

Terenure College

Special Educational Needs Programme

Policy and Procedures



Conscious of the mission of Jesus: ‘I have come that they may have life and have it to the full’ (John10:10), we aim to have a school community which is concerned with people as sons and daughters of God. In an atmosphere of welcome and warmth each individual is valued for himself or herself irrespective of ability and achievement. Each and every one learns to grow at different levels – intellectually, spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and physically – through involvement in a balance of academic, religious, cultural and sporting activities. (*Preamble to Mission Statement, Terenure College*)

1 Aim of the School in providing for Students with Special Educational Needs

The aim of the school is to give all students an opportunity to achieve success by teaching in ways that suit each student’s ability. The school will provide an appropriate system of identification of the special educational needs of students, deliver additional support, have high expectations and set appropriate targets, and monitor students’ progress during their time in the school, thus providing a co-ordinated and continuous response to the needs of the students identified with special educational needs. A whole-school approach is essential to ensure an inclusive and understanding environment for all students with additional needs.

2 SEN Coordinator

A key role within the special educational needs structure of the College is that of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The SENCO co-ordinates the work of the Special Needs Programme in Terenure College. The role of the SENCO includes the following:

- arranges for the assessment of pupils after they have accepted their place in the College,
- identifies pupils who need additional support in literacy or numeracy and contacts their parents,
- obtains previous assessments relating to new students,
- makes applications for students with an identified additional need who meet the criteria for assistive technology or SNA support to the NCSE,
- liaises with Year Heads especially regarding the provision of appropriate information to the teaching staff,
- identifies students’ needs based on the Department of Education’s Continuum of Support (COS) model,
- liaises with mainstream and learning support teachers of students with special needs,
- leads the preparation of Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students identified as having need of the greatest level of support according to the COS model,
- prepares Student Support Files for those students identified as needing additional support,
- liaises with the Guidance Counsellor especially regarding the assessment tests run in the school,

- liaises with the National Education Psychological Services (NEPS) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO),
- prepares applications to the Department of Education and State Examinations Commission (in consultation with parents),
- meets on a weekly basis with core Special Education team,
- liaises with the Pastoral Care team,
- liaises with Deputy Principals and Principal.

These roles are further outlined below.

3 Identification, Screening and Referral Procedures

All new students who have been offered and have accepted a place in Terenure College are assessed in literacy and numeracy.

Based on the results, the SENCO identifies the students who require additional support in literacy and numeracy. The parents of those students are contacted by the SENCO.

As many students with special needs have previously been assessed by outside agencies (including the Lucena Clinic, Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists), additional information in relation to these students is obtained from the reports submitted by parents.

Meetings are arranged with the parents of those students who present with the greatest level of support needs, i.e. co-occurring conditions such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, and those with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Autism or a general learning difficulty.

4 Special Needs Support Timetable, Assessment and Planning

The Deputy Principal with responsibility for timetabling devises the Learning Support timetable at the beginning of the school year based on the school's allocation of SET hours and in line with the department of Education Continuum of Support model. The students with identified special needs are given support in the areas of literacy and numeracy, organisational skills, study skills and social skills. Support teaching is provided on an individual or small group basis, as appropriate.

At the start of the school year, the Year Heads (in consultation with the SENCO) inform the staff of the students presenting with special educational needs. Teachers are advised to liaise with the SENCO if further clarification is required. All new teachers are provided with a resource pack on Special Education Needs.

During the first term all 1st year students are further assessed by the Guidance Counsellor, who administers the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT 5). This assessment helps to further identify students who may need additional support.

5 Liaising with External Agencies

The SENCO liaises with the National Education Psychological Services (NEPS) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) on matters in relation to students with special educational needs.

At the beginning of the school year, the Principal, the Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor and SENCO meet with the NEPS psychologist assigned to the college to plan for the year ahead.

Where concerns arise in relation to a student, the psychologist offers advice and may meet the parents of the student if necessary. To date the NEPS psychologist has made presentations to staff members relating to general learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and specific learning difficulties. Where required the psychologist carries out educational assessments.

