



Wilson's Hospital School

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy 2020 – 2021

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy document, which is regarded as a reflection of current practice is to provide a set of guidelines for the use of additional teaching resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to support students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This policy is written in the context of a revised model for allocating Special Education Teaching (SET) resources which was introduced by the DES in September 2017. Effective provision for SEN students in Wilson's Hospital School is part an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all students and good collaboration between the school, parents/guardians and students. This policy should be viewed as 'evolving' and should take account of developments in practice as they happen.

School Ethos:

Wilson's Hospital School aims to provide an education balancing the academic, practical, moral and spiritual aspects of life. The school is a warm and welcoming place where all students and staff are cherished in an environment where Christian values of mutual respect, tolerance and inclusivity are nurtured. The school is committed to enabling each student to reach their individual potential in a caring, safe and positive environment. At Wilson's Hospital School in line with the school ethos, the student as a valuable individual is the starting point for provision of SEN support. As teachers, we plan to meet the breadth of educational needs in our classes and we aim to engage all our students, including SEN students, in active learning methodologies which promote active participation and learning. In planning to meet the diverse needs of all our students we aim to truly make a positive difference to the flourishing of each individual. Wilson's Hospital School welcomes students with SEN and adheres to the following principles of the EPSN Act (2004):

- The education of people with SEN shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.
- People with SEN shall have the right to avail of and benefit from appropriate education.
- People with SEN should leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Aims:

Wilson's Hospital School aims to:

- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other SEN, as they relate to education.

- Provide, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- Ensure that students with individual needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible.
- Affirm that students with SEN have the same right to avail of and benefit from education as students who do not have those needs.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision-making process in relation to their children.
- Co-operate and work closely with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with SEN.
- Ensure that students with SEN are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the individual needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that SEN are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with individual needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home
- Co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of other agencies in supporting students with SEN.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources allocated by the DES.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with SEN.

The SEN Team

The SEN Team comprises of the school Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO), The Guidance Counsellor, the Special Education Teachers (SET) and the Special Needs Assistants (SNA). The school Guidance Counsellor has an important role in collaborating with the SEN Team in relation to RACE and the social and emotional needs of SEN students. The SENCO is responsible for managing, organising and monitoring the provision of support for SEN students under the direction of the Principal.

Legislative Framework:

This policy takes cognisance of the following legislation:

- The Education Act (1998),
- The Equal Status Act (2000),
- The Equality Act (2004),
- The Education Welfare Act (2000),
- The Data Protection Acts (2018),
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004),
- Circular No: 0008/2019 & 0014/2017: Special Education Teaching Allocation,
- Circular No: 0030/2020: Special Needs Assistant Allocation,
- Circular No: 0058/2019: Assessment instruments/tests for additional and SEN.

Supporting Publications:

The following publications were consulted in writing this policy:

- Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007)
- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers (2010)
- Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (DES, 2017)

Inclusion:

Inclusion requires understanding of and providing for the different needs of students and taking steps to reduce barriers to learning. As an inclusive school, Wilson's Hospital School aims to identify barriers to learning that exist in the school environment and provide for the needs of learners in order to minimise the impact of such barriers.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children have special educational needs if they encounter or are likely to encounter 'barriers to learning' in normal mainstream education, and this may include students without a specific diagnosis of a disability. Students may be in this category for a number of reasons:

- They have greater or lesser difficulties learning than their peers of a similar age.
- They have a disorder, physical or sensory disability which prevents them from using educational facilities provided in school for children of the same age.

Categories of SEN:

At Wilson's Hospital School we welcome SEN students with a wide variety of individual needs which may include:

- Physical Disability:
 - *Dyspraxia (difficulty with fine and gross motor co-ordination),*
 - *Hearing Impairment,*
 - *Visual Impairment,*
 - *Wheelchair user.*
- Emotional/Behavioural Problems
 - *ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder),*
 - *ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder),*
 - *ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder).*
- Specific Learning Disability
 - *Dyslexia – difficulty with reading and/or spelling,*
 - *Dyscalculia – difficulty with numbers,*
 - *Dysgraphia – difficulty with writing.*
- General Learning Disability
 - *Borderline GLD,*
 - *Mild GLD,*
 - *Moderate GLD.*
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism is a condition that involves difficulties with:

1. Social Interaction,

2. *Language and Communication,*

3. *Behavioural Patterns.*

The idea of a “spectrum” means individual ASD students’ needs can vary on the spectrum from mild to severe/profound.

