



The Teresian School Learning Support Policy

1. The Teresian School is committed in accordance with the pedagogy of St. Pedro Poveda, embodied in its Mission Statement, to educating each student as a unique human being who is capable of growing and developing spiritually, socially and academically. This learning support policy is designed to set out the systems which have been put in place to help to identify students who will benefit from additional learning support. It is a guide as to how this support may be provided in an inclusive manner within the school and as to how the school will apply allocated resources in order to assist each and every student to achieve the best possible educational outcomes.
2. This policy is written in the context of the *Education Act (1998)*. It also takes account of the *Education for Persons with Disabilities Act (EPSEN) (2004)* and DES Circular No 0070/2014 which provides Guidance on the provision of resource teaching and learning support to secondary school authorities. This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy bases its rationale on Povedan education philosophy and on the following principles laid out in the EPSEN Act (2004) which state that:
 - “The education of people with Special Educational Needs (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.”
3. The Department of Education provides the Teresian School with a special resource teaching allocation in respect of 'high incidence special education needs' which are broadly described as students with borderline mild general learning disabilities and specific learning disabilities. This allocation may change from time to time. In addition the school may from time to time apply for additional allocations for 'low incidence special education needs' which would encompass less common difficulties of a more serious nature and which would be applied specifically for a specific student the subject of the application.
4. A Resource /Learning Support Department has been created comprising the following:
 - 4.1. **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**
 - 4.1.1. The Role of the SENCO is to provide support for students with special educational needs. The SENCO has responsibility for assessing and recording the needs and progress of students who have been identified with SEN, setting specific targets and assisting teachers in adopting the curriculum having regard to available resource allocations
 - 4.1.2. The SENCO, in consultation with the Principal, also has a responsibility for meeting and advising parents and meeting with relevant professionals. **(Circular 08/02)**.
 - 4.1.3. The role of the Learning Support teacher is to support and facilitate the remediation of the literacy and numeracy needs of students. The Learning Support teacher will facilitate the diagnostic assessment, programme planning, consultation with parents, teachers and pupils, communication with staff and for teaching, monitoring and evaluating students' progress.



4.2. Role of partners in the SEN team

4.2.1. **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 or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted parents are consulted and their permission sought. The SEN department advocates a partnership of collaboration and co-operation with parents of students with SEN.

4.2.2. **Students:** The involvement of students 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 during Resource hours.

4.2.3. **Subject Teacher:** The Subject Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class. It is particularly important that all Subject Teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes account of learning difficulties. The Subject Teacher also plays an important role in contributing to the early identification of pupils with SEN. The Subject Teacher is alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and brings their concerns to the attention of the Principal and SENCO. A key element of successful SEN provision is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the Principal, SENCO and Subject Teacher.

4.2.4. **Specialist teacher with Resource hours:** The role of the Subject Teacher, who has Resource hours, is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of SEN students. Teachers with Resource hours on their timetable will attend an initial meeting with the SEN department. At this meeting the learning needs of the student are outlined. The teacher is expected to formulate programmes of their own which provide curricular support to the SEN student. The Principal and SENCO works in close collaboration and consultation with those specialist teachers in the creation of relevant and resourced programmes of study.

4.2.5. **Guidance Counsellor:** The Guidance Counsellor's role within the SEN team consists largely of the following functions:

- Counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Psychological testing
- Career information management
- Consultation with parents and staff
- Consultation with community organisations
- Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience

4.3. **Special Needs Assistant (SNA)** As laid out in *circulars 07/02, 24/03*, the role of the Special Needs Assistant is as follows:

4.3.1. Responsibility for the care and well being of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promotes independence. As part of their duties, SNAs may:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| • Assist | • Encourage | • Support |
| • Focus student | • Anticipate | • Observe |
| • Clarify | • Make note of | |
| • Read material | homework | |

4.3.2. The SNA may not be asked to act as substitute from an absent teacher or be left in sole charge of a class. The SNA is privy to confidential information pertaining to SEN pupils and



confidentiality is of paramount importance. The role of the SNA is pivotal and important in the school. We recognize the enormous contribution our SNA makes to the school.

5. Model of Organisation

- 5.1. **Identification of SEN:** An important role of the SEN department is to establish the procedures necessary for the preliminary screening of pupils and subsequent selection of pupils for more detailed diagnostic assessment. Central to this process is the Subject Teacher and the parent.
- 5.2. **School based identification:** A Subject Teacher and year co-ordinator can refer any student they are concerned about to the SENCO, who will then begin a broader profile. This first step in the screening process allows the SENCO, in co-operation with the Year Coordinator and the Principal to identify the nature of SEN being experienced. It is during this time that the learning, emotional, behavioural and social needs of the student are evaluated.
- 5.3. **Parent Referral Process:** When a parent indicates to the school that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the SENCO liaising with the Principal and with the parents' approval, initiates the administration of the preliminary screening process. Once the SENCO forms the view that the student may have SEN, the SENCO will advise the parent in relation to appropriate assessment.
- 5.4. **Preliminary Screening/Student profiling:** If it is deemed appropriate the Principal/SENCO initiates a process of formal and informal assessment to be conducted by the SEN department.
 - Informal Assessment:
 - Observations from mainstream teachers.
 - Consultation with parents.
 - Student Journal.
 - Meeting with pupil.
 - Formal Assessment:
 - Review of entrance tests.
 - Review of in house exams and reports.
 - Behavioural record if appropriate.
 - Review of previous professional assessments
 - Initiate preliminary assessment by NEPS psychologist
 - Following this screening/profiling stage decisions are made as to appropriate support warranted.
 - No need for further action.
 - Needs for monitoring/support in mainstream setting.
 - Purposeful Withdrawal.
 - SNA support
 - All information and data gathered are recorded in the student's profile.

