



Coláiste Éamonn Rís

Special Education Needs Policy

School Mission Statement

“Our school community exists primarily to develop responsible individuals who will participate fully in a changing society and to carry out this task in a Christian environment.”

The school aims to provide a broad education for all students and to nurture their individual abilities and talents.

Coláiste Éamonn Rís is a Catholic Voluntary school under the trusteeship of The Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The school follows the religious and educational philosophy of the Christian Brothers.

This policy document aims to outline the form that Special education needs support for students with special education needs (S.E.N.) takes in the school and the philosophy which underpins it.

It is written in the context of **The Education Act (1998)** and takes cognisance of **The Equal Status Act (2000)**, **The Equality Act (2004)**, **The Education Welfare Act (2000)**, **The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)**, **The Education for Persons with Special education Needs Act (2004)**,

Other publications have informed the content of this policy-

“Inclusion of Students with Special education Needs-Post Primary Guidelines (Department of Education & Science (DES) Inspectorate: 2007)

Exceptionally Able Students-Draft Guidelines for Teachers (NCCA: 2007).

A continuum of support for Post Primary schools (Department of Education and skills)

Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special education needs in Mainstream Schools, Guidelines for Supporting Schools with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties.

Up and away A resource book for English Language Support in Primary Schools.

Rationale

Learning Support in Coláiste Éamonn Rís is a tangible sign of our commitment to be an inclusive learning community.

Aims and Objectives

As set out in The Education Act 1998, The Education for Persons with Additional Educational Needs Act 2004 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004, Coláiste Éamonn Rís aims to:

- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other special education needs, 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 special education needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible.
- Affirm that students with special education needs 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 needs Needs (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special education needs.
- Ensure that students with special education needs 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 special education needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that special education needs are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school community.
- Ensure that students with special education 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 special education needs and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with special education needs.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support.
- Co-ordinate the advice, and guidance of other agencies in supporting students with special education needs.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with special education needs.

Definitions:

‘Students with Special education needs are those who are restricted from participating in and benefiting 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 person without that condition’. (EPSEN Act 2004).

Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students.

Access to Learning Support

The following are the main selection criteria for Additional Support at Coláiste Éamonn Rís:

- A student who has had a psychological assessment which recommends additional Support / Resource teaching.
- A student who has a Specific Learning Difficulty or a General Learning Difficulty.
- Students with clinical assessment of emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Student with physical difficulties.

Consideration is given to:

- A student who received additional support in primary School.
- A student identified during the entrance assessments.
- A student identified by their teachers as having difficulty with one or more subjects.
- Student who meets criteria to access Autism suite according to the Autism suite policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Board of Management:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of a Whole School Special education needs policy.
- Ensures that the rights of parents as prescribed in legislation are upheld in the school.

2. Principal/Deputy Principal(s):

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the special education needs of students are met.
- Works with the Board, Staff and Parents/ Guardians in the development of a whole school plan for special education support.
- Liaise with the Primary schools, collect and collate information about the learning needs of students.
- Ensures that mainstream teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with additional needs.

- Provides advice and training to mainstream teachers as required.
- Consult and liaise with outside bodies and agencies.
- Promotes the involvement of parents of students with Special education needs.
- Meet and advise parents as required.
- Makes applications to NCSE/DES for relevant resources.
- Organises Reasonable Accommodations in the certificate exams.
- Ensures the effective and efficient use of resources.

3. Special Education Team:

- Liaise with the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Heads and mainstream teachers.
- Facilitate additional teaching and learning for students.
- Co-ordinates planning for students with special education needs.
- Liaises with management in relation to the selection and implementation of tests for assessing students' achievement and progress.
- Co-ordinates the gathering of information for students with additional educational needs from assessment reports by outside professionals, and in-school assessments.
- Is involved in the administration of standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Is involved in the review of individual students' progress.
- Provides advice to year heads and mainstream teachers as required.
- Advises on Reasonable Accommodations in the certificate examinations.
- Meets parents as required.

4. Subject Teacher

- Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his / her class.
- Supports the Special education needs policy.
- Collaborates with SET teacher in identifying pupils who may have general or specific learning difficulties.
- Differentiates the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Provides learning activities and materials that will ensure success.

