



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Preamble: Policy for the Learning Support Team - A general framework

The Learning Support Team includes students who either have a statement of needs or have a professional's report which highlights challenges which potentially hinder the students' learning process and their psychosocial development at school. These challenges could be physical, sensory, behavioural, cognitive and/or of a learning nature.

Students in the Learning Support Team often require particular educational arrangements which target the individual challenges of such students with the main aim to ensure equal opportunities for all:

This policy's main aim is to ensure equal opportunities for all. Therefore it encompasses the following targets :

- To identify children (at the earliest stage possible) who would benefit from either a declaration of needs which will give them the formal entitlement of support by an LSE or an assessment by a professional which will guide the college as to how the student can be best supported by all educators involved thus ensuring that the students' requirements are handled effectively and as soon as possible.
- To create a clear framework and a structured development of additional services, utilizing resources and knowledge both inside and outside the classroom to serve students with additional educational needs.
- To keep accurate records and track pupils' development.

- To collaborate with parents and all professionals involved.
- To keep refining a whole-school strategy to cater for the needs of every student.

Identification

Some students join the College at year 1 already with a statement of needs or an assessment which highlights particular challenges and needs.

Otherwise, as early as Year1 but also right up to the secondary years, all students are continuously monitored so as to identify those who are not making appropriate progress in a variety of educational domains, such as social, mental, and emotional health; cognition and learning; and sensory or physical development. This is a continuous process that involves evaluation and assistance from all educators, parents and professionals.

Early identification of difficulties gives the best chance of a positive outcome. In support of this:

- Full cooperation from parents in providing relevant information, will support the College to ensure that possible needs are quickly identified
- Academic Review Reports are provided to parents at the end of each term, in addition to Parents' Day (which takes place twice a year) and all College staff being available to meet and discuss any issue with the parents by appointment whenever necessary.

Management/Process

- Parents will be invited to attend meetings about their son's progress and will be kept informed of any additional or different educational provisions that are offered.
- Students who make less rapid progress will be closely observed and offered customized learning opportunities to enhance their development.
- The first step in addressing a student's needs is early identification, assessment, and intervention. This is always done in consultation with the parents. Referrals and filling in of all the necessary paperwork (eg applications for a statement of

needs and assessments by SfCE professionals eg Literacy specialist, occupational therapist, autism specialist etc or other professionals in private practice) are always backed by the parents' formal written consent.

If a statement of needs for a particular student is issued, the College will immediately initiate the necessary steps to ensure that the student is also directly supported by an LSE. However, this process might take 3 to 6 months due to the various employment circumstances. Thus, it is not an automatic one. In turn the LSE, in collaboration with the teachers, will draft an IEP which will be then discussed and amended as necessary, with the parents during an IEP meeting. The IEP will be the general guideline as to which goals the student, educators, parents and other professionals (where applicable) will work towards during that particular scholastic year.

The IEP goals are reviewed towards the end of the 3rd term. It is always ensured that parents are given a digital copy of such documents.

If a student has been assessed by a professional and a report is issued but does not formally qualify for an LSE, a meeting with the parents is held so as to discuss the best and possible ways how to implement the professional's recommendations both at home and at school by all educators involved in the student's year group.

- In compliance with General Data Protection Act, all information pertaining to students in the Learning Support Team is saved and disseminated only with the educators working with the student and always with parents' permission. This includes referral forms, all professionals' reports, IEPs for students with a statement of needs, profiles compiled for students with a professionals' report but who do not have a formal statement of needs, access arrangements and applications for services or access arrangements with the relevant authorities.

Resources and Expertise

If a specific program needs to be offered, emphasis is centred on equipping the teacher and LSE with the knowledge and tools necessary to meet students' needs in the classroom where possible. Sometimes specific IEPs require the use of tutorials.

The development of skills and expertise is an ongoing process, and this is laid out in the Schools Development Plan.

Resources for meeting students' needs are kept in one place and made available for free usage in class. Both the Primary and the Secondary Campuses are wheelchair accessible, have more than one disability restroom, and a multisensory room.

A Structured Progression of Additional Provision

Although students in the Learning Support Team may need an educational programme that is extra or distinct from that of their peers (same age group), the majority of the students' requirements are met in the classroom in various ways, including:

- Extra assistance from the teacher/s
- Extra one-on-one or small-group assistance from an LSE.
- Differentiating the work or providing alternate tools or activities.

Some students may have individual/small group sessions outside of class with an LSE, a visiting teacher, or a therapist when a more intensive or specialized input is required.

If the student's issues persist or worsen after a fair amount of time with additional support, the College and the parent may discuss referring the student for assistance and guidance to a more specialized agency outside of the school.

With students with a statement of needs, the College or the parent may ask the Assistant Head in charge of Inclusion (Primary Campus) or the Inclusion Coordinator (Secondary Campus) to refer the student back to the statementing and moderating panel to take into consideration further support if the type and severity of a student's issues are deemed to be such that the College cannot satisfactorily address his or her needs from within its own resources.

The Assistant Head for Inclusion (Primary Campus) or the Inclusion Coordinator (Secondary Campus) must be immediately informed if a parent has reason to be concerned. Parents should be consulted as quickly as possible if there are any issues with a student's progress or behaviour at College.