6. Model of SEN provision:

- 6.1. In assessing and deciding the level of SEN support the following options are considered:
 - Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
 - Small group withdrawal
 - Individual withdrawal
 - Curricular reduction
 - Resource allocations



The Teresian School

12, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4 Tel: (01) 2691376 Fax: (01) 2602878 email: secretary@teresian.ie

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. **The duration of provision is reviewed at the end of every half term.** There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum. All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers, resource teacher and student.

- 6.2. **Programme Planning:** The objectives of the assessments conducted by the SEN department are to identify the pupil's learning, behavioural, emotional and social needs. As a result of the information generated by this assessment process, the SENCO may consider it necessary to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) created in consultation with NEPS psychologist, Principal, Subject Teachers, resource teachers, parents and pupil to best enable the student to progress in school. An IEP sets out the short-term goals needed to meet the priority learning needs of the student.
 - 6.3. **Review/Evaluation:** The progress of each pupil will be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the term. At the end of each half term the resource teacher/SENO evaluates the merits, progress and challenges of the programme. These evaluations help to form the basis of future planning. The primary purpose of this review is to determine whether or not the agreed learning targets have been achieved and to decide the nature and level of Resource support, if any that should be provided in the following instructional term.
7. **Timetabling of Resource Provision:**
 - 7.1. **Irish Exemptions:** All students who have an Irish exemption are timetabled for Resource at this time where possible.
 - 7.2. **Modern Language Waivers:** Exemptions will only be granted if the student meets the criteria in the relevant DES circular. Students who are exempt from or who wish not to study a modern language will undertake another option subject where applicable.
 - 7.3. **Withdrawals:** The SEN department may withdraw students from other subject areas in consultation with the respective subject department teachers and with parental permission. In some cases students with SEN may be on reduced timetables to facilitate their Special Education Needs. These students may attend Resource during these periods on their timetable.
 8. **Communication:**
 - 8.1. **SEN Team:** Members of the SEN team meet each month with the Principal to review school SEN provision.
 - 8.2. **SEN Pupils Register:** At the beginning of the new school year the register of all pupils with SEN will be in the student office. This register includes:
 - Name of pupil
 - Category of difficulty
 - Support being provided
 - Potential areas of difficulty
 - Suitable teaching strategies/methodologies
 - Potential provision at State Exams
 - Parents are informed that this register is made available to all their daughter's teachers.
 - 8.3. **Record Keeping:**
 - A record is kept of all meetings by or involving SEN team / personnel.
 - The SEN department maintains an up to date record of all student referrals.



The Teresian School

12, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4 Tel: (01) 2691376 Fax: (01) 2602878 email: secretary@teresian.ie

- A student profile is kept on every student with SEN. This profile is updated at the half term review of SEN provision. All relevant documentation including every communication with parent, teacher or other party is recorded in this file.

9. **Transition from primary to secondary school.** The Teresian School seeks to foster a climate of support for incoming students that is flexible and allows for creative responses to individual needs.

9.1. **Sharing of relevant information:** In making provision for students with SEN the Principal and SENCO liaise with feeder primary schools before the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) assessments to ensure that any reasonable accommodations needed are put in place. Also, with parental permission, important information relating to each student is obtained. I.e. whether the student has access to any of the following:

- 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
- Specific ICT support

A student profile is then prepared for incoming students with SEN and appropriate supports are planned.

9.2. **Steps in moving to Teresian School:** The following steps are followed to help the transition from Primary to Secondary School:

- Where specific concerns regarding SEN students are in evidence, phone contact is made by the Principal and SENCO with parents and needs/resources available discussed.
- The Principal and SENCO liaise with feeder primary school to collate information, transfer relevant documentation and note the advice / recommendations from primary school..
- SEN department reviews results of CAT assessments. Resource provision for incoming SEN students is discussed with Principal.

10. **Assessment procedure:**

10.1. The purpose of the CAT assessments are to identify learning needs that have not yet come to light, to ensure a true mixed ability class setting and to facilitate option choice where appropriate.

10.2. Further testing may be done to find out more data regarding the student's SEN to enable the resource department to put in place appropriate supports.

10.3. Where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student's individual needs are discussed. All screening occurs with parents' permission.

11. **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. At the end of each half term a detailed review is conducted to observe record and evaluate progress made. Parents and pupils are to be involved in this process.



The Teresian School

12, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4 Tel: (01) 2691376 Fax: (01) 2602878 email: secretary@teresian.ie

12. **Liaison with other professional agencies:** It is often the role of the Resource teacher to attend meetings with and liaise closely with a number of out-of-school agencies such as those listed below.
- 12.1. **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 Science 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).*
- 12.2. **Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO):** The SENO represents the local delivery aspect of the work of the NCSE. There are approximately 70 SENO's employed nationally and all have a qualification and work experience relating to service delivery to children with SEN. 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.
 - Regular and detailed engagement with organisations such as health authorities, the DES, the Inspectorate and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- 12.3. **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):** The Teresian School is provided with a senior psychologist from NEPS. The service that is delivered by NEPS operates under the following framework:
- Consultation about individual students
 - Recommendations and advice on individual students 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.
- 12.4. **Health Service Executive:** Referrals will be made as appropriate by school management to the HSE.

Ratified by the Board of Management of The Teresian School