



MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL
24/25

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY
ON SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mission Statement

At the heart of our mission is the belief that each and every member of our community is a value and treasured child of God. We are committed to creating opportunities for our students. We hold the belief that we have a duty to dream big for each and every person within our learning community.

1.2 Our Values

We treasure our students, staff and the greater community.

We create space for each person to recognise their unique qualities, the richness of their stories and all they bring to our community as individuals.

We are a school in which each person is respected and treated with dignity.

We believe we have a duty to instil and nurture each student's self-belief and accompany them on their journey to becoming independent, critical and active citizens of the world.

1.3 Aims

Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level"

(Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, 2017)

This policy applies to all students attending Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore including those with special educational needs and/or additional needs. The aims of this Whole School Special Education Policy are as follows:

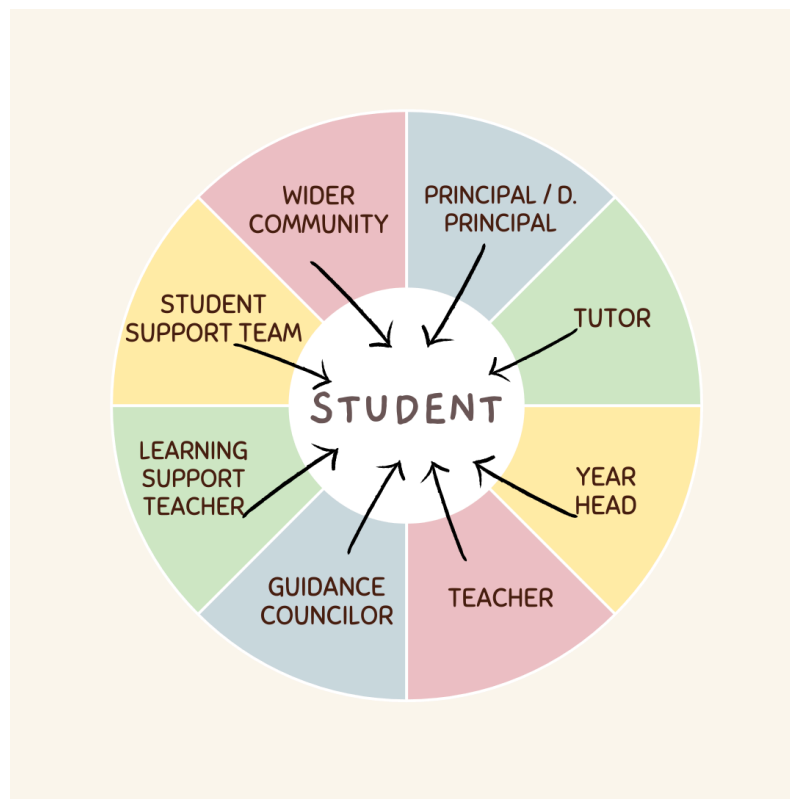
- "To ensure that students have a positive sense of themselves as learners and a strong sense of their own efficacy and capacity to improve" (NCCA Wellbeing Guidelines, **2017**)
- To promote inclusivity through equality of access and participation in the school.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.

- To promote the emotional, social, and physical well-being of students by developing self-esteem, personal responsibility and the ability to live and work with others
- To provide a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- To enable all students to belong to an educational community without prejudice and within which individual difference is celebrated.
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils and aid in the continued development of the necessary structures and staff expertise in supporting students with special educational needs.

1.4 Rationale

- This Policy document aims to outline the school's provision of special education support for students with SEN
- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision
- The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below
- The Policy is a working document and will be reviewed annually
- The Policy is a reflection of our current practice.

A Whole School Approach to the education & welfare of our students is central to all our endeavours



1.5 Legal Framework & Supporting Documents

This policy is drafted in the context of specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with special educational needs, the statutory requirements placed on the school and the Board of Management by the following acts and the guiding documents published to support Schools deliver equality of teaching & learning:

- DES circular letters
- The Guidelines published by the NCSE
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post Primary schools. (NEPS)
- The Education Act 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- Children First act 2015
- Inclusive Education Policy (DES)
- The Equality Act 2004
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN Act) 2004
- The European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015
- NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2017
- Ceist Board of Management handbook
- Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools, a guide to establishing a team (DE &

1.6 Scope of policy

The school provides for students with a wide range of abilities and/or additional needs, and is intended to serve our school community including our Board of Management, parents, teaching and ancillary staff and Senior Management Team

Section 2: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs

2.1 Provision of Support

The Department of Education allocates SET hours directly to schools based on their educational profiles. The SET allocation model is designed to distribute additional teaching resources across the entire Post Primary school system. This is to ensure that additional teaching resources are available to support students with the greatest level of need.