- Assessed Syndrome
 - *Down syndrome.*
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SLD)
 - Expressive language disorder,
 - Receptive language disorder.
- Multiple Disabilities

NOTE: In addition to the needs listed above, where resources that may be allocated include teaching support, SNA support and assistive technology, another “Special Need” is Giftedness. Gifted and Talented students can also find secondary education stressful and may struggle to fit in. Wilson’s Hospital School aims to focus on the strengths rather than the deficits of our students and formal and informal assessment will be used to identify those strengths. We will endeavour to address the needs of particularly able students through differentiated teaching styles and individual support where deemed necessary.

Implementation of the Revised Special Education Teaching Model (2017)

(DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, p.5)

The following principles will be adhered to in the implementation of the Revised SET Model in Wilson’s Hospital School and in the creation of a whole-school approach to provision of support for SEN students:

- Resources provided to support SEN students will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school.
- Supports provided to SEN students will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with teachers, parents and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including SEN students.
- SET supports provided to the school will be used solely for the support of SEN students, including those for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).
- Students with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and wherever possible, those students will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- The school will aim to establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of SEN students. All members will have the necessary experience and access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support the diverse needs of SEN students.

A Three-Step Process to Support SEN Students:

In Wilson’s Hospital School we will use the DES Continuum of Support framework to engage in a three-step process in identifying and responding to our students’ needs. This framework recognises that SEN occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their individual needs. Using this framework helps to

ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.
(*DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, p.6*)

Step 1: Identification of Need

Wilson's Hospital School operates a policy of early identification of the academic, social and emotional needs along with the physical, sensory language and communication difficulties of SEN students through:

Prior to school entry:

- Enrolment Form: Opportunity for parents to inform us of SEN,
- Transition Meetings with Feeder Schools,
- Scholarship Examination,
- CAT4 Test,
- Open Day: Conversations with Parents,
- Contact with parents if deemed necessary based on CAT4 Results,
- Student Transfer Profile – Sent to feeder schools via parents if deemed necessary based on CAT4 Results,
- Education Passport,
- Assessment Reports from external agencies given to us by parents.

Upon school entry:

- Formal Assessment: New Group Reading Test (NGRT) and Access Mathematics Test 2 (AMT 2),
- Wide Range Achievement Test: Fifth Edition (WRAT5) where deemed appropriate,
- Teacher observations,
- Academic tracking,
- Care Team observations: Weekly meeting of Principal, Deputy Principal, SENCO, Guidance Counselor, Chaplain, Matron, SNA, Subject Teacher/s.

Students with SEN transferring from another post-primary school:

- A Student Transfer Profile will be sent to the former school of any student with SEN who transfers from another post-primary school.

Step 2 – Meeting Needs

(*Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, p.5-35*)

Creation of Student Support Files:

- When SEN students are identified through the process outlined above, a Student Support File will be created for each of those students in response to their individual needs. Student Support Files will be created through a collaborative process involving the SEN Team, Subject Teachers, parents, the student and sometimes external professionals.
- The Student Support File will allow the SEN Team and Subject Teachers to document progress over time and it will assist us in providing an appropriate level of support to students in line with their level of need.
- Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision will be made regarding the appropriate level of support required by the student. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or to move to a higher or lower level of support.

- Each student's Support File will be added to their profile on VSWare so that all teachers will have access to relevant information.
- Student Support Plans will set out agreed targets, strategies and a time-frame for review. This will help teachers to differentiate their subject teaching to meet the needs of their students and to set specific targets related to their subject areas.
- Milder, transient needs will be met through classroom-based support by the mainstream teacher by differentiation.
- Individualised support will be provided for students with more complex and/or enduring needs.

(DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, p.11 - 12)

A Continuum of Support

SEN occur on a continuum and therefore the needs of SEN students in Wilson's Hospital School will be supported on the basis of a continuum as follows:

i) Classroom Support:

Classroom support will be the most common response to emerging needs – the subject teacher, the student and the parents will discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective.

Actions may include:

- Specific classroom strategies,
- Individualised teaching methodologies,
- Differentiation,
- Adapting the learning environment.

The Review Process:

- A review of Classroom Support actions may involve the subject teacher, parents and student and should focus on progress made by the student.
- The outcome may be that the student continues to have a Classroom Support Plan, no longer requires a Classroom Support Plan or School Support will be initiated.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Subject Teacher:

- Liaises with parents regarding initiation of Classroom Support process.
- Seeks advice from the SEN Team.
- Keeps the Principal informed of Classroom Support Plan.
- Maintains a record of relevant information.

The SEN Team:

- Provide advice and resources to the subject teacher to assist him/her in the assessment process and development of a Classroom Support Plan for the student.

The Principal:

- Note that a Classroom Support process is being implemented.

Other Professionals:

- Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists etc may be indirectly involved, offering consultation or advice via the SEN Team.

ii) School Support:

- Where Classroom Support is not enough to fully meet the student's needs the subject teacher will involve the SEN Team in the problem solving process.
- Information will be gathered through formal and informal assessment and a School Support Plan will be created.

Information Gathering and Assessment:

- Information gathering will inform the development of a new Support Plan and will be gathered from the following sources:
 - Classroom Support Plan,
 - Formal Assessment,
 - Observation of learning style/behavior,
 - Observations from teachers,
 - Parents,
 - Pupil,
 - External Professionals.

Planning and Intervention:

- A School Support plan will be created which will set out the nature of the student's learning difficulties, define specific learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review.
- The plan will for the most part be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school-based intervention programs such as Team Teaching or Small Group Teaching. Home based actions in support of the plan will be encouraged.
- The School Support process is coordinated by the SEN Team.

The Review Process:

- The review process will focus on student progress and be informed by the views of the parents, the student, the teachers and the SEN Team.
- The outcome may be that the student continues to have a School Support Plan, intervention reverts to Classroom Support or School Support Plus will be initiated.

Roles and Responsibilities:**The Subject Teacher:**

- Consults with the SEN Team and remains responsible for working with the student in the classroom.

The SEN Team:

- Consult with teachers, the student and his/her parents in creation of School Support Plan.
- Seek advice from external professionals.
- Make School Support Plan available to all teachers on VShare and Teams.
- Provide additional support for the student through Team Teaching and/or Small Group sessions.
- Coordinate the review of the School Support Plan.
- Maintain a record of relevant information.

The Principal:

- Records decision to implement School Support Plan.

Other Professionals:

- Provide advice to SEN Team.

iii) School Support Plus:

- This process will be initiated if, in reviewing the School Support Plan it is agreed that the student is not making adequate progress.
- If a student's needs are severe and/or persistent the SEN Team will liaise with the student, the parents, the Subject Teachers and personnel outside the school in the assessment and intervention process.
- The information from Classroom Support and School Support will provide the starting point for problem solving at this level.
- A School Support Plus Plan will be drawn up based on the information gathered.

The Review Process:

- The SEN Team will carry out a review in collaboration with the parents, the student, teachers and external professionals to measure progress.
- The outcome will be the continuation or discontinuation of School Support Plus.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Subject Teacher:

- Contributes to assessment and planning and remains responsible for the student in the classroom.
- Provides classroom supports.

The SEN Team:

- Review the outcomes of interventions in the Classroom and School Support Plans.
- Coordinate the assessment of the student's learning, social, emotional and/or behavioral difficulties.
- Coordinate development of School Support Plus plan in collaboration with the student, parents, teachers, SEN Team and external professionals.
- Provide additional support for the student through Team Teaching, small groups and/or 1:1 withdrawal.
- Monitor and support interventions.
- Review School Support Plus plan in collaboration with the student, parents, teachers, SEN Team and external professionals.

The Principal:

- Record the initiation of the School Support Plus process.
- Ensure that a file is maintained containing records regarding consent of the involvement of external professionals, the assessment process, interventions, reviews and records of earlier school and classroom support processes.

