



St Louis High School

Special Educational
Needs and Inclusion
Policy

Our School

St Louis High School is an all-girls' voluntary secondary school established in 1913 by the order of St Louis sisters (SSL). It is managed by a Board of Management under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools' Trust.

Mission Statement

*St Louis High School is a dynamic community of learning
where we aspire to foster a happy and inclusive environment.
We nurture creativity, embrace diversity, and cherish our values
while building on our rich traditions
in an atmosphere of respect, gratitude, and generosity.
As active global citizens we share in the journey
towards a deeper understanding of and engagement in our complex, ever-changing and inter-
dependent world.*

A Whole School Approach

A policy of **inclusion** is extremely important in St Louis High School. SEN (Special Educational Needs) information is shared on an ongoing basis annually with staff to promote a whole-school approach to SEN provision. Several approaches are employed to support this:

- (i) Ongoing communication between the SEN Team, SEN Co-ordinators, SNA (Special Needs Assistant) team and the teaching staff, students, and parents.
- (ii) Planning is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning and is especially so for students with special educational needs.
- (iii) Collaboration between all parties involved especially the Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, parents/guardians, students, classroom teachers, SEN team, SNA team, Care Team, Guidance Team is supported and encouraged as part of the school's culture to support SEN students and promote inclusivity within the school community.
- (iv) Ongoing support for Continuing Professional Development and access to relevant training and courses is facilitated for all members of staff.

Inclusion

Students are supported to access, fully participate in and benefit from the school's educational experience and to do so alongside students who do not have learning needs. Inclusion in education relates not only to students with special educational needs, but also to all students who learn in a different way. All students are welcomed to St Louis High School.

Whole School Planning

Inclusion aims to enable all students to fully belong to the school community and to be educated within a structure, in which differences between individuals are accommodated.

St Louis High School accommodates and includes students with special educational needs, students with other learning differences and students from diverse environments and cultures.

For students who are having difficulty adjusting to the post-primary school, including those who have poor attendance, early intervention strategies can be implemented with the objective of preventing more significant difficulties developing, including early drop-out from school. We work closely with outside agencies to support students and their families including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Inspire (education support programme for students aged 12-15).

As a participating school in the **NCSE's School Inclusion Model (SIM)**, we engage with a Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and work closely with the NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Psychologist to develop programmes such as Lego Therapy, Vocabulary Enrichment Programme, CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and to support students with special educational needs and learning differences. Other programmes such as the Read and Write Gold, Nurture, and the introduction of the CUBBIE sensory unit are being employed to support and enable students and to strive to bring about a better sense of inclusion for all.

The school will organise teaching arrangements and SNA support where appropriate for students with special educational needs in a way that enables these students to be included with other students with varying abilities throughout the range of subjects to the greatest extent possible.

Resource teaching support will be provided to the students who have been identified formally by a psychologist, psychiatrist, speech and language therapist or other appropriate professional as having special educational needs. Additionally, we provide special education teaching for students with no formal diagnosis whose needs have been identified in-house.

Students with special educational needs will be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible. Such students will be withdrawn for individual or small group teaching only when it is clearly in their interest or at times when it is not possible to provide appropriate education in the mainstream class for them or for other students.

The in-school assessment of an individual student will always be undertaken for a particular purpose. In-school assessment is carried out as part of a process of information-gathering, planning, intervention/action, and review.

Differentiation

The term 'differentiation' refers to the process of varying content, activities, teaching, learning, methods, and resources to consider the range of interests, needs and experience of individual

students. Differentiation applies to all effective teaching but is particularly important for students with special educational needs. Within any group of students there will be a wide range of ability and experience. Learners vary in their intellectual and physical capabilities and in their motivation, interest, health, and backgrounds. This variation calls for flexible approaches, allowing for differentiation to provide challenges and successes for all students, while accommodating those who are experiencing difficulties and those who need further challenge. Differentiation is a process that allows for variation in

content: what we teach

process: the methods, materials, and activities we use to give students opportunities to practise and learn the content

product: the way in which students show us what they have learned.

Communication and consultation

Effective communication and consultation are required to convey and exchange information among all partners. At the start of the academic year, all staff (teachers and SNAs (Special Needs Assistant)) are informed about the whole-school approach to Special Education Needs provision. Special Education Needs students are identified and this information is conveyed and shared with staff, bearing in mind the importance of confidentiality. This information is updated regularly and shared as required throughout the year and details are included on our VS Ware Platform and under our SEN file on Office Teams. The SEN co-ordinators share updates very regularly with staff by email. SEN updates are presented at staff meetings during the academic year.