The Special education teaching resources that are provided to schools should be used solely for the support of students who have been identified by the Senior Leadership team along with the SET, including those for whom English is an additional Language, exceptionally able students, students with a diagnosed special educational need, those without a diagnosis but have low attainment scores and those with behavioural difficulties impacting on their educational experience.

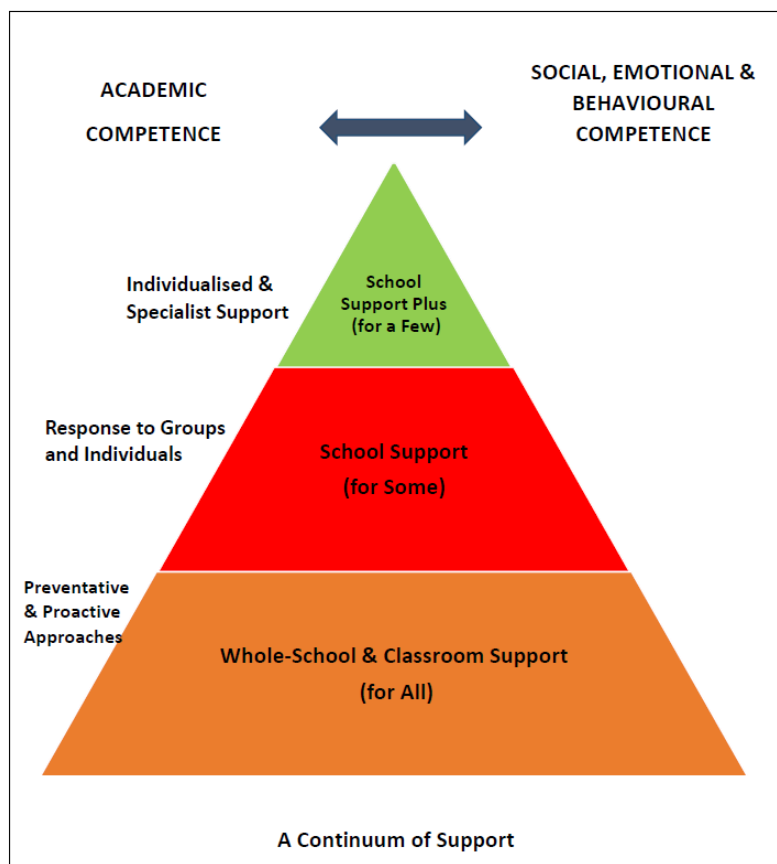
Special Education Teaching Support in Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is organised in line with the NEPS 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools' (DES, 2007). This model of support is organised at three different levels:

- Support for ALL students
- School Support (for some students)
- School Support Plus (for a few students)

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs.

This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified educational 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.



2.2 Support for All Students

This is a whole school level of support available to every student. Intervention at the whole school level is intended to be proactive. It aims to support and promote positive student behaviour and learning for all. An integral part of this level of support is effective whole school screening for learning and behavioural needs, so that there is early identification of 'at risk' students

Interventions include:

- Access for all first year students to "Literacy", "Numeracy" and "Transition and Transfer" programmes - promoting reading & writing, practical mathematical operations and coping skills
- Numeracy Ninja, Maths eyes, Maths Weeks & Drop Everything & Solve
- Vocabulary Enrichment Programme
- Drop Everything & Read & Literacy promotion events such as Word of the Week, and Book Clubs
- 'Friends for Life' - an emotional resilience and promotion of wellbeing programme
- Positive Behaviour Strategy, School Awards & Assembly,
- Standardised assessments through Junior & Senior cycle to assist in the identification, screening & tracking of students progress in Literacy & Numeracy
- Student Council - represents the views of all students in the school.
- Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) - a social inclusion programme that is aimed at students who are identified as being at risk of being socially or academically isolated or at risk of early school

leaving before the Junior Cycle Programme has been completed.

- Transition Year and Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) at Senior Cycle.
- School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Access to guidance counsellor
- Access School counsellor

Curricular Support and Interventions

- Universal approaches to teaching strategies and learning activities - School wide promotion of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and active teaching methodologies
- Co-Operative teaching - in-class support allocated to classes, to support all students in that subject where necessary
- Assessment and monitoring of student progress at Christmas and Summer exams
- Communication & Collaboration with teaching staff regarding concerns about students' behaviour and learning
- Collection and analysis of school wide screening data and transfer information, attendance and behavioural records by SEN co-ordinator.

DEIS and the Vocabulary Gap

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and particularly vocabulary difficulties have been identified as being more prevalent in populations of adolescents from areas of socioeconomic disadvantage and as having a significant impact on attainment in schools (Spencer, Clegg & Stackhouse, *unpublished*).

Vocabulary learning has been identified as one of the most significant problems experienced by students with Speech, language and communication needs (Bishop, 1997; Gathercole, 1993; Sim, 1998).