When the EPSEN Act (2004) is fully implemented, it states that "the principal shall...cause a plan to be prepared for the appropriate education of the student (in this Act referred to as an "education plan")" for those students who meet the terms of Section 3 of the act.

Step 3 – Monitor and Recording Outcomes

- Students' progress in relation to achieving their targets will be regularly and carefully monitored through the Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus process outlined above.
- This will be done through formal and informal assessment and observation and reports from Subject Teachers, Year heads, parents and students.

Referenced from ‘WHS One-to-One Staff and Student Interaction Policy (2020)’

One-to-One Teaching

Provided that it is deemed appropriate and beneficial for the student concerned, one to one teaching may be provided.

- Individual tuition within the SEN department,
- Individual care provided by SNA,
- Individual classes or catch-up classes provided by teachers,
- Group sessions where only one student turns up,
- Check-ins between staff members and students regarding social, emotional and/or behavioral concerns.

All one-to-one classes take place in an open environment with a glass paneled door. The teacher, as a qualified professional, shall use their judgement on how best to arrange seating and work areas, but shall be cognisant of the dignity and integrity of the student involved. Some work carried out within the SEN or Matron Department may require a degree of extra privacy.

In any situations where a student receives one to one tuition on an ongoing basis, the parents shall be advised of this arrangement and a copy of the timetable shall be given to the Principal.

Development, Implementation and Review of Policy

The provision of additional support for SEN students is a collaborative responsibility shared by all. The School Management Board, Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN Team, Subject Teachers, parents and children are all stakeholders and contribute to implementation and monitoring of Special Educational Needs policy. The School Management Board of Wilson’s Hospital School has overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students in the school, including SEN students. The School Management Board facilitates the inclusion of SEN students through inclusive enrolment policies and by promoting inclusive whole-school policies and procedures. Under current legislation the Principal has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the needs of SEN students are met. Therefore, the principal should work with the School Management Board, teachers and parents in the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy to promote the inclusion of students with SEN.

The School Management Board:

The School Management Board of Wilson’s Hospital School have an important role in overseeing the development, monitoring and review of school policy. The School Management Board should liaise with the Principal to facilitate quality provision for SEN students by aiming to secure the best possible environment for those students.

The Principal:

The school Principal should:

- Take overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s SEN policy.
- Monitor the implementation of the school SEN policy regularly.
- Facilitate the creation within mainstream classes of an inclusive environment for SEN students.
- Meet regularly with the SEN Team.
- Provide opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers to enable them to address the individual needs of students in their classes.
- Ensure whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents in their children’s education.

The SENCO:

The SENCO has responsibility for the daily running of the SEN Department. Duties of the SENCO include:

- Develop and implement a whole school SEN policy under the direction of the Principal.
- Lead the SEN Team and Subject Teachers in the provision of support SEN students.
- Consult with external agencies to arrange for educational assessments and provision of support for SEN students.
- Lead the three step process of identification of need, intervention, monitoring and recording of outcomes.
- Collaborate with the Principal, Guidance Counsellor and the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) in the allocation resources such as additional teaching hours, SNA provision and ICT for SEN students.
- Arrange for the purchase of appropriate ICT for SEN students availing of the DES Grant for Assistive Technology.
- Organise the certification of exemption from Irish for SEN students where necessary.
- Collaborate with the Care Team and the Guidance Counsellor to meet the care needs of all students in the school, including SEN students and assist those students experiencing social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- Meet with parents of SEN students experiencing learning, social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- Collaborate with the Guidance Counsellor in applications for Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations (RACE).
- Collaborate with Examinations Secretary and Deputy Principal to organise Reasonable Accommodations in House and State Examinations.
- Collaborate with Principal and Deputy Principal in allocation of support for SEN students on the school timetable.
- Collaborate with external agencies, parents and students in the creation of Student Support Files.
- Assist in the selection process of candidates for the position of SNA.
- Lead and supervise the provision of SNA support for SEN students.
- On-going communication of information concerning SEN students to Principal, Deputy Principal and all teachers as required.

The SEN Team:

The SEN Team at Wilson's Hospital School are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to meet a variety of needs.

