

Holy Family Secondary School



Special Education Needs Policy

June 2015

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Holy Family Secondary School staff, the Parents' Association, the Pupil Representative Council, the Board of Management, amongst others, were consulted during the formation of the policy.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 9th June 2015

Proposed Next Policy Review date: Academic 2018-19

Chairperson, Board of Management
Mr Feargal Whyte

Secretary, Board of Management
Mrs Angela Ryan

Representative of the Diocese
Fr. Joe Mc Dermott

1. Link to Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states:

‘We promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family. Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each pupil so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues’

Holy Family Secondary School continuously strives to create a progressive learning environment for our pupils, guided by Christian values.

2. Rationale

Holy Family Secondary School, in compliance with its Mission Statement welcomes applications from pupils with S.E.N. The school operates an open admissions policy; promoting equality of access, participation and benefit for all, in as far, as the school can fulfil the needs of an individual pupil. This is consistent with the provisions of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2002, Section 2, which provides that;

“a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or the degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with

*(a) the best interests of the child in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
(b) the effective provision of education with whom the child is to be educated.”*

3. Scope of this policy

The policy also operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following;

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004
- The Education for persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 (EPS.E.N.)

4. Important terms and definitions

➤ **Working Definition of Special Education Needs**

“Special education 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.

While the definition in the act does not refer to pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, section 7 (4)(b) of the Equal Status Act 2000 does indicate a category of special needs in this case and the school will be mindful of such pupils also in providing for special needs.

➤ **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supports the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. The service is organised on a regional basis with psychologists being assigned to a group of schools. Psychologists work with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. Where an individual assessment is required, it will only be carried out with the written consent of the parents or guardians. Psychologists provide oral and written feedback to both parents/guardians and teachers.

➤ **Special Educational Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O)**

S.E.N.Os are appointed by the NCSE to provide a direct local service to the parents of children with special educational needs and to schools within geographical areas. This involves identifying the needs of children and deciding on the level of resources schools require to provide them with an appropriate education service.

➤ **National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)**

In June 2011, the functions of the National Education Welfare Board transferred to the newly established office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The NEWB focuses strongly on harmonising policy issues that affect children in areas such as early childhood care, education and participation, youth justice, child welfare and protection and research.

➤ **The Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)**

TUSLA was established on the 1st January 2014 and is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

5. **Aims of the HFSS S.E.N Policy**

- To ensure access for pupils with S.E.N. to a high quality education with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- To educate pupils with special education needs alongside their peers, within the normal curriculum, after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of their parents and the ability to meet individual needs.
- To identify and assess pupils as early as is possible and/or practicable.
- To involve parents and pupils in the identification, assessment and delivery of Learning Support and to strive for close co-operation between all concerned.
- To meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs, by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of available resources.
- To enable all staff to play a part in identifying S.E.N. pupils and to take responsibility for recognising and addressing their individual needs.
- To stimulate and maintain pupil curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their education.
- To enable pupils with special educational needs to be familiar with literacy, numeracy and basic skills, in order for them to lead full and productive lives.

IMPORTANT: In order to ensure these aims are fulfilled, the Board of Management needs to be explicitly made aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and

addressed. This information must be communicated to the school (the Principal). The Board of Management, in conjunction with parents, forward all relevant information received, to the National Council for Special Education Needs (N.C.S.E.) who allocate resources based on Department of Education and Skills policy.

In making provision for special need pupils the Board of Management needs to know whether the incoming pupil has had access to any of the following resources:

- *Special Needs Assistant or Classroom Assistant*
- *A Special Class*
- *Help, for specific needs, from any Resource Teacher*
- *Assistance with behavioural modification*
- *Psychological assessment - report to be provided*
- *Any additional resources to help with their special needs*
- *Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance*
- *Exemption from Irish*
- *Any resource in relation to travel or mobility, etc.*
- *Other resources not listed above*

NOTE: If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available, as far as is practicable.

Having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, the school will assess how the special needs of the pupils can be met. Please note, it is never the school's intention to delay allocations or the implementation of strategies but **it may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of their child's commencement in first year.**

The school will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.

Further to the procedures outlined above and in accordance with Section 14.1(e) of the E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004, the school shall ensure that *“teachers and other relevant employees of the school are aware of the importance of identifying children and pupils who have special educational needs.”*

6. Access to Learning Support and Modes of Learning Support

The following groups of pupils qualify for learning support in the school:

- Pupils **who have had** a psychological assessment which recommends Learning Support/Resource teaching, and who have been granted resource hours in either the high or low incidence categories.
- Pupils who have psychological assessments which recommend Learning Support, but **who have not been granted resource hours.**
- Pupils who have not been assessed but who display profound difficulties in their Entrance Assessments may be offered Learning Support. Parents of these pupils will be consulted with a view to accommodating their child in a Learning Support group.