Knowledge of vocabulary is a strong predictor of academic achievement and has an important role to play in literacy and cognitive development (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997)

Development of vocabulary skills is inherent to both oral and written language development. Students aged 12-17 years are exposed to 10,000 new words from textbooks alone over their years at post-primary school (Clark, 2003)

With this in mind we deliver the **Vocabulary Enrichment Programme** to all first year students.

2.3 Support for Some

Support at this level is targeted at those students (approximately 10%-20% of the school population) who do not respond to the whole-school strategies sufficiently and who need more support. A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which may be short-term, while others may be longer term. These may include:

- Transfer to Second Level support programme organised by School Completion Programme.
- Access to small group Emotional and Behavioural/ Social Skills support programme.
- Liaising with student's parents/guardians to discuss progress or organise an educational assessment or CAMHS referral if necessary
- Differentiation at classroom level / assessments
- Co-teaching supports may be put in place where there is an identified need within a class group.
- Student Support Plans / Classroom Support Plans
- Counselling Support
- Access to weekly / termly small group Literacy and Numeracy support
- Curricular support at Irish or Modern Language class times for students with Irish Exemptions where possible
- Dyslexia Programme
- Language & Communication Support
- Rapid Plus Programme
- Year Head Behaviour rewards & consequences system
- Organisational Support
- Study Skills Programmes
- Linking with outside agencies

2.4 Support for the few

These students typically about 2%-5% of the school population have significant difficulties and may require intensive, individualised interventions. Interventions at this stage are likely to include

- Individualised Support with specific long term & short term goals
- Classroom Support Plans / Student Support Plans
- Care needs Plan
- SNA Support
- Level 2 Learning Programme
- Behaviour for learning Support
- Involvement of additional professional input such as psychologists, speech and language therapists, etc.
- Specialist Interventions
- Liaising with specialist teams e.g. Visiting Teacher for Visually Impaired, Speech Therapists, Social Workers, or CAMHS teams.
- Reduced curriculum
- One to one work with members of the School Completion Programme team.
- Counselling service

2.5 Identification of students with Special Educational Needs

In Mercy we aim to put in place significant interventions to promote Literacy, Numeracy, Behavioural and Social / Emotional skills so that all students have access to support in these areas.

Below are the different ways we as a Special Education Team aim to identify those students who have additional needs beyond the scope of Support for All.

- Intake screening (CAT4)
- Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport, Interview with Primary school teachers
- Teacher referral
- Student referral
- Parental referral
- Student Support Team referral
- Consultation with outside agencies (School Completion Programme, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy (NGRT & PTM)
- Data from Athena tracker
- Parental/Guardian consultation (Pre-transition meetings)
- Diagnostic Assessments in Literacy/Numeracy
- Psychoeducational Reports
- Medical Reports

Guidelines for the Identification and Prioritisation of students for Additional Support

In line with Circular 0014/2017 students are prioritised for support on the following criteria:

- Students performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests in numeracy or literacy
- Students who previously received supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher in Primary School and/or who continue to experience significant difficulties
- Students who are identified as having significant needs on the basis of school based assessment of attainment including ongoing monitoring of academic performance in House Examinations and behavioural, social and emotional functioning
- Students who present with mild, or short-term, educational needs, including those with speech and language difficulties, organisational, co-ordination or attention control difficulties
- Students who present with additional needs which are set out in professional reports, for example those with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, etc.) and General Learning Difficulties (Mild, Borderline, Moderate, Severe)
- Students with significant and complex Special Educational Needs, for example significant behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs (E.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorders)

- Students who have additional literacy or language learning needs, including those students who need English Additional Language Support (EAL)

2.6 Provision for students with known & documented needs

- **Transfer of Information** The transfer of information from Primary to Post Primary is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. Information on incoming first years is obtained directly from the parents'/guardians' interviews with the Home School Liaison Teacher and from the SENCo visits to the local feeder primary schools. This information is treated sensitively and with the strictest confidence, however relevant information about special educational/additional needs which are significant to their ability to access the school curriculum is passed on to relevant staff members and is recorded in a special needs register in the school. Once a place has been accepted by a student, Parents/guardians are requested to state what additional needs their son / daughter has, give details of any assessments undertaken & provide the school with a copy of any reports.
- When we receive this information it is used to set up a Student Support File for the student upon commencement of their education with us. They are placed on the Schools SEN register using the Continuum of Support framework. Appropriate interventions based on what level of support they are placed on will follow as long as the school has the appropriate resources available. They will be reviewed yearly by the SET and decided if they should remain on that level of support or move up or down the continuum.

2.7 Provision for students with Emerging needs

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the identification may happen through the whole school screening and monitoring systems listed above.

The emerging needs that have been identified will come through the Student Support Team.