- Teaching approaches include team-teaching, small group and individual support.
- The SEN team will work collaboratively to create Student Support Files for SEN students. The SEN Team will offer advice to Subject Teachers and other departments on employing differentiated teaching methods and resources in their subject teaching.
- The SEN Team will consult with parents of SEN students regarding their individual learning needs
- Facilitate the smooth transition of SEN students from feeder primary schools and other post-primary schools.
- The SEN Team will liaise with external agencies if requested to do so by the Principal or SENCO.

Parents:

Parents can make a huge contribution to their child's learning. Wilson's Hospital School encourages open communication between parents and teachers throughout every student's education. Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school in the following ways:

- Providing all relevant information and documentation to the school in relation to their child's learning difficulties, learning needs, strengths, and any other concerns they may have. This information will enable the school to begin to plan for the inclusive education of their child. The provision of documentation to the school regarding their child's needs is critical to collaborative planning for their child.
- Parents play a critical role in the successful creation and implementation of their child's Student Support File.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school if they are concerned about their child's education. This can be done through the Year head or SENCO.
- Parents help the school by keeping teachers informed of their progress of their child, or any difficulties they encounter.
- Parents can support the work of the school by providing a home environment where there are opportunities for learning and participating with their child in the following activities:
 1. Paired reading;
 2. Helping them with their homework;
 3. Using ICT where available to support learning in English and Mathematics.
 4. Confidence building and providing reassurance,
 5. Implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in their child's Student Support File and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- It is very important that parents talk positively about school and school work.
- Parents should keep the school informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home. If following diagnostic assessment, the child needs additional support, the parent should make contact with the SENCO to discuss:
 1. The results of the assessment
 2. Learning targets set for the student
 3. The way that these targets can be supported at home.
- If it is decided to discontinue learning support as the targets have been met, parents need to discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home.

Students:

Students receiving additional support should:

- Have a positive attitude towards participation in their learning.
- Become familiar with their learning targets and be involved in the setting of those targets.
- Contribute to the selection of material relevant to the attainment of these targets.
- Participate fully in all assessments.
- Develop "ownership" of the skills and strategies that are taught as part of the additional support they receive and learn to apply these to improve their own learning.

The Guidance Counsellor:

The Guidance Counsellor is a core member of the SEN Team and should:

- Assist other members of the SEN Team in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in the school.

- Provide individualised guidance and support for students with SEN and involving parents as required.
- Assist students at different stages of school life in making correct subject choices and career decisions. It is important that the Guidance Counsellor facilitates the SEN student in setting realistic career goals.
- Collaborate in the assessment process with the SEN Team.
- Assist SEN students in their personal and social development.
- Make referrals to other professionals and agencies where necessary.
- Assist with vocational preparation i.e. interview skills, work experience etc.

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA):

Wilson's Hospital School currently has an allocation of 3.5 SNAs. The role of the SNA is cited in Circular 0030/2014. The SNA is allocated to schools to provide care assistance to SEN students. The duties of the SNA are assigned by the Principal. Her work is supervised by the SENCO and includes:

- The SNA is recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non-teaching services to students with assessed educational needs.
- The SNA provides a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with SEN.
- The SNA works closely with class teachers in providing assistance to students with SEN, for example in the areas of personal care, supporting mobility, health and safety.
- The SNA will provide assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene if required.
- The SNA may be required to provide special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping SEN students with note-taking or assistance on out of school trips.
- The SNA must treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential.
- The SNA may not act as a substitute teacher. In no circumstances may she be left in sole charge of a class or group of children.

Subject Teachers:

(DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, p.13, 14)

Subject Teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. Accordingly, Subject Teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. All Subject Teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of SEN students.

These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms,
- Collaborative problem-solving activities,
- Differentiation,
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence,
- Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment.

Methods of Differentiation practiced by teachers in Wilson's Hospital School include:

- Variation in the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs,
- Adapting lessons for students' interests,
- Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs,
- Adapting and utilising resources, including use of ICT,
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly.

