Special Educational Needs Policy

Stanhope Secondary School

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Continuous Professional Development   - list available on request

Appendices

1. Rationale

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) takes in the school and the philosophy that underpins it. It is written in the context of the Education Act 1998, and takes account of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Act (EPSEN) published in 2004. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. This policy bases its rationale on the principles laid out in the EPSEN Act which states that: "The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs".

"People with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers", and "That people with SEN leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.".
(**EPSEN Act 2004**)

2. Special Education Categories – Roles within SEN

2.1 Categories of Special Education Needs (SEN):
The School assesses the needs of the student individually. To date the following categories of SEN have been provided for:
- Borderline Mild General Learning Disabilities
- Mild General Learning Difficulties
- Moderate General Learning Difficulties
- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties / Global Learning Difficulties
- Physical Disabilities
- Sensory Difficulties – Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Down's Syndrome

2.2 Roles within Resource/Learning Support Department:
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Resource Teacher/Learning Support Teacher
- Guidance Counsellors – DARE & HEAR Applications
- LCA Coordinator
- Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator (HSCL)
- Principal
- Deputy Principal

SENCO
The Role of the SENCO is to provide support for children with special educational needs as listed above. The SENCO has responsibility for assessing and recording students' needs and assisting teachers in adapting the curriculum to help meet these needs. The SENCO will establish a Student Support File and create an individual Student Support Plan (SSP). The teachers can add in updates to student's progress and set additional targets. The SENCO has responsibility for meeting and advising parents / guardians and with professional agencies where appropriate. The SENCO has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on Special Education Needs. The SENCO together with the Deputy

Principal seek to establish and promote whole school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with SEN. In Stanhope Secondary School, the SENCO works and liaises with the Deputy Principal to put in place structures and plans to meet the needs of students with SEN and to enable each student to reach their potential. The SENCO is also responsible for the following:

- Working with Deputy Principal in the timetabling of resource and learning support hours for teaching staff
- Meeting weekly with Deputy Principal for student progress reporting.
- Working with the Deputy Principal to resolve issues as they arise.
- Sourcing SEN in-service where possible and liaising with the Deputy Principal to ensure adequate cover is provided.

Resource Teachers & Learning Support Teachers:
The role of the Resource & Learning Support teachers is to support and remediate the literacy, numeracy and other specific needs of students. Each Resource & Learning Support teacher has responsibility for programme planning, setting targets, evaluating progress and updating SSPs and reporting to SENCO. Appendix 2.

Guidance Counsellor:
The Guidance Counsellor's role within the SEN team consists of the following:
- Counselling in personal, educational and career development.
- Career information management, disability supports available at 3rd level and further education.
- Consultation with Parents / Guardians when planning for subject needs of students with SEN.
- Vocational preparation done in conjunction with SENCO
- Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)
- Disability Access Route Education (DARE)

Home School Liaison Co-ordinator (HSCL)
The HSCL role within the SEN team consists of the following
- To attend transition meetings in primary schools with SENCO
- To collect and provide SENCO with Educational Passports for all incoming primary school students.
- To provide SENCO with all necessary psychological, educational and additional reports upon a student's application to Stanhope Secondary School Secondary School, Stanhope St.
- To facilitate the CAT4 and NGRT testing of all new students
- To provide SENCO with relevant reports from above listed testing.
- To upload all relevant documents from SENCO to VS ware as appropriate.
- Support SENCO where necessary for completion of RACE application forms.

Principal

The Board of Management / Principal seek to develop a SEN core team of individual teachers with responsibility for delivering Resource Teaching and Learning Support and promoting the professional training and development of staff in SEN. The Principal will provide adequate accommodation, teaching resources and provide a secure facility for the storage of records in respect of SEN students. The Board of Management / Principal have delegated responsibility for the development, implementation and review of all school policy on SEN to the Deputy Principal and SENCO.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on Special Education Needs. The Deputy Principal together with the SENCO seek to establish and promote whole school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with SEN. In Stanhope Secondary School, the Deputy Principal works and liaises with the SENCO to put in place structures and plans to meet the needs of students with SEN and to enable each student to reach their potential. The Deputy Principal is also responsible for the following:

- Working with SENCO in the timetabling of resource and learning support hours for teaching staff
- Meeting weekly with SENCO for student progress reporting.
- Working with the SENCO to resolve issues as they arise.
- Sourcing SEN in-service where possible and providing cover for this to take place.
- Updating the Principal of on developments in the SEN department.