The school operates collaboratively with parents/guardians to inform them of the provision made for their child and the issues relating to special education and their rights and responsibilities in this regard. One-to-one meetings, phone calls and emails are the primary methods of communication with parents/guardians.

Communication and consultation with the SIM support team of SLT, OT and Psychologist is maintained throughout the year. CPD is offered to address areas that the SEN team consider would be beneficial for all staff to avail of e.g., Training in the Vocabulary Enrichment Programme; CPD on Sensory Processing, Regulation and Movement in the Learning Environment; Training in the use of CUBBIE sensory unit.

Aims of Special Education provision within the school

St Louis High School fully endorses the aims of education for students with special educational needs as set out by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) which state that the broad aims of education for students with special educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

- i) Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise their potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum.
- ii) Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential.
- iii) Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.

St Louis High School believes that all students, if provided with suitable learning experiences and adequate levels of support, are capable of development and learning and that all students are entitled to a high-quality education in an **inclusive and welcoming environment**.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

Parent/guardians play a key role in the following areas:

- Providing the school with as much information as possible in the form of assessment/s, primary school reports regarding students' needs and help they have received in the past.
- Talking and listening to their child about the support they are receiving.
- Meeting with the Resource Team and subject teachers to advise, consult and be informed on the nature of their child's needs.
- Providing complementary support at home that supports their child's programme of work.
- Encouraging their child to find comfortable ways of learning that suit them.
- Updating school personnel with relevant information as required.

The Rights of Parents/Guardians

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (Ireland 2004) confers on parents a series of rights in relation to the education of a child with special educational needs. St Louis High School fully acknowledges, respects, and supports the following key rights:

- The right to make requests
- The right to be consulted
- The right to participate
- The right to withhold consent
- The right to information
- The right to appeal

Rationale of St Louis High School's Policy on Special Educational Needs

The rationale of this SEN policy is:

- a) To comply with legislation and departmental guidelines and circulars.
- b) To clarify the roles and responsibilities of members of the St Louis High School's community in relation to supporting students with special educational needs.
- c) To assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in St Louis High School.
- d) To co-ordinate resource teaching roles and provision within St Louis High School.

The context of legislation

For us to fulfil our obligations under the 1998 and 2004 Education Acts, consider it necessary to develop a Special Education Needs and Inclusion Policy for the students in our care. St Louis High School is committed to successfully implementing all relevant legislation.

Educational Act 1998:

EPSEN 2004:

Education Welfare Act 2000

Equal Status Act 2000

Our Aims

This Policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- a) Identify any additional needs that our students may have.
- b) Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of our students with additional needs.
- c) Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs.
- d) Track, monitor, review and report the progress of students with additional needs.
- e) Communicate information between the SEN team, Care Team, principal, deputy principal, staff, parents/guardians, and students.

Objectives

To ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs:

- are provided with as much Learning Support as resources allow, to enable them to develop a positive self-image and build self-esteem and confidence.
- receive appropriate tuition within the class group or in a selected smaller group.
- are assessed and identified appropriately so that teaching and learning are delivered in a cognisant manner that is supportive and understanding of their needs.
- are the subject of ongoing review in terms of their needs and their educational programmes.

How we deliver and organise learning support

Early Intervention Strategies

Our strategies include:

- Close collaboration and consultation between teaching staff and SEN team.
- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy to ensure progression and continuity from year to year.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and numeracy skills to students who need it.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills of students where appropriate.
- Promotion of Numeracy – Maths Week; whole school approach in planning to support numeracy development; numeracy support in classes.
- Promotion of literacy e.g., Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Vocabulary Enrichment Programme; Read and Write Gold; whole-school approach in planning to support literacy development; SLHS literacy programme;
- Involvement with the School Inclusion Model (NCSE) providing SLT, OT and Psychological support where appropriate.
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g., Homework Policy Guidelines for Parents.

- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SEN team in some instances.
- Co-Teaching in some instances.
- Providing emotional support to enable students with special educational needs fully access their education e.g., Cubbie sensory unit support; Counselling support; Year Head support; SNA support; management support.