Transition from the Primary to the Secondary Campus

The College SLTs at both campuses strive to ensure as smooth as possible transition from Primary to Secondary schooling. Therefore, during the scholastic year prior to students joining Year 7, the following meetings are held:

1. During the 2nd term, handover meetings are held between the Primary and Secondary SLT staff members and Inclusion Coordinators in charge of the Learning Support students in Year 6 and Year 7.
2. During the 3rd term, handover meetings are held, this time involving Year 6 educators and Year 7 LSEs.
3. At the beginning of the 3rd term, MAP sessions are held with Parents of students who have a statement of needs.
4. Towards the end of the 3rd term, all Year 6 students have an orientation visit at the Secondary Campus where they are usually accompanied by educators of both Year 6 and Year 7
5. During early July, the Assistant Head in charge of Year 7 and the Inclusion Coordinator hold individual meetings for parents whose sons have a professional's report.

The above meetings aim to create an opportunity for the Secondary Campus educators, parents and students to get a good understanding of the students' strengths, challenges and needs and devise strategies how to best keep on supporting such students during their schooling in the Secondary Campus.

It is also an opportunity for Parents and students to familiarize themselves with the learning supporting system at the Secondary Campus. This is mainly based on a subject based system. Normally, 3 LSEs per year group are assigned. They are each responsible for a small number of subjects which usually are their areas of expertise. The LSEs' work is always backed by the teachers' input, guidance and support who is ultimately responsible for the education of all students.

On the other hand, where necessary, the College still offers the full-time one to one LSE support for students whose entitlement and needs demand it.

During the above-mentioned meetings, parents are also guided through the necessary procedures related to updating of professional's reports, applications for renewal of statements where necessary and applications for access arrangements with the

MATSEC board and for ECDL/ICDL examination purposes. From time to time, the Inclusion Coordinator will continue to guide parents about such procedures according to the time frames set by the authorities related to each application.

Partnerships with Parents and other Professionals

- To ensure that children develop holistically, we work closely with all parents to hear their opinions and expand on student's knowledge of historical events, skills, and comprehension. Parents are the student's first teachers, and their assistance, cooperation, and involvement are essential for academic and overall achievement, particularly when a student is struggling. In addition to being requested to assist in establishing and supporting goals for Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) or other meetings, parents are urged to attend all sessions pertaining to their son.

A variety of outside support services are provided by our College and the Secretariat for Catholic Education (SfCE) to assist students and their families. Only with the parents' knowledge and permission will referrals to such support services be made.

Whenever it is appropriate, outside organizations are urged to hold school visits, offer support, and foster supportive relationships with all of the staff members who interact with the student.

If a parent is dissatisfied with the provision being made for their son, they are to ask for a meeting to discuss their concerns with the Assistant Head for Inclusion (Primary Campus) or the Inclusion Coordinator (Secondary Campus). In turn, these College staff members will discuss the matters raised with the rest of the SLT and/or the educators concerned as necessary. Further meetings with staff members will be organized if necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluating and Assessing Progress

IEP meetings are held annually for students with a statement of needs, usually during the first term, after the LSEs supporting such students would have had a number of weeks to observe the students and draft the IEP together with the teachers' input. For such meetings, the parents are free to invite other professionals who follow the student and who might be able to give a valid contribution. IEPs are then reviewed at the end of the year to assess the student's progress. The IEP identifies goals, assesses them, and tracks their development.

Every student at St Augustine College is subject to continuous assessment, which can range from casual personal observations to highly specialized and carefully crafted exams administered by trained professionals. These adapted papers are however always in line with the standards requested by the relevant National Educational Authorities as per Track level/LO level followed.

Every term, St. Augustine College publishes a report to document the progress of the students. Students following an alternate curriculum will also receive a report each term outlining their progress.

Record Keeping

Each student's individual records, are safely stored in Central Files at the Assistant Head's office. IEPs, Academic Reviews, Reports, Statements of Special Educational Needs, and Confidential information are all included in these files together with copies of important correspondence with parents and professionals. After a student finishes Year 11, or if the student changes school in another year, official documents are returned to the parents.

All LSEs also keep record of the resources created, work carried out with students and evaluation notes of students' progress. This information is kept in the student's files created by the LSEs in hard or soft copy form, as per procedures set by the particular campus. Such information is referred to when giving feedback to parents and/or professionals and when reviewing IEPs.

Roles and responsibilities

Statutory responsibility for students with a statement of needs lies with the governing body. Making the proper arrangements to meet the students' needs is the responsibility of the entire College. Most of these arrangements will be made by the class educators and will be carried out in the classroom as far as it is possible.

All educators are primarily responsible for:

- Managing the school's Individual Education Program and recommendations highlighted by professionals in their reports on a daily basis.

- Consulting and collaborating with other educators.
- Working together with curriculum coordinators to ensure that all students' education receives equal emphasis.
- Organizing and utilizing support in the classroom.
- Keeping track of, maintaining, and updating all students' records.
- Contributing to the professional growth of educators by exchanging knowledge and best practices.

Raising awareness regarding different challenges students face and offering peer preparation programmes where necessary, in collaboration with SLT members and Inclusion Coordinators.

The SLT including the Inclusion Coordinator are primarily responsible for:

- Coordinating services for students with specific needs
- Consultations with professionals and meetings with parents.
- Communication with other organizations, such as SfCE, educational psychology services, health and social services, and non-profit organizations;
- Ensuring the general smooth running of all necessary logistics for the implementation of strategies necessary for the benefit of students in the Learning Support Team
- Providing guidance to both educators and parents to in turn support students in the best way possible in all spheres of their education.
- Supporting educators as necessary when organizing awareness sessions and peer preparation programmes.

Since every student is a member of the College educational community, it is important to study this policy in conjunction with all other school policies.

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