2.3 Role of Stakeholders in SEN

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where testing, assessment and profiling is being conducted Parents/Guardians are consulted and their permission sought. The SEN department advocates a partnership of collaboration and co-operation with Parents/Guardians of students with SEN so that each student realises their individual potential.

Students

The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle that underpins effective SEN provision. Students are encouraged to contribute to their own learning targets and to develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught.

Classroom teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class. It is particularly important that all class teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes account of learning difficulties. Differentiation for SEN students should be part of every class teacher's yearly scheme of work and a copy should be made

available to the SENCO for inclusion in the SEN plan for the year. The class teacher is alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and brings their concerns to the attention of the SEN department as early as possible in the academic year. Successful SEN provision is best achieved where there is a high level of professional consultation and co-operation between all class teachers and the SEN team.

Specialist teacher with Resource hours
The role of the subject teacher, who has Resource hours in the SEN department, is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of SEN students. Teachers with Resource on their timetable will attend an initial meeting with the SEN department. At this meeting the learning needs of the students are outlined. **The teacher is expected to formulate programmes of their own which provide curricular support to the SEN student in particular to students who are following Level 2 Learning Programmes.** The SEN department works in close collaboration and consultation with those specialist teachers in the creation of relevant and resourced programmes of study. The Resource and Learning Support Teachers will have flexibility around the provision of support. However, all necessary SEN support must be provided to allow maximum benefit for students with SEN needs. Those with a higher level of SEN needs should be allocated a higher level of SEN support.

Year Heads
Each Year Head has responsibility for their own year group and takes responsibility for the academic, wellbeing and discipline issues within their year group, as well as any other issues that may arise. They are the primary point of contact for Parents/Guardians. The Year Head may refer to, or collaborate with the SENCO/Deputy Principal with regard to the SEN needs of their year group.

Form Teacher
Each Form Teacher has a pastoral responsibility for their class group and is responsible for dealing with individual student issues within their group, with the support of the Year Head where necessary.

LCA Coordinator
LCA coordinator has the responsibility to consult the SEN department if students require extra help throughout their course. The SENCO will review this request, set up an SSP if required and allocate resource or learning support where appropriate.

School Chaplain
The Chaplain is available to all students on certain days for guidance and spiritual support. The Chaplain may also provide contact details for the school with outside agencies, where appropriate for certain SEN / vulnerable students.

Students with SEN:
 Where involvement is appropriate, the student may:
- ➢ Be involved in the creation of their SSP.
- ➢ Provide information about their own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns through the student interview/checklist from the Continuum of Support document (NCSE)
- ➢ Assist in the identification of their priority learning needs, targets and strategies.
- ➢ Give feedback which will contribute to the monitoring and recording of their progress.

2.4. **Role of the Special Needs Assistants see Appendix 2 (Circular 0030/2014)**

The SNA has responsibility for the care and wellbeing of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promotes independence. The SNA has direct involvement with the student with SEN in that they are there to assist, communicate, encourage and support the student and to help the student with their organisational skills. The SNA has the following roles.

- ➢ Accompanying students to class and remaining with students at all times unless directed otherwise by SENCO / Principal / Deputy Principal.
- ➢ The SNA collaborates with the Resource Teacher and/or the Learning Support Teacher and Class Teacher.
- ➢ The SNA provides information on the student with SEN to the SENCO as it arises.
- ➢ The SNA is available to assist the Resource teacher and mainstream class teachers by providing the extra support needed by the student with SEN to include note taking and recording of homework in the student journal where necessary.
- ➢ SNA assists with the behavioural and care needs of the students.
- ➢ The role of the SNA is pivotal and important in the school. We recognise the enormous contribution our SNAs make to the school.

2.5 External SEN supports

External Agencies
In some cases, external agencies e.g. NCSE, NEPS, CAMHS, HSE and Visiting Teacher Service may be involved in the assessment of a student with SEN and may contribute to the development of an SSP. Apart from providing general advice and support to school staff the agency is often consulted about 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.

3. SEN Model of Organisation

3.1 Whole school context

Stanhope Secondary School Sec School, Stanhope St, organises its classes in a mixed ability setting. Each first year group is formed with a deliberate mix of all ability ranges. Classes are taught as a homogenous unit for each subject, from first to third year. The school does however bear in mind that some subjects (English, Gaeilge and Maths) do not lend themselves to being taught as mixed ability and where resources allow, higher and ordinary level classes are formed. This allows for flexibility so that all students are in the appropriate level for their ability range.