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once students' needs have been identified, resource teachers and/or learning support teachers/SNA support are allocated to address these needs as required.

We aim to provide a variety of types of support: in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of students are inclusively met.

The level and type of support reflect the specific needs and targets of individual students as outlined in their support plans. The resources are used to address the identified needs of students and, most importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.

Inclusion of students with special educational needs is essential and methodologies such as differentiation, mixed-ability groupings, and small group teaching are essential to nurturing a culture of inclusivity.

In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many students will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills, and application to learning. The SEN and SNA Teams meet with subject-based teachers and reviews students' needs, the resources in place, and the progress made. The aim is to develop the use of the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment.

The needs of students are cross-referenced and common needs that can be met by grouping are identified to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches are employed.

The Allocation of Resources

The following students **may be** selected for Special Education in our school depending on resources at any given time:

- A student who has had a psychological assessment that recommends Special Education teaching.
- A student who has a Specific Learning Difficulty or a Mild Learning Difficulty.
- A student who received Special Education in Primary School.
- A student identified from Primary School Sten Scores.
- A student identified from CAT4 Scores.
- A student identified by their teachers as having difficulty with one or more of their subjects (Referral System).
- A student with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- A student from a minority background (EAL -*English as an Additional Language*; Cultural).
- A student with physical difficulties.
- A student who is non-verbal.
- A student with a visual / hearing impairment.
- Exceptionally gifted students

Identifying Students with Additional Needs

The following procedures are employed for identifying a student with special educational needs:

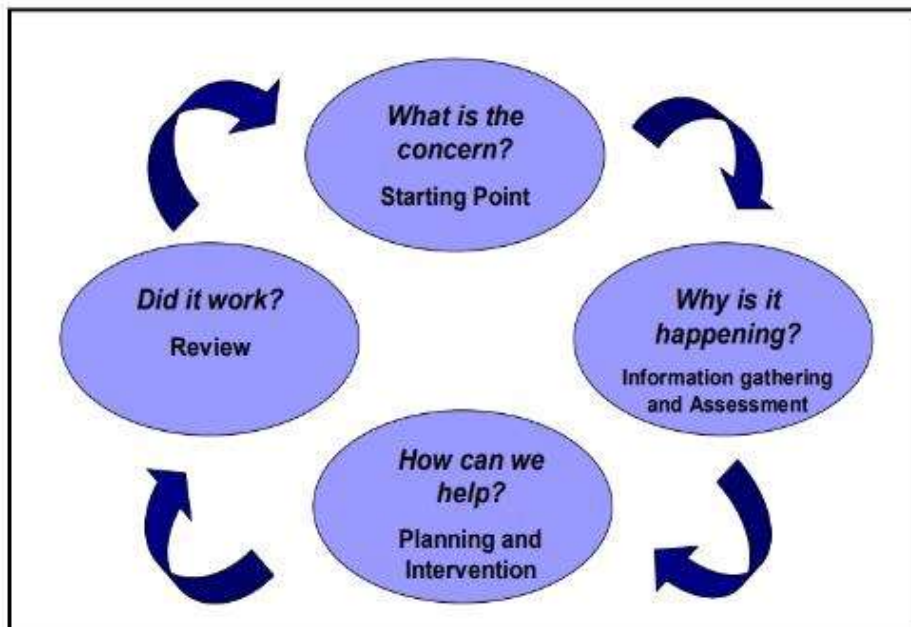
- Parents are encouraged to indicate on an information form prior to entry, any special needs that were identified in primary school and are requested to supply the school with any relevant information including a Student Support File (SSF) from primary school.
- The principal/deputy principal/SEN Co-ordinator/Year Heads may visit some feeder primary schools before the commencement of the first year and consult with the primary teachers.
- Standardised tests (CAT 4) are administered to all First Years in the first few weeks of their first term in St Louis High School and the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support.
- The transfer of all students with their primary school passport and reports from 6th class enables the SEN Team to identify students with low Sten Scores.
- When a parent notifies the school that a student is not benefitting from the regular education programme, the SEN Co-ordinator Team is consulted and initiates a process of

formal and informal assessment. A culture of open communication with the parent/guardian is established to best support the progress of the child in question.

