

# **POLICY**

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Gorey Community School  
September 2006

## GOREY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

This is a statement of school policy for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (S.E.N.).

### SCOPE

This Policy Statement has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of Gorey Community School. It applies to all pupils in the school, to their parents and to all members of the school staff and management.

### POLICY and PROCEDURE

The Mission Statement of Gorey Community School requires the school to provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all children of the community, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects, ongoing education and generally for the purpose of contributing towards the spiritual, moral, mental, physical well-being and development of the said community.

The *Education Act 1998* requires the Board of Management (hereinafter referred to as the Board) to publish the policy of the school concerning the admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs.

The Board of this school has a policy of equal rights of access to all students. This includes the proviso that “No student will be refused admission for reasons of ....., special educational needs, disability....” Full details are contained in the Gorey Community School - Admissions Policy.

This requirement is reinforced by *The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act of 2004*. According to the Act; “Special Educational Needs means, 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.....”

In addition the provisions of *The Equal Status Act, 2000* are recognised, not only generally, but also in relation to the specific onus which this imposes in relation to promotion of equality and prohibition of all types of discrimination and harassment of those students with special educational needs.

The Board endeavours to respond to the educational needs of the community and upholds the belief that all children and young adults should be valued equally, irrespective of any individual needs or differences and is committed to making effective provision, through the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) and other agencies, for those students who have special educational needs, subject to the provision of adequate resources from the D.E.S. The Board and

staff are committed to support and nurture students, and to support their families and those who work with them, where appropriate. The Board is committed to an educational environment based on respect, honesty, trust and integrity.

### AIMS and PRINCIPLES

1. To assist students to reach their potential in all aspects of school life - practical academic, creative, social, cultural, spiritual, moral and physical.
2. To promote equity, equality and justice throughout the school.
3. To ensure that students with S.E.N. are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential, self esteem and dignity are developed and respected.
4. To ensure that all teaching members of staff are aware of the special educational needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
5. To ensure literacy/numeracy is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
6. To ensure that special educational needs are not viewed in isolation but in the context of the whole school/community.
7. To ensure that students with S.E.N. are offered a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous and differentiated curriculum and that it is provided in an inclusive manner.
8. To encourage the creation of a caring, welcoming, stable and stimulating environment, encouraging each child to develop intellectually, socially, morally and physically according to their abilities.
9. To set high standards for students with S.E.N. and to provide them with appropriate guidance, in order to encourage them to achieve to their full potential and to prepare them for their roles as adult members of society.
10. To ensure that the achievement of students with S.E.N. is recognised, encouraged and celebrated.
11. To develop staff expertise in supporting students with S.E.N.
12. To encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home.
13. To ensure a commitment to informed decision-making based on secure evidence.
14. To co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of other agencies in supporting students with S.E.N.
15. To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
16. To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with S.E.N.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### THE BOARD of MANAGEMENT

1. To ensure that all students with S.E.N. are identified and assessed.
2. To ensure that the school has a comprehensive S.E.N. Policy in place, which has been developed collaboratively with all relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure it's evaluation.
3. To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous and differentiated curriculum is provided in the school.
4. To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with S.E.N.
5. To ensure that a S.E.N. Coordinator is appointed from amongst the teaching staff.
6. To promote the development of positive partnership with parents and relevant agencies.
7. To ensure that the S.E.N. Policy forms part of the school plan.
8. To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy.

### THE PRINCIPAL

1. On behalf of the Board of Management the Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy for students with S.E.N.
2. To ensure that procedures exist for the identification, assessment and provision for students with S.E.N.
3. To appoint a S.E.N. Co-ordinator from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the Co-ordinator.
4. To keep the Board informed regarding issues of relevance to S.E.N.
5. In consultation with the S.E.N. Co-ordinator and other relevant personnel to liaise with the D.E.S. regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodation and exemptions in relation to state examinations, as well as assessments.
6. To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of hours and funds. This should include equality of access and opportunity for students with S.E.N. in terms of well equipped rooms and other resources.
7. To liaise closely with parents of students with S.E.N.