5. Special Needs Assistant(s)

- See the current Coláiste Éamonn Rís Special Needs Assistant policy
- Special Needs Assistants make a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with additional educational needs. The duties of the Special Needs Assistant are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management and are outlined in Circular SNA 0030/2014.
- When the SNA is engaged in assisting a student or a group of students in relation to a particular learning task, this should take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.

6. Parents:

- Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the education of their children.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties.

7. Students:

- Students with Special education needs are valued at Coláiste Éamonn Rís and are encouraged to participate fully in their education and in school activities.
- Students with special education needs are required to follow all school policies.
- Students are expected to contribute to their learning targets and to maintain efforts to realise their full potential.

8. The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

The guidance counsellor is a member of the Student Support Support Team and works alongside members of the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with additional educational needs. The guidance counsellor works closely with Year Heads, Class Tutors and Special Education Needs Team to identify students requiring support.

The guidance counsellor has an important role in assisting all students, including those with Special education needs at the different stages of schooling. To facilitate this, students and parents are welcome to make appointments with the guidance counsellor.

This is particularly encouraged for students progressing from Junior to Senior Cycle. Students in Sixth Year are offered appointments with the guidance counsellor to support them in making career decisions. It is acknowledged that students with Special education needs may require greater support at formal transfer points in their school career, and the guidance counsellor will be particularly aware of these students.

At key stages throughout the students' schooling the guidance counsellor is responsible for co-ordinating a number of assessments.

When appropriate, the guidance counsellor is available to staff who may want to seek advice/relevant information regarding students with special education needs and how they can best be supported in school.

9.Special education needs Co-ordinator

The SEN co-ordinator is responsible for the overall co-ordination of Special education needs support within the school.

The SEN co-ordinator duties are as follows:

- Assist with arrangements for the successful transfer of students from their primary school to Coláiste Éamonn Rís, and in gathering information about students, including those with additional educational needs, before this transfer.
- Co-ordinate SEN provision in the school.
- Liaise with SNAs regarding SEN students in the school.
- Liaise with parents/guardians of SEN students and prospective students.
- Liaise with NEPS psychologists regarding assessment of priority students.
- Communicate with relevant staff regarding essential information regarding SEN students.
- Facilitate and chair SET department meetings.
- Provide updates and details of SEN matters to school management /staff.
- Liaise with the SENO in relation to matters SEN including; assessment reports, SEN provision, SNA access and applications to the NCSE.
- Maintain and update SEN files.

- Contribute to digital records maintained on VSware.
- Administer and maintain records of assessment tests carried out throughout the school year.
- Complete relevant standardised tests required by education psychologist's pre-assessment.
- Support Year Heads in meetings with parents.
- Liaise with school management regarding specific and whole school professional development.

The Role of the Special Education Team

Principal/Deputy Principal

SET members

SEN Co-Ordinator

Guidance Counsellor

Year Heads/Class Persons

SNAs

Through the work of the SEN Team, the school endeavours to create whole school ownership in the management of Special Educational Needs.

The SEN team plays a key role in the evaluation of practice and procedures relating to Additional Educational Needs.

The School acknowledge that it is particularly important to continually review and develop our practices in relation to:

- Accessing relevant information about all our intake students.
- How we use assessment data results.
- Literacy and Numeracy Testing for Junior Cycle students.
- More able students

Procedures for identifying a student with SEN.

- Parents indicate Special education needs on enrolment form.
- Parents should supply all the necessary documentation relevant to Special education needs to the school and Irish exemptions either by post or via e-mail to the SEN co-ordinator.
- Assessment exams are administered to all incoming First Years in February/March/Sept and the results of this test may indicate need for additional support.
- PADD-E assessment (NEPS) administered each September.
- A liaison person consults with Primary teachers when visiting feeder primary schools.
- A class teacher or class tutor can refer any student they are concerned about to the SET by completing the relevant student referral form and 3 annotated samples of work.
- An EAL student who enrolls in the school.
- When a parent notifies the Principal that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the Principal initiates a process of formal and informal assessment.