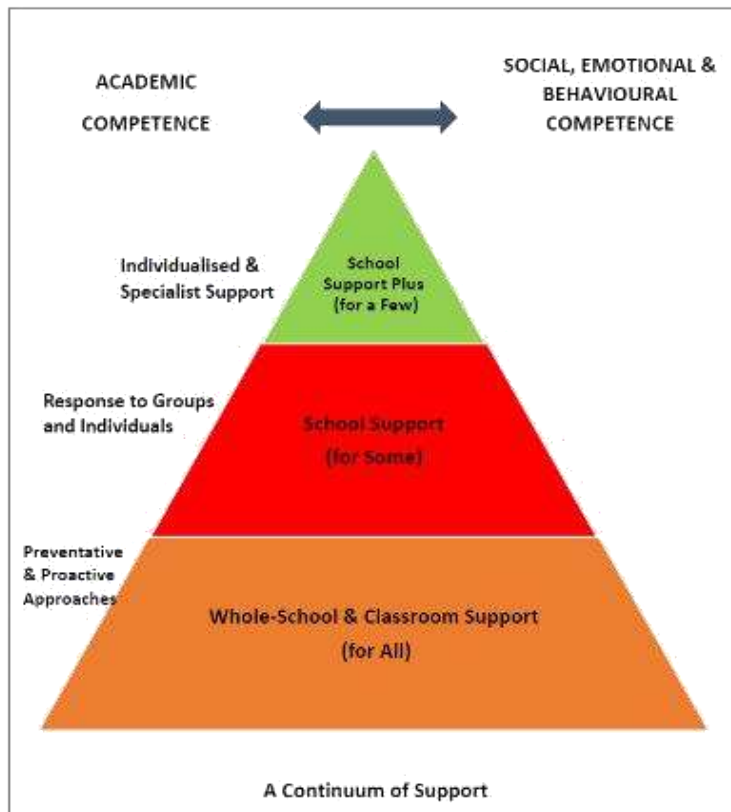
Continuum of Support

We use the continuum of support framework set out by the Department of Education (DES) to identify and support students with additional needs. We acknowledge that special education needs occur along a **continuum**, ranging from mild to severe, and from temporary to long-term and that students require various levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of education needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of support framework, we can identify students' educational needs, to encompass academic, social, and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way while engaging with external agencies as required.



The continuum of support recommends the following levels of support:

- Classroom Support
- School Support
- School Support Plus

Classroom Support

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual student.

This is a simple Individual Learning Plan which is drawn up by the subject-based teacher in collaboration with the SEN and SNA Teams where appropriate which outlines the student's additional educational needs and the actions, including differentiation, individualised teaching, and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the student's needs.

Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by subject-based teachers to support emerging needs. The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students in the class. The teacher may discuss the nature of the problem with the SEN and or SNA team and with parents and consider methodologies that may be effective.

School Support

In some cases, interventions at the classroom support level are not adequate to fully meet students' special educational needs. Therefore, School Support may be required. The subject teacher needs to involve the SEN and SNA Teams in the problem-solving process at this point as it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan. Support at this level can take many forms, for example:

- small group or individualised tuition
- co-teaching or in-class support
- peer mentoring
- Lego therapy
- Cubbie sensory unit
- Referral to Care Team
- Referral to SEN Team for social/emotional/behavioural support
- time-out cards and time-out quiet space
- rewards system
- being on report

At this stage of the Continuum of Support, the SEN Team will add the student to the Register of Needs and draw up a Student Support document, in consultation with the student and parent. This document will set out the nature of the student's learning difficulties, implications for learning, priority learning needs, accommodations required in class and exams, range of supports in place and any other relevant information. After the Student Support document has been drawn up, it becomes a working document for teaching and SEN staff to work collaboratively to support the students' special educational needs. The SNA team will also provide support and advice where appropriate. A Student Support document operates for an agreed period and is subject to review.

School Support Plus

A Student Support Plan is an additional and more detailed document than the Student Support document outlined above. This plan is agreed between a resource teacher, the student, and their parent/guardian at the start of each academic year. It is reviewed half-way through the year/at the end of January each year and a new plan is drawn up.

It will set out:

- Students' strengths and interests

- Priority Concerns
- Reasons for concerns
- Targets for the student
- Strategies to help the student achieve the targets
- Staff involved and resources needed

The plan will be reviewed at the end of January each year and updated accordingly

If a student's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will involve personnel outside the school team in the problem-solving, assessment, and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue as essential elements of the student's Student Support Plan.