The team which is made up of the Principal & Deputy Principal, the SENCO,

HSCL, Guidance counsellor, Year Heads & SCP. The team will discuss & coordinate the support available to students.

2.8 Schedule of Assessment

Name of Test	Target Group	Purpose of Test	When
CAT 4	Incoming 1st Years	Testing ability	Feb pre transfer
PTM (Progress Testing in Maths)	September of First Year	Attainment in Numeracy	September

NGRT	September of First Year	Attainment in literacy	September
PTM	End of Second Year	Attainment in Numeracy	May of Second Yr
NGRT	End of Second Year	Attainment in Literacy	May of Second Yr
CAT 4	Transition Year	Ability testing	May of TY
RACE	3rd and LCE/A	Attainment in reading and spelling	October/December of the academic year
Pre NEPS Assessment	Individual Students	Further testing	During the Year
WIAT III T DRA	Small group / Individual withdrawal	Monitoring & Tracking progress of students	Ongoing

Ability: The entrance assessments for incoming first years aims to establish their strengths and difficulties in the areas of Verbal, non verbal, quantitative and spatial ability. The assessment test used is the CAT4 Digital Edition. It is school policy that results of entrance assessments are not given back to primary schools. Parents/Guardians requesting this information are encouraged to make an individual appointment with the SEN Team to discuss the student's results. In order to safeguard the interests of the students it is school policy that results are not given to parents/guardians over the phone or without proper consultation with the SEN Team

Attainment: In September all first years are given a short standardised mathematical (PTM) and reading test (New Group Reading Test) to establish the group profile. Interventions are decided upon based on this group profile.

The students are re-tested at the end of 2nd year to track progression of attainment and also to help identify students who will be priority for RACE testing in 3rd year. The results of the attainment tests are shared with relevant teachers to inform planning and classroom practice.

The Data gathered between Ability and attainment assessments are collated and are used as a tool to inform SEN team and senior Management of the specific needs of the group which may need particular whole class / group / individual interventions.

Further Assessment: As part of our assessment procedures, we may identify a student that requires further support from an educational Psychologist. This support may be formal or Informal. See Section 3.4 for more information

2.9 Student Support Plans (SSP)

A SSP is devised for all students with Special educational needs who transfer to our school. Using the transfer Passports, gathering information from Primary schools, meeting with parents and student interviews help to build an individual Support Plan from the very beginning of the first year. Further screening, assessment & observations help the SET to update each plan.

Those with more complex needs will have a more detailed plan and may include the provisions of care needs, behavioural care needs and Personal Pupil profiles.

The Student Support Plan involves: (See appendix 1)

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- SEN provision
- Priority Learning Needs
- Setting targets for each priority learning need:
- Identifying the strategies and resources required:
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances

These SSP's aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner so that it functions practically as a working document.

2.10 Timetabling of allocated SET hours

Resource teaching and team-teaching hours are assigned by the Principal as part of the main timetabling process each June. Additional hours of learning support are allocated by the Principal to individual teachers. The SENCO works closely with the Principal and deputy Principal to assign these periods to both students and teachers. The process of timetabling additional support hours is guided by the identified needs of our students and every effort is made to effectively deploy our teaching resources to ensure an appropriate and high-quality learning experience for our SEN students.

2.11 Duration

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is varied and is reviewed throughout the intervention. In some cases support is needed on a short term basis after which the student commences with the regular curriculum. More complex cases are supported through until transfer to further education (if applicable). The provision of Learning Support is primarily targeted at students from first to third year if they require such support. It is school policy to review students with additional support needs at the end of each academic year. Support at Senior cycle includes subject support through additional classes where resources are available and services provided by TAP/CFES/TA21/NCAD/TUD with the particular focus study and exam skills. Access to our Leaving cert Applied programme is also a beneficial and relevant programme available to our older students who require an alternative option for Leaving Cert.

Section 3: Resources

3.1 Resources For All

All mainstream classrooms have large TV screens accompanied by teacher devices to deliver visual content. Students have access to devices for classroom learning and Google Suite for Education. Teachers have access to a Twinkl learning account (single subscription)

The Numeracy Department has access to Numeracy Ninja resources and members of our SET are qualified to deliver programmes to students such as 'Friends for Life' and 'Vocabulary Enrichment Programme'. These do not require any funding to run.

Our school has opened a brand new library which is accessible to all teachers and students.

All Junior cycle students are part of the JCSP programme and will receive a certificate of completion in 3rd year. The Junior Certificate School Programme aims to provide a curriculum framework that assists schools and teachers in making the Junior Certificate more accessible to those young people who may leave school without formal qualifications and is heavily resourced.

Mercy Secondary School also runs a Lunch Time Club every day in the Library. Any student who wishes is welcome to go to this room for some or all of their lunch break. A teacher supervises each day. This room can be particularly attractive to students who dislike noise, crowds etc.