3.2 Identification Process

1. During the admission process, in consultation with primary schools, students with SEN are identified, for example if they have psychological reports which specify their needs and recommendations.

2. This allows the SENCO, where appropriate with input from the Care Team, to identify the nature of SEN needs of the student.

3. Students' Educational Passports from Primary Schools and CAT4, NGRT and WRAT5 assessments are used to identify students who may require support.

4. Stanhope Secondary School students may be referred for further educational assessment by SENCO with Parental / Guardian approval.

5. Students who are high achievers are identified to all teaching staff at the start of first year and are supported by Year Head and Guidance Counsellor through different activities.

3.3. Parental / Guardian Involvement

If a Parent/Guardian notifies the school that a student is not progressing in the regular educational programme provided by the school, a process of formal and informal intervention and assessment takes place with Parental / Guardian's consent. An Educational Assessment may be necessary in addition to that but is subject to availability from NEPS. If the school feels that a NEPS assessment should be made available, they will inform the Parent/Guardian and proceed as agreed. Where an assessment is advised and the school is not in a position to proceed with same through NEPS, Parents/Guardians will be advised of the possibility of availing of a private assessment paid for by Parents/Guardians. A list of registered psychologists can be provided. The SENCO will liaise with the Parent's/Guardian's psychologist as appropriate.

The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) states that where an assessment establishes that a student has SEN, an SSP is to be prepared for the student and communicated to all staff. Relevant information from the educational assessment will be shared with relevant teachers.

3.4 Model of SEN provision

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of SEN support and which students may benefit from additional support and established interventions within the mainstream context, the following options are considered by the SENCO:

- Team Teaching
- Learning Support
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Curricular Reduction – Irish / Modern Language Exemption
- LCA – for Senior Cycle

An alternative programme, L2LP may be provided to students where it is deemed necessary. This will only happen with the agreement of the SENCO, Parents/Guardians and Principal. Central to this is a full discussion of the impact of this decision and learning pathway on the student's future career choices. For this programme an educational psychological assessment with a diagnosis of a High Moderate Learning Disability or a Low Mild General Learning Disability is preferable and advised but not essential. Depending on a student's level of ability they may engage in a full L2LP or a tailored one, where in addition to the 5 priority learning units and 2 short courses, the student can do certain subjects at level 3. The primary educational needs of students engaging in L2LPs will be met within the mainstream class, where the class teacher has developed a differentiated programme that enables the student to complete the learning intentions and outcomes in the relevant priority learning units.

3.5 Programme Planning

Programme planning takes place for groups and individuals within the structure of the Student Support Plan (SSP)

3.6 Student Support Plan (SSP)

Each SSP includes:

- Personal/Background details
- Educational details (primary school details / assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need
- Formal test results
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment
- SEN provision
- Priority needs
- Relevant documentation
- Literacy and numeracy needs
- Identified and established targets.
- Recommended interventions
- Abilities, skills and talents.
- Student checklist/interview
- Parent/Guardian input
- SEN department Input

3.7 Resource Teacher Planning

Following the establishment of the Student Support Plan by the SENCO, the SSP will be communicated to the core team of SEN teachers who will draw up a practical programme of interventions and targets. All subject teachers and SNAs will have input into these programmes as all of the required interventions will be met in their classes to address specific individual student needs. Parents/Guardians are an integral part of the SSP development. A copy of targets & interventions for every SEN student must be maintained and filed by all relevant subject teachers. Files must be updated on a regular basis.

Each **Student Support Plan** (Appendix 3) includes:

- ➢ Name of Student
- ➢ Strengths & Needs
- ➢ Name and target of the intervention:
- ➢ Date to be achieved / duration of intervention:

Each Student with SNA access must also have the following included in their SSP
- ➢ A care plan
- ➢ Targets & Interventions for independent learning

3.8 Review/Evaluation

The progress of each student should be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the instructional term by the SENCO, resource and subject teachers.
Student progress is evaluated in the following ways:
- Classroom tests
- Parent teacher meeting
- Continuous Assessment
- By resource and subject teachers on completion of each intervention to determine the success of each target.

The primary purpose of all evaluations as listed above is to determine whether the agreed learning targets have been achieved and to decide the level of resource support, if any, that should be provided going forward.