Mixed Model

- a) Individual withdrawal: One-to-one teaching with a designated teacher. (Not the preferred option)
- b) Small group withdrawal: A group of usually between 3-6 students receive caring support as a whole group. (Preferred Option).
- c) Reduced Timetable: where a student is unable to cope with the demands of the current junior cycle or leaving certificate programmes and studies a smaller range of subjects. Parents/guardians, student and teachers are consulted if a reduced timetable is being considered. Implications of such a decision which could impact on possible later career choices are clearly outlined and discussed in depth with parents/guardians before any decision is finalised.
- d) Resource Teaching.
- e) Under the Continuum of Support model, we decide on the priority needs of our students for SNA support, based on identified needs.

Information Gathering and Record Keeping

Tracking, recording, and reviewing progress

Identification of needs, careful planning of interventions, and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated collaborative problem-solving process.

Assessments

Assessment is part of what a subject teacher does daily for all students. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, homework and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:

- Observations from mainstream teachers
- Consultation with subject teachers, parents, and students
- Student Journal
- Meeting with student

Formal assessment may involve some of the following:

Review of Primary School Passport, Reports and SSF

- Review of in-house exams and reports
- Behavioural Record if appropriate
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellor and /or Year Head
- Administering and interpreting diagnostic tests

To identify students who may require Special Education, screening including standardised testing is carried out regularly or at key stages and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and student support plans.

Such assessments include:

- 1st years-CAT4 level E and NGRT (New Group Reading Test)
- 2nd Year – Drumcondra Post-Primary Testing in English Reading and Mathematics (last term of 2nd year)
- 3rd years - a cohort of students that meet the following criteria:
 - 1. Educational Psychological Report on file (where applicable),

- 2. In receipt of Special Education support in Junior Cycle,
- 3. Failed two or more subjects in their 2nd Year Summer exams to be assessed in preparation for RACE (reasonable accommodations in state examinations) - WIAT-111-T and DASH.
- TY – CAT 4 Level G
- Additional tests may also include - Dyslexia Scr Test (DST), York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC), Sir Spelling Test, Reading Fluency Tests, N Observations and Checklists.
- Further ongoing diagnostic testing in numeracy and literacy as deemed appropriate.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use to ensure we provide the appropriate information to best support our students.

SEN Records

All students' SEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SEN Co-ordinators' Offices.

- SEN Co-ordinators manage and upload the Student Support documents on School Support for Some
- Special Education Teachers manage and review the Student Support Plans on School Support for a Few
- It is the responsibility of the Special Education teachers, SNAs, parents, and external agencies to contribute to the school support plus plan and the responsibility of the SEN Team to update and manage same.

The following should be stored:

- Student Support File
- Psychological Report
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents and outside agencies.
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff.

Student Support Plans and Learner Profiles

We use a Student Support File (SSF) to plan interventions and to track a student's journey through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to students, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and stored in the SEN Co-ordinators' offices.

All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with student's details.
- A timeline of actions.
- Record of support received.
- Record of standardised/diagnostic test scores.
- Student Support Plan (this is shared on the SEN Team one-drive)
- Checklists.

A Student Support File will be opened once a student is placed on Whole School and Classroom Support on the continuum. Subject Teachers will create a student support plan for the student and consult with the SEN Team and co-ordinator. If, after a few reviews, the child's case is moved to School Support, the SEN Team, and the allocated special education teacher will update the information in the Student Support File. The same system is in place for children on School Support Plus.

Key Roles

Roles below are privy to confidential and sensitive information pertaining to SEN students and students with additional needs and the protection of confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

Board of Management

The B.O.M. will:

- oversee the development, implementation, monitoring, and review of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion Policy.
- provide and support the professional development of staff involved in Special Educational Needs to increase teachers' knowledge of appropriate SEN teaching methodologies.
- provide adequate resources to enable teaching and learning to take place.
- provide resources which support and enhance the delivery of SEN education in the school.

Principal/ Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal will:

- ensure that the Special Educational Needs of pupils are met according to current legislation.