3.2 Resources for Some / For Few

Resource Teachers and students have access to one main Resource Room. This is a classroom equipped with six student PC's and a large television screen.

- In addition to this the SEN department purchases an annual licence for the Rapid Plus intervention programme. This is an evidence based programme aimed at supporting progression in reading comprehension.

In 2014 the SEN department invested in our SRA reading Laboratory. This Lab is used for all students in Junior Cycle resource classes and contains an easy-to-use kit of self-guided and levelled readers, helping learners develop independent reading skills, fluency and confidence.

3.3 Access to our Special Class

"Special classes¹ are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream class, even with support, for most or all of their school day. Students enrolled in special classes should be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible, in line with their abilities." (NCSE)

The decision to enrol a student in a special class should take account of:

- Individual learning needs, academic abilities, social & emotional development
- The student's experiences and outcomes to date (in preschool or primary as appropriate)

- The interventions that could be put in place, within available resources, to support the student's inclusion in mainstream education
- Insights and opinions from teachers, parents and other relevant professionals, as appropriate

In Mercy Secondary School we have one Special Class that caters for a maximum of 6 Students. It is dependent on an additional teacher and 2 SNA's granted by the Department of Education to run. Access to the class is dependent on available places. In order to access our Special Class you must meet the following Criteria as set out by the Department

In order to access a special class a student must have a report from a relevant professional or team of professionals (for example, psychologist, speech and language therapist, psychiatrist) stating that:

- 1 S/he has a disability (in line with the designation of the special class in question) and**
- 2 S/he has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting and the reasons why this is the case.**

The professional report must meet DES requirements for the particular disability in question.

Under no circumstances should a school place a student in a special class without such a professional report.

3.4 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The SEN Department is in regular contact with a range of external bodies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) whose support is almost exclusively aimed at students with special needs. The Psychologist supports these students:

- When the school applies for additional resources for them
- By offering advice to students and to their parents as well as to teachers
- By counselling students
- By supporting and giving guidance on good professional conduct within the Special Education Needs Department
- By carrying out psychological assessments

Support from NEPS is very limited and therefore we cannot guarantee an assessment for every student who requires one.

3.5 Level 2 Learning Programme at Junior Cycle

The Purpose of this provision is to address the unique needs of students engaging in Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP) during Junior Cycle. students are at the centre of teaching and learning, and will have an educational experience that addresses their individual needs and enables them to live, learn, work and contribute with the greatest degree of autonomy in the communities to which they belong.

Eligibility:

Students eligible for L2LP will be identified based on assessments, consultations with teachers & parents, and recommendations from educational professionals. Eligibility considerations include learning disabilities,

developmental delays or other specific needs.

Teachers involved in L2LP will employ differentiated instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of students. Assessment of Level 2 Learning Programmes is school-based and ongoing. Students create a portfolio of evidence which demonstrates their achievement of learning outcomes over the three years of Junior Cycle.

As there is no exam, assessment is no longer a barrier but an opportunity to showcase a student's strengths, skills and talents. These resources may help schools to set up portfolios for students engaging with L2LPs. Students will receive results and an official Junior Cert Certificate along side their peers.

3.6 Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) operates the Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) scheme,

The scheme assists candidates who have special educational needs to demonstrate what they know in certificate examinations, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. These needs may include learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural or other conditions.

Examples of exam accommodations may include some the following:

- Use of a word processor
- Use of a recording device
- Access to a scribe
- Additional time
- Spelling and grammar waiver
- Access to an individual reader
- Access to a Reading assistant
- Use of an exam reading pen
- Use of personal stereos
- Access to a special centre
- Access to modified exams

Key considerations for RACE applications

- RACE applications will be made by the SEN department on behalf of candidates whose special needs have already been identified and who have been provided with appropriate learning interventions on an ongoing basis as part of a continuum of support in the school.
- Applications for the Junior Cycle examinations are submitted in third year
- An application to re-activate supports is submitted for the Leaving Certificate examinations if the school authority confirms it is an identified and continuing need.
- Further information and eligibility for all available accommodations can be found on <https://www.examinations.ie/schools/race>

Reasonable Accommodations in In-House Christmas/Summer Exams

Every effort is made to provide the necessary supports for students in these exams. However, the support available is contingent on the resources available at the time.

3.7 Irish exemptions

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted upon accepting a place in Mercy Secondary School.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption of Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologists report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education will be strictly adhered to (circular) There is strict protocol for the processing of requests for consideration for an Irish Exemption and an exemption will only be granted where a student meets the relevant criteria following evidence based intervention.
- Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support / Resource is arranged for students with SEN who do not study Irish, during Irish time. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability.

