



Blackrock College

Special Educational Needs Policy

BLACKROCK COLLEGE

S.E.N. POLICY

JUNE 2015

RATIONALE

Blackrock College has an open and inclusive Admissions Policy.

All pupils identified with special educational needs (SEN) will receive appropriate support to enable them to access effective learning opportunities suited to their needs and ability as set down in the Admissions Policy. Parents should inform the school of the nature and detail of their child's disability.

It is hoped that students with special educational needs (SEN) will be able to access an educational setting where:

- all students are valued equally
- all students integrate socially and academically
- barriers to learning and participation are reduced
- there are systems and resources that ensure early identification and intervention
- suitable learning challenges and targets are set to meet the diverse learning needs of the individual student
- all students have access to a broad, balanced, relevant and appropriately differentiated curriculum
- development of self-esteem and of values such as respect for all individuals are paramount
- students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL MISSION, VALUES, AIMS

Blackrock College is a community where students feel cherished, secure and happy. It gives students access to a broad and balanced education and to develop their spiritual, academic, physical, emotional and spiritual potential to the full. These aims inform all teaching and learning in the Special Needs Department.

DEFINITION

This Policy accepts the definition of special educational needs as outlined under the EPSEN Act 2004, "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"

Blackrock College recognises that students with special educational needs are present in every classroom. All students have particular learning needs, be it an identified disability, emotional/behavioural issues or exceptional gifts and talents.

GOALS

- to identify and provide for all students with special educational needs appropriately and equitably
- to promote and continue to develop a whole school approach for inclusion of students with special needs in all aspects of the school's operation
- to ensure that pre-enrolment screening of new students is effectively carried out and that all appropriate information in regard to students' learning needs is available to the appropriate teachers
- to collaborate with the relevant Year Counsellor and Pastoral Care team to ensure that students with special needs are appropriately supported
- to collaborate closely with Deans and teachers and to assist in the programme planning needed to ensure that all students with special needs are appropriately supported in the classroom
- to ensure that teaching staff are provided with appropriate information in regard to students with special needs and that the information is regularly updated
- to inform staff of the services and resources available
- to ensure that student files are kept up to date and are stored in a confidential manner
- to provide for the Professional Development of teachers in regard to Special Needs
- to assist in the development and implementation of differentiated programmes for students who are gifted

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This Policy is grounded in the legal framework as outlined in the Constitution, the Education Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004.

CONTENT

SEN PROVISION: JUNIOR CYCLE

A guiding principle of Blackrock College is that each student should be given all the support necessary to achieve his full potential.

First year students attend Willow Park where classes are organised on a mixed ability basis.

In Second and Third year, Special Needs students benefit from this arrangement as withdrawal, small groups and team teaching can occur at these times. All optional subjects in both Junior and Senior Cycle are mixed ability in nature.

MODEL

The Model of S.E.N. provision is focused on the individual needs of the student. It is firmly based on the following principles:

- The support of students with special needs in the school is a whole-school responsibility.
- The Special Needs Co-ordinator oversees a support team (of teachers and SNAs, i.e. Special Needs Assistants) that assists the class teacher to meet the needs of students with special needs.
- Parents/guardians are involved in the process of supporting their children through their partnership with the class teacher/s, the support team of S.E.N. personnel, Dean, Year Counsellor and Chaplain and school management
- The Principal/Management provides a structure and environment that supports and monitors the learning of all students and is particularly sensitive to the learning needs of students with special needs

The provision for special needs students is carried out in a number of ways, including, withdrawal of students for extra support on a 1-1 basis, the creation of small class groupings and team-teaching. Learning support time is provided to a student whose scores in literacy and numeracy are under the 10th percentile, but there is a degree of flexibility around this. Resource time is allocated to those students with assessments and diagnoses as agreed by the SENO. Some students have modified programmes and timetables appropriate to their individual needs.

Prioritising the needs of students informs the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Staff are briefed and informed about the IEPs by the Special Needs Co-ordinator. Once developed, Individual Education Plans for the students concerned set clear learning/behavioural/social targets. IEPs are agreed with the individual student and his parents/guardians, and are reviewed and updated when necessary. Each Dean and subject teacher involved with the student may have access to the I.E.P.

Teachers in mainstream classes are in regular communication with the S.E.N. Department and provide differentiated work/tests when required.

Policy regarding Bright and Gifted students at Blackrock College

Bright and gifted students at Blackrock College are accommodated at a variety of different ways. These mainly include a combination of differentiated learning and the provision of extra tuition and study outside of school hours and/or term time.

These can include the following:

- Talented youth with Careers Office- D.C.U.
- Extra after-school tuition:
 - Music } Encourage extra work
 - Maths } – etc.

- German} Students doing extra questions
- French} Students doing extra questions
- Irish} Submit work to teachers for correction

Differentiated learning- D.C.G., Construction, Agr. Science, etc.

- Free study availed by exam students - Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Mid-term.
- ‘Student of the Year’ End of Year Awards.
- Reinforcement of student performance with Scholarship and Gold Medal Award funding.
- Establishment of a network for our students.

Procedures for identifying students with SEN

SCREENING FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

All First Year students sit standardised testing in intelligence, literacy and numeracy and the results of these, together with information gathered from the Primary Schools, parents, psychological and other assessments, are used to identify who will require learning support. The CAT3 screening test is administered to 1st Year students early in the school year.

LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS: ORGANISATION

Students who are identified from the above process, are usually withdrawn from class 2 – 3 times per week. There is a certain amount of flexibility involved in the withdrawal of LS students due firstly to the needs of the individual and secondly, the flexibility within the timetable and staffing considerations. However, typically, students are usually taken from Languages. Students would usually have language exemptions. Team-teaching is also an option for the Learning Support student, depending on the personnel.

RESOURCE SUPPORT STUDENTS

Resource students are allocated a time allowance individually for support by the SENO. This allocation can be organised on a 1- 1 basis, or the hours may be pooled for a group of students, depending on their needs. Particularly gifted students are also identified in this process and offered the opportunity to enter the D.C.U. Programme for Gifted Children. “Centre for Talented Youth in Ireland”.

RACE: Reasonable Accommodation and Concessions in Exams

Reasonable accommodations and concessions may be available to students with diagnosed special needs when sitting state exams. The student’s application is processed through the Principal and sent to the S.E.C.. Arrangements may include the provision of a reader or scribe, use of a word processor or a tape recorder, use of a separate centre, a waiver in spelling and grammar.

A separate application is required for the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate exams. Parents/Guardians should note that if a RACE has been granted for the Junior Certificate there is no guarantee that this means an entitlement of RACE in the Leaving Certificate.

The SEN Department prepares the relevant students for the possible accommodations in the learning support class and by providing them with practice in the mock exams preceding the State Exams.

SEN Department

- The Department comprises Special Needs Head of Department, Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
- The Co-ordinator of the Special Needs Department oversees the provision of learning support services within the school and has specific responsibility for the effective inclusion of students with special needs.
- He/she perform functions delegated by the Principal as conferred on them by the Act EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 18).
- Resource Teachers are responsible for the implementation of individual students' IEPs

The SEN Department consists of two fully qualified teachers who hold Diplomas in Learning Support and Special Needs Education. There is also a large team of teachers working in the area, some of whom have availed of Continuing Professional Development in the field. The work of the department is also supported by the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Counselling Department, Special Needs Assistant(s), the Pastoral Care Team and Chaplain.

The Special Needs Department is conscious of the importance of whole staff involvement in its day-to-day work. External agencies such as NEPS, Health Service Executive (HSE), SESS and other professionals are invited to work with the College on a regular basis.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Parents are key players in the education of their children in an inclusive setting. Fostering a good relationship with parents is a priority and every opportunity is taken to involve parents in decisions regarding their children.

Parents are consulted by phone/email and are offered formal/informal meetings.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal

- Takes such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of a child who is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.2).
- Has responsibility for the development of IEPs, their dissemination, implementation and review.

The Special Needs Co-ordinator/Head of Department

- Is responsible for dealing with DES submissions and concessions
- Liaises with the relevant post holder for RACE
- Helps to process the Irish Exemptions
- Meets the following on a regular basis:
 1. Principal
 2. Post of Responsibility holder for Language Exemption
 3. Post of Responsibility holder for Special Arrangements in Public Exams
 4. Deans
 5. Pastoral Care Team
 6. SNAs

7. Counsellors
8. LS/Resource Team

to ensure good organisation and delivery of service.

- Has contact with whole staff by means of input into Staff Meetings, availing of transfer of relevant information via the School Network and liaising with individual teachers re students needs
- Has regular contact with parents and relevant professionals from outside agencies.
- Is a member of the Pastoral Care Committee.

PSYCHOLOGISTS

- The NEPs Psychologist works with the S.E.N. co-ordinator..
- He/she may be included in the preparation of IEPs in accordance with the EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 8.4).
- He/She Provides general advice and support to school staff and parents; he/she is consulted about individual children.
- He/she may gather information about the boys, their skills and abilities and may advise on a programme of support including referrals to appropriate services and specialities.

PARENTS

- Notify the Principal if they are of the opinion that their son has special educational needs and request him to take such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of their son EPSEN Act 2004 (Sections 3.1(a) and 3.2).
- Are entitled to be consulted and if they so wish to participate in the preparation of the IEP EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.9(a)).
- After the preparation of the IEP, parents are entitled to be informed and to receive a copy of the plan. EPSEN Act 2004 (Section 3.10).
- Are entitled to a report from the Principal of the outcome of a review of their child's IEP

STUDENTS

The school recognises the importance of including the student, where appropriate, in the development of his IEP. Where involvement is appropriate, the student may:

- be involved in the IEP meeting;
- provide information about his/her own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns;
- assist in the identification of priority learning needs, targets and strategies;
- give feedback which will contribute to the monitoring and recording of progress.

THE SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANT (SNA)

The SNA has a direct involvement in supporting the student with identified and specific special educational needs and, therefore, has a valuable contribution to make to his education. It is important that the SNA is given the opportunity to:

- share information with the SEN teaching team about the boy's talents, strengths and needs;
- support the implementation of targets relating to the care and access needs of the boy;
- provide feedback which will contribute to monitoring and reviewing the boy's progress.

See SNA Policy Document.

Other Teachers

It is the responsibility of all teachers in the school to be aware of all students with special needs. This involves:

1. liaising with the SEN team with regard to individual students with SN in their classes.
2. carrying out the work laid out in the IEPs where appropriate
3. Differentiating Class work, Homework and Tests where suitable

The school staff needs to be aware of the varying degrees of information about students that is sufficient to ensure that appropriate duty of care is in place at all times.

All teachers, however, do not need to know all the details about the nature/degree of every student's disability and/or special needs.

MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the Policy on Special Needs is implemented in the school
- The Policy is reviewed every year.
- The review is carried out in consultation with the Board.
- Assessment and monitoring of the Policy are carried out on a regular basis by the SEN team