- promote whole-school policies that support a culture of inclusive learning for all students including those with Special Educational Needs.
- work with staff and Board of Management to oversee implementation, monitoring, and review of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion policy.
- consult and liaise with outside agencies where required e.g., NEPS, DES, NCSE, Tusla, and apply to DES for resources and resource hours where appropriate.
- support and enable the process of consultation with feeder Primary schools in relation to the enrolment of Special Needs students.
- make mainstream staff aware of Special Educational Needs students and the **importance of inclusivity** in mainstream classes.
- make parents aware at the point of entry of the provisions made for students with special needs.
- promote the involvement of parents of Special Educational Needs students and will facilitate meetings between SEN Co-ordinators and parents of students with Special Educational Needs to discuss needs.
- schedule meetings at the beginning of each school year which are led by the SEN Co-ordination team for teachers of students in each year for the purpose of communicating information re. difficulties and abilities of students.
- promote the involvement of the school in such initiatives, such as SIM programme, that provide additional support for SEN education.

SEN Co-ordination Team

The SEN Co-ordination Team will:

- Work closely with the Principal and Deputy Principal to ensure that the Special Education needs of students are met in accordance with current legislation.
- Work with staff and senior management to oversee implementation, monitoring, and review of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion policy.
- Consult and liaise with outside agencies where required e.g., NEPS, DES, NCSE, Tusla, and prepare applications to DES for resources and resource hours where appropriate.
- Provide SEN advice and guidance for mainstream staff, teachers and SNAs alike.
- Inform parents at the point of entry of the provisions made for students with special needs.
- Promote the involvement of parents of Special Educational Needs students and facilitate meetings with parents of these students.
- Lead SEN team meetings and guide and support the SEN and SNA teams.
Prepare RACE applications and offer support and care to students during the process of completing these applications.

YEAR HEADS

The Year Heads will:

- liaise with the Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN Co-ordination team to ensure that SEN students within their year group are emotionally, socially, and academically supported and included.
- liaise with subject teachers of SEN students in their year group.
- work closely with the Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN Co-ordination Team in supporting all students including students with special educational needs in all aspects of school life.
- together with either the Principal/Deputy Principal will work closely with external agencies where appropriate to support students and their families with special educational needs.

Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers

Learning Support teachers and Resource teachers will:

- provide supplementary supportive teaching.
- be involved in the selection of pupils for Special Education Needs and the composition of their Student Support Plans.
- test and assess pupils who need Learning Support.
- meet parents of Special Educational Needs pupils where appropriate.
- work closely with the Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN Co-ordination Team/SNAs in ensuring teacher awareness of students with special education needs.

Guidance Counsellors

The Guidance Counsellors will:

- organise Guidance and Counselling for Special Education Needs students.
- prepare DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) applications and submit to the DES.
- As part of Careers classes, to ensure that SEN students are supported using differentiation methodologies where appropriate.
- Work closely with the SEN team to ensure that personnel from both departments work together to support students with SEN from a personal, educational, social and communication perspective, based on the Continuum of Support.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Special Needs Assistants make an invaluable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with special educational needs. SNA duties are assigned by the Principal and Deputy Principal in accordance with DES guidelines and circulars.

The SNA (Special Needs Assistant) will:

- Provide general assistance to the subject class teacher in aiding and supporting students with special care needs (i.e., those sanctioned by the National Council for Special Education)
- Support the student in a manner that values and respects their individuality as well as promoting independence.
- Work in collaboration with subject class teachers and the SEN team.
- Meet with Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN Co-ordination team to communicate relevant information.
- Assist St Louis High School in making suitable provisions for a student/s with particular care needs arising from a disability in an educational context.
- Assist St Louis High School in making suitable provisions for a student or students with a disability who may also have a significant medical need for such assistance, a significant impairment of physical or sensory impairment, or where their behaviour is such that they are a danger to themselves or to other students.
- Support students availing of the Cubbie Sensory Unit.
- Accompany student(s) or classes on school trips as appropriate to ensure maximum student inclusion
- Provide a safe and welcoming/inclusive environment in the dedicated care room during breaks, lunches, and other times as appropriate or needed.
- Liaise with parents as appropriate in relation to students they support.
- Store and monitor specific medicines for specific students in the dedicated care room.

The SNA is privy to confidential and sensitive information pertaining to SEN students and confidentiality is of the utmost importance. The SNA team meets on a regular basis with senior management and the SEN Co-ordination team to discuss and review progress made with students in their care.

The role of the SNA is pivotal and important in the school. The enormous contribution our SNAs make to the school is greatly valued.

The duties of the SNA are carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/deputy principal/SEN Co-ordination Team. The SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN students to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76). The subject class teacher is solely responsible for disciplinary, health and safety, and classroom management issues and is the main educator of the whole class.