Section 4 Roles and Responsibilities

"The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all students in his or her class, including any student with a special educational need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs." (Circular 0014/2017)

The SET comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, the SEN Co-ordinator, the Learning Support and Resource teachers. The team also includes our special needs assistants appointed by the school principal. The team is advised by the SENO and NEPS psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with SEN students in the school. The specific roles and responsibilities of personnel are as described in the DES Inspectorate publication, Inclusion of Students with Special needs, Post-primary Guidelines (2007).

<u>Board of Management</u>	<u>Principal / Deputy Principal</u>	<u>SEN Coordinator</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, making deliberate and informed efforts to meet the needs of the students. ● The Board is responsible for ensuring the highest quality of learning & teaching. ● To monitor the use of budgets, personnel and resources and ensure they are aligned with the learning priorities and schools strategic plan. ● To ensure that there is a whole school screening process in place ● To ensure that the school has an up to date SEN policy which is reviewed and reformulated as necessary. ● That those students with SEN needs are identified and provided for. ● To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN. ● To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To appoint a SEN Co-ordinator that works closely with the Principal & Deputy Principal. ● To inform the Board of Management of any issues arising with SEN. ● To consult with the SEN Co-ordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions. ● To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds.. ● To establish a "Special Education Team" in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN. ● To promote a whole school approach to special educational needs, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area. ● To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of SEN students. ● To ensure that systems are in place for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To co-ordinate/ devise a school SEN Plan. ● To create and maintain a school register of students with SEN ● To communicate the needs of students to teachers ● To assist in the identification of students with SEN. ● To ensure that SSPs and structured learning plans are in place for students with SEN. ● To advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students. ● To assist the Principal in the allocation of resources. ● Co-ordination of the purchase of test materials and resources for the SEN team ● Entrance Exam Analysis ● Collation of psychological reports and documentation on students in a secure and confidential area

EPSEN.

- The Board should support, encourage & be aware of Staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- To formally adopt and implement the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures, as an integral element of the school's overall anti bullying policy.

referral of students by teachers, parents, etc

- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN.
- To process applications for Irish Exemptions.
- To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education
- To provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrollment/ assessment/ inclusion.
- To manage the implementation of policies and practices.
- To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions
- To assign roles and responsibilities
- To keep records of those receiving support and of the level of support provided.
- To direct the work of the SNA's

- To process applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Exams (RACE)
- To provide RACE in house exam accommodations where possible given the resources available.
- Assistive technology applications
- Supporting the exceptional Review Process
- Communicating with SENO in matters regarding the SNA provision and assistive technology and sending on the Leavers Form and Confirmation of Attendance Forms
- Meet with SNA's to discuss observations and communicate any arising needs of students in their care
- Develop a timetable for SNA's which works in the best interest of the student and arising needs of the school.
- Collaboration with NCSE to provide effective intervention strategies for assessed and emerging needs.
- Dissemination of SEN information to all staff at beginning of school year and regular updates as needs arise
- To liaise with outside professionals regarding best ways to support students.
- To administer standardised assessments and report on findings.
- To be a member of the Student Support Team and provide advice accordingly with students needs.
- Organisation of NEPS assessments for students who require additional assessment.
- To advise and collaborate with SNA's around the care needs of relevant students and facilitate a weekly meeting.
- To facilitate a weekly meeting of the SEN team.
- To liaise with the Principal around the function, evaluation and delivery of the SEN Policy and SEN plan.
- To ensure the development of positive

		<p>partnerships with parents, local feeder schools and other relevant agencies and ensure that parents are informed of their child's SEN and how these needs are being met.</p> <p><u>*These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are met.</u></p>
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<u>Year head / Tutor</u>	<u>Learning Support / Resource teacher</u>	<u>Guidance Counsellor</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To support the SET in creating an inclusive environment within the school, liaising with classroom teachers regarding specific needs. ● To facilitate the inclusion of individual students with special educational needs by monitoring the student's progress within the year group. ● To encourage an awareness of special educational needs from the students, including a respect for students with SEN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention. ● Developing Classroom Plans for all SEN students, with or without a report who need classroom interventions / suitable teaching methodologies. The Classroom plans will be shared with all relevant teachers ● Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student. ● Providing direct teaching to a student with SEN to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum. ● To provide cooperative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. ● Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate. ● Collecting and analysing school-wide screening data, including in-take 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with the other members of the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school. ● Counselling in personal, educational and career development ● Assisting with Co-ordination of standardised assessments. ● Providing career information ● Presenting at the Options Information Evening for students and parents of students progressing to Senior Cycle ● Consulting with parents and staff ● Consulting with community organisations ● Working closely with Year Heads and the SEN team to identify students requiring support ● Facilitating individual appointments for students at Leaving Cert who need advice in making career decisions ● Advising students and parents on subject choice and subject load To liaise with students, parents and the SEN team in relation to DARE applications

- screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records.
- Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff
 - Planning, implementing and reviewing individual and/or group interventions
 - Seeking external professional advice, as needed
 - To advise SNA's around the care needs of relevant students.
 - Evaluation of SSPs and programmes of work

SNA

- To provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs and feedback observations to the SET.
- To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.
- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for

Subject teacher

- To be aware of the School's policy and procedures (as outlined in this policy) and their duties as classroom teacher in supporting students with SEN.
- To access all information that is likely to be relevant to teaching and supervising a student with additional needs, to the greatest extent possible
- To seek advice from the SEN Department regarding their students with SEN.
- To participate in CPD in the area of SEN.
- To plan, in consultation with the resource teacher / SEN Co-ordinator, on the most effective use of an SNA for a student in the class.
- To support/ encourage independence in the student.
- To differentiate teaching and learning

Student Support Team

- Promotes a whole school approach to wellbeing
- Ensuring wellbeing programmes are implemented.
- Accessing views of key stakeholders on the key areas of wellbeing through questionnaires, focus groups & invitations to meetings
- Reviews referrals made to the Student support Team by staff
- Coordinates the support available to students in the school
- Specific members will bring data regarding attendance & punctuality, tracking of results and behaviour issues within year groups.
- Enables students with SEN / behavioural / socio economical difficulties to continue to

- students with particular difficulties e.g. helping student with physical needs with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.(where necessary)
 - Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate).
 - Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
 - Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.
 - Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a nonteaching nature. The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.
 - Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
 - Engagement with parents of students with SEN as required and directed by school management.
 - Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.

- activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students
- To ensure that all students experience success in the classroom.
 - To create a positive classroom environment for all students.
 - To use assessment strategies that support the growth and progress of students' learning.
 - To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.
 - To assess/ monitor progress.
 - To consider the needs of students with SEN in all aspects of classroom planning.
 - To identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour, or interaction with other students).
 - To complete referral forms as required by the SEN team
 - Provide feedback and observations to the SET on SEN students
 - Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies including the Level 2 programme and Leaving Cert applied.
 - Direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom
 - Inform parents of the progress of students through the parent-teacher meeting and school reports.
 - Contribute to the school development planning for their subject area whilst always having concern for students with SEN.
 - Build a bank of differentiated resources pertaining to their subject area, which are shared collegially

- access a full education
- Assist staff to manage those students effectively
 - facilitate links to the community and other non-school support services
 - Members will share specialised and appropriate information on particular students. They may collate information for the purposes of meetings
 - Keep staff informed of decisions / actions

- The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- Assist the SENCO with the formulation of PPPs for their students.

Involvement of Parents

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education.

Parents and transition to and transfer from post-primary school

The quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents can provide valuable support to a child with SEN while the child is making the transition.

Mercy Secondary school provides support to parents by:

- liaising with parents prior to transfer and organising an induction meeting prior to the student transferring.

Involvement of students

Students can self refer to the SEN Department through their tutor if they are having difficulties in their subjects

Students play a key role in their own learning progress. In order for students to benefit most from additional supports they must engage fully with the learning process and the teacher. Additional supports may be removed from those students who continuously refuse to engage with the learning process and the teacher,

- running an 'Introduction to Second Level' programme where all incoming students can attend the school for a day.
- informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first-year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate.
- having an effective anti-bullying policy, and keep parents informed of issues relating to bullying.
- Actively encouraging parents to contact the SEN Co-ordinator

Parents and the transmission of information

The parents of a child with SEN can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child's learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning preferences. The SEN team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN with the acceptance of a place in the school. Once they have accepted a place in the school, parents are asked to complete a form indicating if the student has had educational/medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and if they have previously attended learning support/resource. Copies of Reports, Student Support Plans and Irish exemptions are also requested.

Parents and home-school links

The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child. Parent-Teacher meetings are held once a year for face to face communication and parents are linked in with the SET on the developments & review of targets in their Support Plan. Students receive a written school report twice in the school year (at Christmas and Summer) For some students with SEN a differentiated report is provided (School Support Plus). Special arrangements may be made with the parents in relation to the homework that each individual student with SEN is expected to undertake. Regular communication is available through direct email to SEN Co-ordinator and meetings on request. Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties, they observe in their child's learning as they progress through post primary school. This should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school.

and the resources will be redistributed to other students with support needs.

Students also have a key role in supporting each other's learning in the classroom directly by peer support and by following our positive behaviour strategies to ensure a safe learning environment for all.

Students have input into their learning targets. The SEN department fully involve students in planning for their individual needs. .

Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self monitor.