Subject Teachers are encouraged to:

- Be aware of the School's policy and procedures (as outlined in this document) for including SEN students.
- Seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with individual needs and learning differences in their classes and bring any concerns regarding students to the relevant personnel.
- Take account of the needs and learning styles of all their students and employ suitable teaching methods so that all students can access the curriculum at the appropriate level.
- Take responsibility for their own continuous professional development, particularly with regard to common difficulties e.g. Dyslexia & Specific Language difficulties.
- Develop an attitude of ownership to the education of students in their classes with individual needs and learning differences.
- Where a student has an SNA, the subject teacher should plan how to utilise the SNA most effectively, in consultation with the SENCO and other learning support teachers.

Differentiation

Differentiated instruction is a means by which teachers can create an inclusive and supported learning environment for all students. It acknowledges that students learn at different rates and in different ways.

The following general approaches are recommended:

- Setting learning objectives for students with SEN at an appropriate level.
- Provide learning activities and resources that are suitably challenging and are also likely to result in success and progress.
- Modify presentation, questioning techniques, style of questioning etc in order to maximise the involvement of students with SEN.
- Relate the topic to life experiences or concrete examples.
- Allow alternative formats for answering questions i.e. orally, typing etc.
- Set up 'buddy' learning systems in the class to involve more able students working with those with SEN either in collaborative groups or in peer-tutoring arrangements.
- Provide learning activities which will ensure success for these students, as fostering self-esteem and confidence is critical for these students.

Assessment

Assessment should always be for a particular purpose. In Wilson's Hospital School, assessment is used for the following purposes:

- To inform planning and appropriate teaching and learning,
- To evaluate student progress,
- To establish a baseline in relation to a student's attainments in literacy and numeracy,
- To identify student for learning support,
- To inform consultations with outside agencies i.e. NEPS,
- To ensure a true mixed ability class setting.

Methods of assessment

a). Formal Assessment

Standardised assessments enable the SEN Team to obtain a general indication of a student's ability and to interpret the student's level of attainment and ability by reference to the performance of other students in the same age range or class level. Every student enrolling in the school undertakes formal assessment.

The SEN department follow the school's Assessment Policy in regards to formal assessment.

b). Informal Assessment

Informal methods of assessment include:

- classroom tests,
- informal observations by the teacher,
- observations from the Year head and Form tutor,
- evaluation of written work,
- informal analysis of students' language and social development,
- Students enrolling in the school sit an optional non-standardised Scholarship Examination in English, Irish and Mathematics to help identify students' level of attainments in these subjects, and to identify students who may require extra support at an early stage. It also helps to inform mixed ability class groups.

c). Information Gathering

- SENCO liaises with primary schools regarding all incoming first year students with regards to their areas of need.
- Primary schools provide results of standardised tests i.e. Drumcondra Reading, Spelling, and Maths STen scores.
- Primary school provide reports on each student to the secondary school.
- SENCO makes contact with the Primary School Principal, class teacher, parent of incoming student, and in some cases, the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school.
- The enrolment application form requests parents to notify the school regarding any possible Special Educational Need. This has no bearing on the child's right of entry but is used to identify a possible need as early as practicable.
- SENCO liaises with parents and appropriate external agencies in the event of a possible SEN being identified.

Staff Meetings

A staff meeting will be held at the beginning of each school year to inform all staff of all incoming SEN students and recommendations for teachers to maximise the inclusion of those students in their classes. Staff are reminded of the needs of SEN students periodically throughout the academic year through email and on TEAMS.

Monitoring of policy and practice

The School Management Board has the responsibility for overseeing the development, implementation, and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs.

Review of Policy & Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated by:

- Analysis of subject department and teacher planning to ensure that a differentiated approach is taken and that the targets in Student Support Files are considered in planning.
- Ensuring that students are involved and have their views noted in the Student Support File.
- Ensuring that parents are consulted in the provision of support for SEN students.
- Monitoring student progress based on teachers' formal and informal assessment.
- Ensuring that outside agencies have their recommendations addressed as appropriate.
- DES Inspection.

Success criteria will be measured to the extent that SEN students:

- Reach their expected targets as set in collaboration with all stake holders and informed by formal and informal means.
- Cease to require additional support.

Approved by the School Management Board on 17th November 2020