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CO-ORDINATOR

1. To oversee the day to day operation of the schools S.E.N. Policy, and to work closely with and under the direction of the school principal.
2. To meet regularly with the special needs team, the home- school liaison officer, the school completion programme co-ordinator, the guidance counsellors and other relevant personnel as appropriate.
3. To liaise with and advise other teachers.
4. To oversee and keep securely the records of students with S.E.N.
5. To liaise with parents of students with S.E.N.

6. To ensure the availability of suitable learning resources and teaching aids subject to those resources and teaching aids being made available by the D.E.S., or other agencies.
7. To liaise with external agencies including primary schools, National Educational Psychological Service, Health Boards and Voluntary Bodies.
8. To keep a register of needs and provision in relation to students with S.E.N.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS LIAISON OFFICER (Postholder)

1. To coordinate the administration and organisation of students requiring additional teaching support on a day-to-day basis.
2. To follow up and monitor the attendance of students requiring additional teaching support.
3. To liaise closely with the S.E.N. coordinator regarding the above.

#### THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TEAM

1. To provide diagnostic assessments and monitoring, of students with S.E.N.
2. To advise the teachers and parents of students with S.E.N.
3. To advise students with S.E.N.
4. To provide direct teaching to students with S.E.N. on an individual or small group basis.
5. Where specified by individual psychological reports, the S.E.N. team should be involved in the development and delivery, or the organisation of delivery of Individual Educational Plans, and in the context of a whole school approach, the issue.

#### THE GENERAL TEACHING STAFF

1. To identify and make representations on behalf of pupils who may have S.E.N.
2. To make provision for students with S.E.N. in their classes and subject areas.
3. To develop, within their subject areas, systems for the identification of students with S.E.N.
4. To use resources effectively and efficiently.
5. To be part of a whole school approach in relation to literacy and numeracy.
6. To develop policy and practice and to work towards the achievement of excellence in all aspects of their work.
7. To develop a positive ethos in the classroom for fostering an inclusive approach to meeting social and educational needs.
8. To identify personal training needs and to secure training where needed.

#### PARENTS

1. To work in a positive partnership with the school and other agencies.
2. To support and encourage their children in their education.

3. To make representations in respect of their child who may have S.E.N.
4. To enable the school to make informed decisions, parents should forward relevant test results and information

## SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS

SNAs play a very important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social and emotional development.

1. To work closely with and under the direction of the S.E.N. Co-ordinator.
2. To work closely with Year heads, the learning support team and the individual subject teachers in the implementation of the schools policy as it relates to individual students or groups of students.

## IDENTIFICATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH S.E.N.

The identification process for pupils with S.E.N. will include the following steps :

1. Liaise with Primary schools.
2. Liaise with school completion programme co-ordinator.
3. Liaise with parents.
4. Observations and informal assessments by the subject, pastoral care teachers and guidance counsellors as appropriate.
5. Formal assessments/ testing as appropriate.

Students will be assessed in the following manner:

1. Standardised diagnostic testing on entry to school.
2. Referral to the National Educational Psychological Service as appropriate.
3. Assessment, both formal and informal, through teaching in general subject areas.
4. Follow up assessment and testing relevant to item 1.
5. Results of such assessments shall be maintained in the school as the property of the Board and shall not be removed from the school under any circumstances.

Parental consent will be sought for all psychological assessments.

In conjunction with the above assessments and the advice of other agencies, the student may be restricted regarding:

1. Subject choices
2. Participation in particular school activities  
e.g. Sport, School tours etc
3. Use of special facilities which may have Health & Safety implications

e.g. ICT, Woodwork, Metalwork, Home Economics, Art, P.E., Work Experience etc

## EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE STUDENTS

Exceptionally able students also have particular needs.

The school will facilitate their particular learning needs by :

1. Providing the necessary interventions and supports as and where appropriate.
2. Providing guidance regarding extra-curricular activities that will enable these students to reach their full potential e.g. Talented Youth Programme

## EVALUATION & REVIEW PROCEDURES

Students with S.E.N. are evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis through informal assessment and class testing. Students receiving additional teaching support are monitored throughout and assessed formally at the conclusion to assess the efficacy of these interventions.

This Policy is available to all members of staff, parents, students and other interested parties. This Policy will be subject to regular review as appropriate.