3.9 Timetabling of Resource Provision is structured within the following framework:
- *Irish Exemptions*

All students who qualify for an Irish exemption (scores below the 10th percentile) or who have transferred to us with an Irish exemption already in place will be timetabled, where possible, for learning support or resource hours. Where students are exempt from Irish, they may attend Learning Support/Resource Teaching for no more than 5 periods per week and may be required to remain in the mainstream class under supervision of the classroom teacher while doing their own work. At times deemed suitable to the learning support/resource teacher and the classroom teacher, a student may be able to participate in the Irish class where a topic of interest or some element of folklore/culture is being explored. (**Irish exemption criteria and procedure circular 0053/2019).**

- **Modern Language Waivers (Junior Cycle)**

Where this applies, a student will attend Learning Support/Resource class but may also be required to remain in the mainstream class for supervision if resource/learning support is not available at that particular time. Where possible a student will be encouraged to study a modern language at their own level of ability (to include just the study of culture and folklore aspects of the modern language) as this has been shown to have a positive effect on language skills in general.

- **Modern Language Waivers (Senior Cycle)**

Students availing of a waiver to the study of Modern Language at Senior Cycle will be facilitated where possible with Learning Support or resource classes. They may at times be required to remain in the mainstream class under the supervision of the class teacher where learning support or resource is not available.

- **Withdrawals**

The SEN department may withdraw students from other subject areas in consultation with the respective subject teachers and with Parent's/Guardian's written permission. In some cases students with SEN may be on reduced timetables to facilitate their educational needs.

- *Language exemptions in LCA*

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is recommended for students whose learning needs would not be met by the demands of the traditional Leaving Certificate. In instances where an SEN student chooses LCA it is generally accepted that the curriculum itself supports the student and thus specific SEN provision is unnecessary. However, where it is apparent that additional support is necessary for an SEN student, this will be reviewed on an individual basis and according to school resources.

All LCA students with a language exemption will continue to participate in Modern Foreign Languages and Irish to whatever level they can. They may/may not depending on their level of ability undertake the final state examination in Irish/MFL.

3.10 Resource Provision for the Gifted and Exceptionally Able Students

Gifted and Able students' needs are normally met within the mainstream curriculum. The school facilitates all opportunities for students to excel. Students are encouraged to participate in competitions and activities which are suitable to their unique gifts. Examples include:

- Art
- Debating
- Sport
- STEM

Where they experience needs which are not met by the mainstream curriculum and which fall within the parameters of the SEN department, such needs would be addressed on an individual basis in consultation with Parents/Guardians and relevant professionals.

4. Communication

4.1 SEN Team
- ➤ The SENCO and Deputy Principal meet on a weekly basis.
- ➤ The SENCO attends the weekly Care team meetings.
- ➤ The SENCO meets with SNAs as is necessary
- ➤ The SENCO and Deputy Principal compile the list of RACE students for all in-house exams

4.2 SEN Students Master Plan /Board

Throughout the year the SEN register is updated and teachers have access to it in the Resource Room.   This Board includes:

- ➤ Student's initials
- ➤ Class & Year group
- ➤ Category of SEN needs – Literacy/Numeracy/L2LP/other
- ➤ Teachers assigned to SEN students at various class periods

4.3 SEN - VSware
CAT4 results for each SEN student are available to all staff on VSware.

4.4 SEN students who present mid-year
- ➤ If a psychological assessment is available, with Parent's/Guardian's permission, summary of needs and recommendations is communicated to the staff.
- ➤ In the case of students without a psychological assessment, who require additional support, teachers are notified of need and support required.

4.5 Record Keeping
- ➤ A record of all SEN meetings is kept on file by the Deputy Principal.
- ➤ The SENCO maintains an up to date record of all student referrals.
- ➤ All relevant documentation including every communication with parent/guardian or other agency is filed by SENCO.
- ➤ At present a full record of psychological reports is kept in the individual students file in the SENCO's office in a locked cabinet.

4.6 Communication with Parents/Guardians
- ➤ Where the school recommends a psychological assessment, written permission is always sought by SENCO from Parents/Guardians.

> ➤ Incoming first year Parents/Guardians are required to hand in assessments from the educational psychologist or from other agencies.

5. Enrolment Process and Assessment

5.1 Enrolment policy
The school's Admission and Enrolment Policy is available from the office.

5.2 Transition from primary to secondary school
Stanhope Secondary School Secondary School seeks to foster a climate of support for incoming students that is flexible. We allow and provide for a compassionate response to individual student needs. A comprehensive Transition Programme is in place and co-ordinated by the HSCL. The HSCL is responsible for collection and forwarding on of all primary school educational passports by the end of September each year.