- Pupils who are identified with learning support needs during the year may be accommodated within existing groupings **ONLY** if deemed appropriate and practicable.
- Pupils who are in receipt of Learning Support/ Resource hours may need to be assessed in school by the Learning Support/Resource team for the purposes of determining how best to support their individual learning needs. These assessments will consist of both formal and informal assessments.
- Formal assessment will include, but may not be limited to, the Diagnostic Reading Assessment, WRAT 4, NRG (New Grouping Reading Test), Malt 12/13/14, MCT (Maths Competency Test) and oral language assessment.
- Informal assessment will include but will not be limited to; writing samples, maths samples, learning style and in class observations.
- **All assessment results are private and confidential to each HFSS pupil and their parents/guardians.**

Modes of Learning Support in HFSS

Wherein possible and practicable, learning support provision will be provided by a member of the Learning Support team.

Individual Withdrawal is used occasionally, where a pupil requires specialised individual support in order to meet a specific need at a specific time.

Small Group Withdrawal is the preferred method of provision with most pupils in resource and learning support getting their allocation in small groups in English and Maths. The organisation of these groupings is the job of the Learning Support Coordinator(s) in consultation with the Principal. Groups are arranged on the basis of similar need profiles and the capacity to withdraw pupils at the same time. Withdrawal for small groups usually occurs during Irish for those pupils who are exempt and during continental language for those not doing a language.

Reduced Timetable A small number of pupils whom it is deemed, after consultation with the National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.) psychologist, parents and teachers, and in light of pastoral care considerations, cannot sustain a full curriculum, and have their timetable reduced. **ONLY insofar, as is possible and practicable.** Extra learning support or more classes in remaining subjects are provided at the time of the dropped subjects.

Co- Teaching **Co-teaching** is two or more teachers sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the pupils assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of pupils.

7. Access to Psychological Reports

Individual files will be kept on each pupil. Information in the files includes psychological reports, results from entrance assessments, correspondence between the school, parents and other relevant agencies, and applications for support and concessions.

Files are maintained by the Learning Support Co-ordinator(s) and access is afforded to the following personnel; the School Principal, the Deputy Principal, members of the S.E.N. Department, the Year Heads and the Guidance Counsellor.

Beyond these individuals, information regarding special needs is communicated to teachers on a need-to-know basis. In accordance with section 14 (1.d) of the E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004, the school *'shall ensure that all relevant teachers and other relevant employees of the schools are aware of the S.E.N. of pupils'*.

Information is provided to teachers at the first staff meeting. Other newly identified pupils are notified to the teachers as the year progresses. This is the responsibility of the S.E.N. Coordinator(s)

8. Responsibilities and Standard Operating Procedures

Role of the Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed regularly and to ensure that the school meets its requirements in relation to inclusion under the Education Act (1998) and all relevant legislation.

Role of the Principal and/or Deputy Principal

- To oversee and develop the implementation of the HFSS policies on S.E.N. and Learning Support.
- To ensure adequate timetabling of hours for learning support and resource hours and to allocate time for staff to reflect, review and plan curricular arrangements, for planning for pupils with S.E.N., for consulting with support personnel and other professionals regarding the needs, progress, and review of individual pupils.
- To provide adequate time for review of policy by special needs team as required. To organise continuous professional development in Special Education Needs (S.E.N.) for staff.

Role of the Learning Support Coordinator(s)

- To coordinate the collection of assessments of incoming pupils and work with parents and feeder schools to identify pupils with special needs.
- To work effectively with Special Needs Assistants (SNA). To meet monthly with SNA(s).
- To work with the Principal and Deputy Principal in the allocation of pupils to classes and the allocation of pupils to individual Learning Support teachers and to work with the other Learning Support teachers, parents and others.
- To be responsible for the submission of N.C.S.E. forms and be responsible for liaising with external service providers i.e. N.E.P.S. and the Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.)
- To coordinate the exemptions from Irish and to arrange the applications for reasonable accommodations for the State Examinations.
- To organise assessments with NEPS and to liaise with external agencies.