Following these assessments, decisions are made as to the appropriate support needed. It may be decided that there is no need for further action, further monitoring and support in a mainstream setting is necessary, purposeful withdrawal may be desirable, or there is a need for further investigation and/or assessments.

Arrangements for students with Special Education Needs

Coláiste Éamonn Rís considers a student as needing additional support if he:

- Is recognised as being at or below the 10th percentile in areas of reading, spelling and/or comprehension, or below on a standardised test and/or following an assessment by the relevant professional personnel.

- Is failing to achieve in school due to specific personal circumstances. A student is defined as having special education needs if he has a learning/physical difficulty, which calls for support provision to be made for him. This in particular refers to:
- Students with a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for students of the same age.
- A student with English as an additional language.

A student profile(plan) may be designed for a student, drawn up in consultation with a teacher and student, for whom the main class setting fails to fulfil his need. Priority learning needs and goals may be identified, targets set, along with a time frame for the attainment of same.

A student file is created and records relating to the student are retained on this file.

Structure of Learning Support

The following models of support may be used:

- In class support
- Individual Withdrawal
- Small Group Withdrawal

Irish Exemptions

Irish exemptions will only be granted when criteria as outlined in **Circular 0053/2019** are met.

See also Guidelines for Post Primary schools May 2020, Dept of Education and skills. School procedures as outlined in Appendix 2.

Information

- Updated SEN report is published monthly and sent to all staff.
- If a psychological assessment is available and with the permission of parents, a summary of the needs may be made available to teachers through VsWare.

- Information is available to parents regarding the provision being made available to their son.
- S.E.T. meetings are used to evaluate and review students and procedures frequently.

Examinations

Reasonable Accommodations:

- Students who meet the strict criteria as set out by the State Examinations Commission may have a Reasonable Accommodation Application Form completed on their behalf. Applications are completed for Junior Cert and reactivated for Leaving Certificate examinations.
- Information is available from www.examinations.ie which outlines specific criteria regarding each accommodation available.

House Examinations

Where possible, depending on resources available, the school may provide smaller examination centre (s) for Christmas and Summer exams.

Gifted and Talented

Pupils who are exceptionally able or talented are those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership ability
- Aptitude in visual / performing arts
- Mechanical aptitude
- Psychomotor ability e.g. athletic, gymnastics

All children have a right to an education that is appropriately challenging and takes account of individual needs.

Policy statement

All gifted and talented students require a learning environment that fosters wellbeing and learning outcomes consistent with their abilities. The learning environment in Coláiste Éamonn Rís may provide educational pathways and appropriately challenging learning experiences, to maximise wellbeing and learning outcomes of gifted students.

Coláiste Éamonn Rís aims to provide the gifted and talented students with opportunities for enrichment, extension and acceleration within and beyond the classroom. The gifted students are, more likely to reveal their giftedness and to flourish under an approach that seeks excellence for all.

Identification

The gifted student will have come to the attention of his/her primary school teachers. He will show higher scores in standardised tests carried out in primary school.

The gifted student will learn quickly and easily and retain what is learned, recall important details, concepts and principles, and comprehend easily.

Gifted and talented learners may also possess specific learning difficulties/ disabilities or physical impairment which may mask their giftedness. (Dually exceptional student)

Inclusion

An inclusive education system is the most supportive framework for offering opportunities to prevent underachievement and provide appropriate challenge across the ability range.

Coláiste Éamonn Rís supports and encourages differentiated classroom teaching to maximise growth and individual strength. Differentiated instruction and differentiated curriculum in the classroom will assign work that is appropriately challenging and achievable.

Opportunities for Gifted and Talented Students

Coláiste Éamonn Rís promotes opportunities for enrichment of the gifted students.

Co-curricular programs and community programs encourage the gifted student to display their competence and flair through various national academic competitions such as: The

Young Scientist, Maths and Science Olympics. Students are also encouraged to participate in activities such as the Chess, Debating and Public Speaking, Drama, Musicals, Spelling Bee, Scrabble and Maths club.