4.2 Special Needs Assistant

Background to The SNA Scheme The SNA scheme is designed to provide schools with additional adult support staff who can assist children with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs. The purpose of the SNA scheme is to provide for the significant additional care needs which some students with special educational needs may have. SNA support will be provided to post primary schools when required. In general, only students with chronic and serious care needs will be allocated SNA support in post primary schools. It should not be assumed that all children who have special educational needs or who have been diagnosed as having a disability, require access to SNA support.

Once allocated to schools SNAs are important and valued members of the school community. An SNA is an important whole school resource, SNAs participate fully in the life of the school and may therefore also assist other children in the school, who from time to time need assistance, or who have intermittent care needs, but who may not have been assessed as requiring SNA support on a permanent basis. SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, or another person acting on behalf of the Principal, and/or the Board of Management of a school in accordance with Circular 0071/2011.

Level and Duration of SNA Support

Students will access the support of an SNA based upon their level of need, which can range from a requirement for brief periods during the day to most of the school day in some instances. In deciding the level and extent of access to SNA support which should be provided to a student, the best interests of the student should be the paramount consideration. As far as practicable, the views of a student capable of forming her own views should be obtained and given due weight, having regard to the age and maturity of the student. The views of the student, where possible, should therefore be taken into account in reviewing the extent of access to SNA support required.

It is neither appropriate nor beneficial for a student to have a permanent allocation of SNA support which would follow them throughout their school career without recourse to a consideration of changing needs. This could impede that student's development of independent living skills, interaction with peers, or stigmatise the student through association with a permanent allocation of adult support, at a point of their development where this support may no longer be required.

4.3 Parental Engagement

Parental/Guardian engagement is a critical factor in ensuring both the academic success and successful participation in all aspects of school life for all students, but in particular for those students with a Special Educational Need. A key aim of the Special Educational Team is to provide as many opportunities as possible "to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of students with special educational needs" (DES, 2017).

Outlined below are our current practices in the promotion of parental engagement:

- Enrolment Form (Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school of their son/ daughter's additional support needs prior to enrolment so that provision can be made for them)
- Pre-Transition Meeting (A transfer to second level orientation day is also organised by the SCP in June before commencement of secondary school)

- An information night is organised for parents of incoming first years in February before the students start.
- Parents are notified when a Student Support File is opened for their child and also when they engage in withdrawal classes.
- If a student's needs merit further investigation or referral to outside agencies (educational psychologist, occupational therapist, CAMHS, etc.) parents/guardians are supported and provided with detailed information on possible referral routes.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the SEN Department and the school, if concerns arise at any stage in their child's academic journey through Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore.
- The SET maintain regular, informal contact with parents regarding the progress of their child. Those with more complex needs are in more regular contact (possibly daily) with members of the SEN department including the SNA's

4.4 Provision of Support (Complex Needs)

Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO)

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is assigned a SENO by the NCSE. SENOs provide a direct service to the parents of children with special educational needs. Each SENO has responsibility for a list of schools (primary, post-primary and special), within the particular area they serve. At present, SENOs are mainly involved in resourcing schools to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and in ensuring that these resources are used efficiently in schools, in accordance with DES policy. A key role of the SENO is to identify the level of resources that may be sanctioned for a school to support a particular student with special educational needs and what kinds of supports the student needs to benefit from school. In doing this, SENOs must take into account professional reports and recommendations in relation to the student. They must also operate within the policies set down on these matters by the Department of Education and Skills. SENOs have a role in supporting and advising parents of children with special educational needs. Contact details are available on the NCSE website (www.ncse.ie), and the SENO can be contacted by e-mail or phone.

4.5 Confidentiality

Access to information

Records kept on all students include: entrance test results, NCCA Primary School Passports, 6th class teacher interview information, medical information and parental reports. The information kept on students attending with additional needs include psychological reports, Student Support Files and any other relevant professional reports.

In the interest of security and strict confidentiality these reports are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SEN Office. It is current policy to transfer the relevant information from the psychological reports to the SSF. The recommendations of which are shared with teachers to support planning and learning. This information can be accessed by relevant teachers only and the Sensitive information is handled appropriately in consultation with parents'/guardians wishes.

Updating our SEN Policy

The School aims to achieve the following by updating our SEN Policy:

- TO outline our whole school approach to teaching & learning
- TO include our most current best practices in SEN
- To reflect the most recent recommendations given by the department and NCSE
- To assist parents in making informed decisions in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school
- Ensure SEN is not viewed in Isolation, but in the current context of whole school and community
- Ensure that students with SEN 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 privy them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve their full potential.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home
- To outline procedures and practices which will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of students with SEN
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN

(learning Support Guidelines)

Priority Areas for development:

- 1. Further development of SEN team**
- 2. SEN team collaboration with Year Heads regarding SEN students**
- 3. Improve our Resources in the Resource Room**