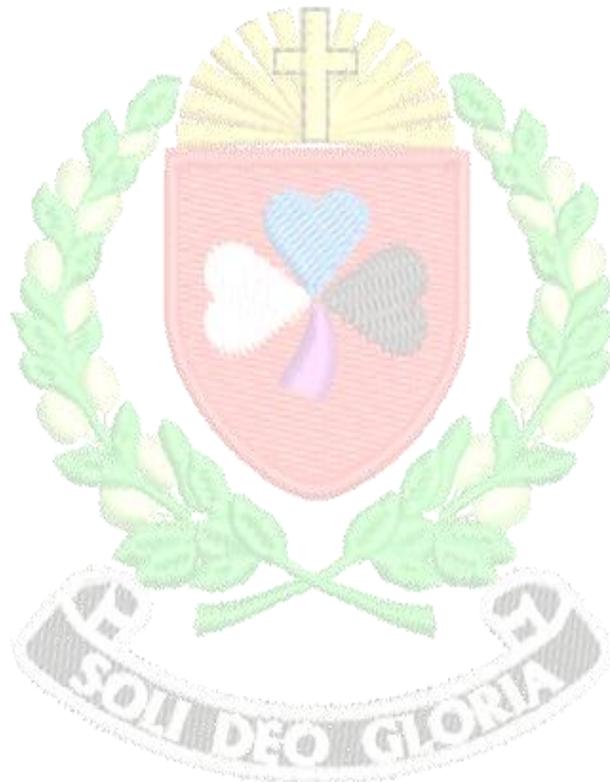
Role of the Learning Support Teachers

- To teach individual and/or small groups of pupils requiring learning support.
- To advise subject teachers and other departments on employing differentiated teaching methods and resources in their subject teaching.

Role of the Special Needs Assistants

- To carry out duties as assigned by the Principal, in consultation with the S.E.N. in accordance with Circular 0030/2014.
- To meet monthly with S.E.N. team.

- To cater for the care needs of the S.E.N. Pupils including assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- To provide special assistance where necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. writing, typing, photocopying etc.
- To provide assistance on out-of-school activities as may be required.
- To assist in the organisation and procurement of items needed for class e.g. textbooks, P.E. gear etc. and in the organisation of the pupil's locker.
- To assist the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- To encourage each pupil to become more independent and self-reliant.



Role of the Guidance Counsellor

- To participate in the preparation of the S.E.N. Policy of the school and to work with the Special Needs Team and other staff in the implementation and review of this policy.
- To liaise on an ongoing basis with the other members of the S.E.N. Team and Pastoral Care Team as relevant matters arise and to provide a range of services to all pupils, including careers information, study skills and examination techniques, consultation with parents, referral services etc. with an awareness of the S.E.N. of pupils.
- To work together with S.E.N. Team to conduct assessments of incoming first years and other pupils new to the school and to advise the Principal of any matters arising from such assessments.
- To support pupils who have been referred and to advise on supports available at third level for S.E.N. pupils and to assist pupils in assessing these supports

Role of the Subject Teachers

- To implement the S.E.N. policy, by taking into account the needs and learning styles of all their pupils and to employ suitable teaching methods so that all pupils can access the curriculum at an appropriate level (for example, differentiation, appropriate class tests/exams etc)
- **To take steps to inform themselves of the special needs of any pupil in their class and to bring any concerns regarding such a pupil to the relevant personnel.**

Pupil Involvement

- To contribute to the drawing up of learning programmes and the setting of learning targets for themselves.
- To contribute to the review of learning programmes.
- To co-operate with the agreed programme and its evaluation by participation in appropriate tests and assessments.

Links with Outside Agencies and Services

The E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004) assures interlinking provision between the National Council for Special Education Needs (NCSE), The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), TUSLA and school.

In accordance with this act, the school will work with the local S.E.N.O, the local N.E.P.S. psychologist, the visiting teachers for the Blind and the Hearing impaired, psychologists, psychiatrists from the social welfare Department and the Health Executive and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of any particular pupil

It may be necessary to hold case meetings with relevant professionals with the permission and knowledge of the pupil's parents (and their attendance) in order to determine the best approach and provision for the pupils in question. Notes from such meetings will be recorded and maintained in the pupil's file.

9. Advice for Parents

Holy Family Secondary School believes that effectiveness of any assessment or intervention will be influenced by the involvement and interest of the child and his/her parents. Both the parents and the pupils have important and relevant information to offer.

Parents are invited to contact the Learning Support Department during the year in addition to meeting the Learning Support teachers at Parent/Teacher Meetings. Parents are always contacted if a pupil is to be referred for assessment and afterwards to discuss the outcome of the assessment.