The SENCO prepares applications to the Department of Education and State Examinations Commission. The documentation is prepared in consultation with the parents. This includes applications for Reasonable Accommodations in state examinations for Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate students. Reasonable accommodations include a spelling, grammar and punctuation waiver, the assistance of a reader, the use of a word processor or a scribe, a waiver from the aural components for students with a severe hearing impairment and the provision of an assistant or a waiver in the practical components of a practical subject.

Reasonable accommodations are provided during in-house examinations for students who have been granted a reader or word processor for state examinations and for those Junior Cycle students deemed likely to be granted such an accommodation.

6 Liaising with others

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator liaises on a regular basis with various people:

- Parents,
- Guidance Counsellor
- Pastoral Care Team
- Year Heads
- School Principal and Deputy Principals

6.1 Parents

Parents have a vital role in their children's learning. Meetings with parents are an integral part of the role of the SENCO. The parents of students with special educational needs are encouraged to maintain contact with the SENCO on an ongoing basis. Meetings are arranged with parents to discuss their child's educational needs where required.

6.2 Guidance Counsellor

The SENCO and the Guidance Counsellor liaise closely to discuss students with special educational needs. If concern is expressed in relation to a student's poor performance, particularly in relation to numeracy or literacy further investigation is warranted. A discussion with class

teachers and parents may result in a student being assessed by an educational psychologist to determine whether the student has an underlying difficulty or not.

The SENCO and Guidance Counsellor also discuss the CAO application forms for students with additional needs and applications to the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE).

6.3 Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care Coordinator arranges two meetings per year group throughout the school year. These are attended by the Pastoral Care Team, the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads and the SENCO. Students presenting with difficulties, educational or otherwise are discussed and appropriate action is taken. This may involve meeting with the student, the parent or the NEPS psychologist. In addition to these meetings the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads and the Co-ordinator of Pastoral Care meet on a weekly basis.

6.4 Form Masters

The SENCO and various Year Heads liaise very closely as a means of communicating new information, monitoring students' progress keeping records.

6.5 Principal and Deputy Principals

The SENCO, principal and deputy principals meet regularly for planning, briefing and consultation purposes.

7 Record Keeping

The SENCO, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads and the Co-ordinator of the Pastoral Care team are in receipt of all reports pertaining to students with additional educational needs which are kept securely. A register of all students in receipt of additional support is maintained by the SENCO and Deputy Principal.

The SENCO opens a Student Support File for the students identified as needing additional learning support.

Teachers involved in SET support classes will keep records for each student using the College template which outlines a student's progress through the year.

8 Role of mainstream teachers

In accordance with the Department of Education's Continuum of Support model, the subject teacher is recognised as having primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her class including those with special educational needs.

9 Special Needs Assistants

The Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are a vital part of the care of students with additional needs within the College. SNAs provide care support to children who are assessed as needing such assistance to attend school. SNAs help children to develop independent living skills so that they can interact, as much as possible, with their classmates and peers. It is important that students do not become over dependent on SNA support. As children grow and develop and become more independent, they may need less SNA support as they progress through school. They are assigned to an individual (or group of individuals) with additional care needs.

The SNAs perform their duties as outlined in the Department of Education Circular 30/2014.

SNAs are valued as an integral part of the school's core SET team.

10 Gifted pupils

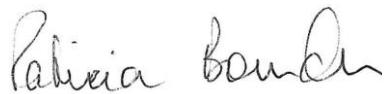
The SENCO and Guidance Counsellor will help in the identification of gifted students in the College and will inform teachers so that appropriate differentiated teaching practice can be put into place.

11 Continuous Professional Development

Terenure College will endeavour to provide continuous professional development (CPD) in special education needs for its teachers on a regular basis. It commits to providing briefing documents on special educational needs to its teachers on an ongoing basis.

12 Review of policy

The above policy and procedures are kept under continual review by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Principal and Deputy Principals.

Signed: 

Ms. Patricia Bourden,

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 23.05.2022

Signed: 

Mr. Philip Wallace

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 23.05.2022