5.3 Sharing of relevant information
In making provision for students with SEN, information regarding incoming student's needs is requested at the new first year information meeting. With Parental/Guardian permission, important information relating to each student is obtained from relevant sources such as NEPS, feeder primary school and other (where appropriate)

For example, has the student had access to any of the following resources:
- Special Needs Assistant
- Special class setting
- Support or help from either the learning support or resource teacher
- Assistance with behavioural difficulties
- Psychological Assessment
- Occupational Therapy Assessment
- Referral to HSE for any reason
- Support in relation to a sensory impairment
- Support in relation to travel or mobility
- Current IEP/IBP.
- Exemption from Irish.
- Specific ICT support.

An individual support plan is then prepared for incoming students with SEN and appropriate supports and programmes are planned following on from this.

5.4 Steps in moving to Stanhope Secondary School Secondary School, Stanhope St
The following steps are followed to help the transition from primary to secondary School:
> ➤ The SENCO is available to meet with parents at the Open Night/Day. Where specific concerns regarding SEN students are raised, phone contact is made by the SENCO with parents/guardians and needs/resources available are discussed.

- The SENCO may visit a feeder primary school if necessary to discuss a specific student's transfer to Stanhope Secondary School Secondary School.
- The SENCO liaises with the HSCL regarding SEN student provision for CAT4 assessments.

5.5 Assessment Procedures

The CAT4 assessments (verbal / non-verbal/ spatial/ quantitative) are used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of incoming first year students. The purpose of these assessments is to identify learning needs that have not yet come to light. Further testing may be done to find out more data regarding the student's SEN needs to enable the resource department to put in place available appropriate supports. Parents/guardians may be contacted to discuss individual student's needs as they arise. All testing occurs with parents/guardians permission.

5.6 Ongoing monitoring of progress and support of transfer to second level

The progress of each student is monitored on an on-going basis throughout the term by the SENCO, subject teachers, Year head, SNAs and SEN Department.

6. Liaison with Outside Agencies

Other professional agencies:

The SENCO will attend meetings with and liaise closely with a number of out-of-school agencies such as those listed below.

6.1 National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The National Council for Special Education has been established as an independent statutory body. The council has authority to:

- Carry out research and provide expert advice to the Minister for Education and Skills on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services.
- Provide for a range of services at local and national level in order that the educational needs of children with disabilities are identified and provided for, and
- Co-ordinate, with health authorities, schools and other relevant bodies, the provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities. (See Circular PPT 01/05 for detailed outline of role of NCSE).

6.2 Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)

The SENO represents the local delivery aspect of the work of the NCSE. SENO's have responsibility for:

- Co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of educational services to children with SEN.
- Processing applications for resources for children with SEN – Assistive Technology

Regular and detailed engagement with organisations such as health authorities, the DES, the Inspectorate and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

6.3 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Stanhope Secondary School Secondary School, Stanhope St is provided with a psychologist from NEPS. The service that is delivered by NEPS operates under the following framework:

➢ Consultation about individual students.
➢ Recommendations and advice on individual student's needs
➢ Advice on classroom strategies and resources
➢ Advisory work in relation to SEN policy and practice
➢ Consultation and recommendations in relation to R.A.C.E. (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations)
➢ Full psychological assessments available to students.
➢ Student's cases are presented to the NEPS psychologist and each case prioritised for assessment on its merits by the psychologist in consultation with the SENCO and school principal.

6.4 Health Service Executive

Referrals will be made as appropriate by school management to the HSE.

6.5. Visiting Teachers

Teachers for the visually impaired and partially deaf students visit the school to ensure students with visual and hearing difficulties are monitored.

Continuous Professional Development

We believe continuous professional development is important because it ensures we can be as competent as we can in our profession. A record of CPD will be maintained.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Continuum of Support NCSE

Appendix 2   Role of Special Needs Assistant (Circular 0030/2014)

Appendix 3   Student Support Plan (SSP) - see attached SSP template

Appendix 4   Irish exemption criteria and procedures (Circular 0053/2019).

Appendix 5   Special Education Teaching Allocation (Circular 0014/2017)

Appendix 6   Advice on the use of Assessment Instruments / Tests for guidance or for additional & special educational needs (SEN) in post primary schools (Circular 0067/2020)

Learning Support Guidelines 2000