Parents are expected to support the work of the school with the pupil and to ensure the correct use and maintenance of any aids or equipment that are provided for the pupil.

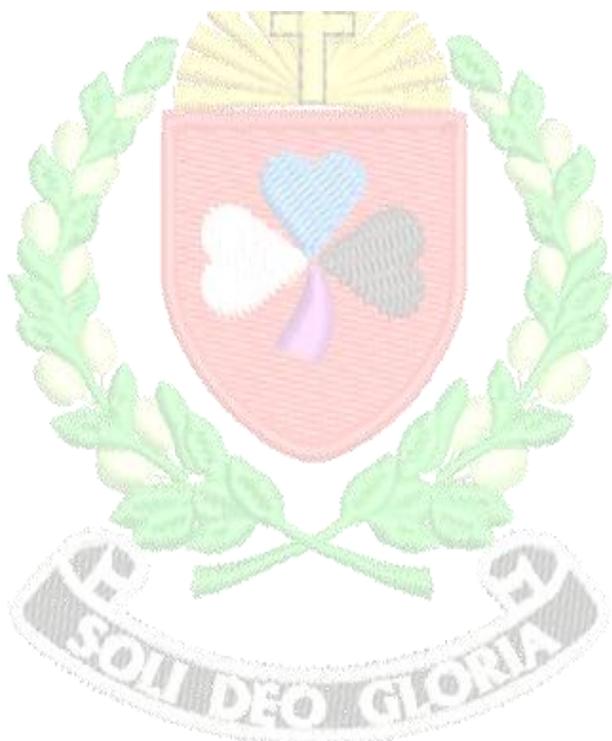
National Council for Special Education www.ncse.ie

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. The Council was first established as an independent statutory body by order of the Minister for Education and Science in December 2003

A Guide for Parents: http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NCSE_Booklet_webFINAL_10_06_14.pdf

Special Education Support Services www.sess.ie

Transition from Primary to Secondary School <http://www.sess.ie/resources/transition-primary-post-primary>



Appendix 1: Glossary of abbreviated terms associated with special educational needs

- SESS Special Education Support Service
- NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- SEC State Examinations Commission
- RACE Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations
- NEPS National Education Psychological Service
- NBSS National Behavioural Support Service
- CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- PDST Professional Development Service for Teachers
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- EAL English as an additional language
- S.E.N.O Special Educational Needs Organiser
- NEWB National Education Welfare Board
- EWO Education Welfare Officer
- ILSA Irish Learning Support teachers Association
- IATSE Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education
- NCTE National Centre for Technology in Ireland
- ACE Aiding Communication in Education
- AHEAD Association for Higher Access and Disability
- DARE Disability Access Route to Education
- HEAR Higher Education Access Route
- SSE School Self-Evaluation
- HSE Health Service Executive
- OT Occupational Therapist
- S< Speech and Language Therapist
- DLP Designated Liaison Person
- EA Pupils with exceptional ability
- TBI Traumatic Brain Injury
- SIB Self Injurious Behaviour
- DCD Developmental Co-ordination Disorder – Dyspraxia
- DS Downs Syndrome
- CP Cerebral Palsy
- SERC Special Education Review Committee
- TALIS Teaching and Learning International Survey
- E.P.S.E.N. Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act

Appendix 2: Policy Review Timeline

HFSS SCHOOL POLICY REVIEW: **Special Education Needs Policy**

YEAR OF REVIEW: **Academic 2015**

PROCESS STAGE	DATE	NOTES
Identification Primary Planning Meeting	Feb 2015	Meeting of SMT with Learning Support dept. Policy considerations discussed.
Scoping document (DRAFT 1)	March 2015	Orlaith Carr, HFSS staff teacher, on Special Education needs teacher training course 2014-15. Advised SMT/Learning Support dept. on current best practice re: policy development.
Discussion document finalised (DRAFT 2)	April 2015	
Circulation of discussion document to focus group (staff) (DRAFT 2)	May 2015	Focus Group for discussion document with Learning Support Department teachers 7 th May 2015
Circulation of discussion document to staff (DRAFT 3)	May 2015	
Consultation with HFSS SCR, Senior Prefect Team, Parents' Association (DRAFT 3)	May 2015	
Review by Planning Team (DRAFT 4)	May 2015	
Consultation with Board of Management (FINAL DRAFT)	9 th June 2015	
Ratification date (BOM)	9 th June 2015	

Implementation date	June 2015	
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