005	Graduate Diploma in learning support
Alma Johnston	2006-2007	ICEP; SLD (Dyslexia)
David Henry	2006 - 2007	ICEP; Inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream school
David Henry	2007 - ongoing	Davis Dyslexia Correction course
Gerry Price	2006 - 2007	Certificate in SEN for SNA's
Elayne McDermott	2006 -2007	Member of Special Education Support Service; Seminar delivery

**5) How effectively and sensitively the results of formative assessment of academic progress and personal development are used in planning suitable learning programmes to meet the needs of students with SEN**

- At the end of each planned term, results of targets set are taken into account for the next plan.
- Where appropriate, the student is involved with their own plan in that they make suggestions about areas which concern them.
- Each student is dealt with separately and individually.
- The results for the yearly Cloze 3 and Vernon spelling tests are compiled by the SENCO but not passed on to the students or parents. They are filed in the year group file.

**Short-term goals**

- *With the arrival of broadband to the school it is envisaged that information and communication will be done by Internet and e-mail and that there will be a greater ease of communication.*
- *A procedure for all testing will be drawn up so that there is a consistent method of testing depending on age, ability and stage the student is at.*
- *It is hoped that more talks can be arranged through NEPS as is their remit. It is envisaged that at least one talk will take place before the end of this year on a given SEN topic.*

**Long term goals**

- *There will be a suitable classroom and office for the SEN department*
- *It would be beneficial to some students to introduce team teaching. This would be an interesting project to develop in the long term*
- *It is time to discuss an applied course either for leaving or junior certificate to enable all students access to a broad and balanced curriculum.*