In the extra -curricular domain students can learn to value their ability and to gain confidence in that ability. Many extra –curricular activities take place in the school during lunch time and/ or after school.

Coláiste Éamonn Rís recognises that parents/ guardians are paramount to student success and positive alliance with parents will maximise students’ social, emotional and academic potential.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting

All students are assessed on an ongoing basis. Assessment may be formal, informal, summative or formative.

Formal Assessment

All Incoming First Year students take an entrance assessment which includes the Cognitive Ability Tests 4 (CAT4).

PADD-E is completed in September for 1st Year students.

Students take house examinations in December and May/June each year.

Other professionals working alongside the school may formally assess students with SEN.

Informal Assessment

- End of unit/chapter tests
- In class questioning

- Assessing homework/project work
- Group work
- Oral work

The responsibility for aspects of formal and informal assessments lies in the first instance with the subject teacher.

The organisation of CAT tests is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor who is supported by the SEN team.

SEN teachers contribute to literacy and numeracy testing of students with special education needs.

If required the SET may administer the appropriate standardised test.

Using Assessment Data

Assessment data is used to:

- Highlight students for additional learning.
- Profile a class group/year group.
- Track student progress.

Recording Assessment Data

- Teachers record assessment marks both formal and informal.
- House examination results are included on the school report to parents in January and at the end of the school year.

The SET department maintain files for the students with whom they work. Included in these files are any additional assessments that the students may have taken.

Access to Assessment Records

Assessment material is treated confidentially and only made available to appropriate personnel.

The SEN department manage a significant amount of the assessment information for students with SEN. Relevant information is disseminated appropriately by the SET team.

Monitoring Arrangements

The responsibility for monitoring student progress lies in the first instance with the subject teacher. Subject teachers may liaise with Subject Co-ordinators, Year Heads or Class Tutors if they have a concern about a student in their group. If a student has been identified as having Special education needs the SET will also play a role in monitoring/co-ordinating student progress.

Evaluation

The successes of any intervention strategies are monitored on an ongoing basis through formal and informal assessment.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented by the Board of Management.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored on an on-going basis and reviewed and amended in 2026

Ratification

Ratified by the Board of Management on 14/ 9/ 2026

Signed : Gerry Forde

Appendix 1

- Names of Educational Psychologists available on www.education.ie
- Reasonable Accommodation information www.examinations.ie
- Additional education Teaching allocation, Circular 0014/2017, www.education.ie
- Irish exemption circular 0053/2019, www.education.ie

Appendix 2

School procedures – Irish Exemptions

Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

A parent/guardian must make an **application in writing** to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.

A) Considering an application for exemption

The principal will:

1. Ensure that the **date of receipt of the application** by the school is recorded on the form.
2. **Acknowledge receipt** of the application for exemption from the study of **Irish in writing**.
3. **Discuss the written application** with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c or 2.2d) as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
4. **Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s)** of the **next steps** in processing the application.
5. **Inform** the parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil regarding any **implication of an exemption** from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
6. **Inform** the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the application will **be processed** and the outcome **confirmed in writing** within **21 school days** of receipt of the application.
7. **Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that a signed Certificate of Exemption** will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.
8. **Inform** the parent(s)/guardian(s) that, **where an application is refused**, the school's decision may be appealed to the **Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee** within **30 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent(s)/guardian(s)**.

9. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) the **arrangements for the pupil's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.**

B) Recording the decision

The **outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school principal in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s).**

Where an exemption is granted, a **Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal** will be issued. The Certificate of Exemption will also state the name and address of the school, the school roll number, the pupil's name, date of birth and the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted.

Parents/guardians and pupils should be **informed of the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.**

Appeal

Where the application for exemption from the study of **Irish is refused**, a parent/guardian can appeal the school's decision to **the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee (IEAC)**. The deliberations of the IEAC will focus solely on the process the school engaged in reaching its decision. The IEAC will consider how the school followed the process as prescribed in this Circular and the accompanying Guidelines for Primary Schools.

An appeal must be lodged **within 30 calendar days** from the date the decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Irish Exemptions Appeal Form and Guidelines for Primary Schools can be accessed at www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/. 5