Subject Classroom Teachers

Subject Classroom teachers will:

- recognise their key role in including students with Special Educational Needs in the class group.
- ensure that all students (including those with SEN) are provided with learning programmes and an environment that encourages and enables them to gain access to curriculum and to progress their learning.
- ensure that their teaching methodology is differentiated to meet individual needs and to facilitate the achievement of individual students' targets.
- notify Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head/SEN Co-ordination Team of any emerging areas of concern in relation to a student/s.

Parents

Parents will:

- accept their role as the primary and natural educators of their children. Parental involvement is critical for the continued success of students with Special Educational Needs in school life.
- provide the school with full information and all documents relating to assessment etc.
- keep lines of communication between school and home open throughout the school life of the student.
- support the work being done in school with the student.

Students

Students should:

- be facilitated to be involved in planning for their learning.
- be consulted and involved in Student Support Plan. e.g., giving information on hobbies, likes, dislikes, weaknesses, and strengths.
- be encouraged to focus on learning targets in Student Support Plan and to achieve their (maximum) potential.

External Agencies supporting SEN

SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) - Special Educational Needs Organiser

NEPS - National Educational Psychological Services

H.S.E - Health Services Executive

NEWB - National Educational Welfare Board

TUSLA Family Support

EWO – Education Welfare Officer

Communication

There is regular communication between Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN Co-ordination team/SEN teachers/SNAs and Subject Class Teachers.

There is regular communication between SEN Co-ordination team/SNAs/SEN teachers with parents/guardians.

Categories of Special Education needs

(a) Students with special educational 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 a person without that condition. (EPSEN Act 2004).

(b) Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunity enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students.

Categories may include:

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems (E.B.D.)
- Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems (SE.B.D.)
- Mild general learning disability (MLD)
- Borderline general learning disability (BGD)
- Specific learning disability (SLD) e.g., Dyslexia, Dyspraxia*
- Moderate general learning disability (MGLD)
- Severe or profound general learning disability (SGLD)

- Multiple disabilities
- General Learning Difficulty (GLD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism/ Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g.: ASD; Asperger's Syndrome)

Further Information

Health and Safety Issues

Every student and staff member is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each student with SEN. When a place in St Louis High School is offered to a student with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the student is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks (e.g. environmental) to students and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology is playing an increasingly key role in the education of pupils with special educational needs. AT applications can help overcome some of the barriers created by a learning difficulty and can allow students to read, write and communicate more effectively. The availability of assistive technologies can provide immense support to the SEN learner in terms of academic achievement. If a student has a recommendation for assistive technology in a professional report an application may be made to the SENO as per Circular No 0010/2013. If this application is successful: The equipment is purchased using funding provided by the NCSE (National Council for Special Education). Although the equipment will be sanctioned for a particular pupil the equipment will, as a rule, remain the property of the school and will be available for allocation to subsequent students with similar disabilities.

Supervision/ Child Protection

Where students receive support on a one-to-one basis, the Learning Support/Resource Teacher/s is/are responsible for ensuring that both they and the student are visible through the glass panel in the door. Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open. Where students are withdrawn for support, the learning support/resource teacher in conjunction with the Deputy Principal and SEN Co-ordination team should arrange an appropriate classroom where resources, if needed, are made available. Where a student has access to a SNA, they may withdraw the student from the class if a plan is in place with the subject class teacher.

Resources and Programmes to Support Special Education delivery in St Louis High School

The following additional resources and programmes have and are being implemented to support SEN students:

- Read and Write Gold
- Vocabulary Enrichment Programme
- Lego Therapy
- Availability of a quiet space (at lunchtime)
- CUBBIE sensory unit
- St Louis High School is a partner school of the SIM programme (NCSE)
- St Louis High School is a partner school of the FUSE Anti-Bullying Programme.
- NURTURE tracking system – closing the feedback loop.
- A quiet time-out area
- Office 365 Teams
- VS Ware

Extra-Curricular Activities available to support SEN students:

Extra-curricular activities are available to students at St Louis High School. SEN students who wish to participate in any of the clubs/activities are welcomed and supported. Clubs may vary from year to year.

Sports Clubs:

Athletics; Basketball; Badminton; Camogie; Gaelic Football; Life Saving; Rugby; Swimming; Table Tennis; Tennis;

Music Groups

Junior Choir; Instrumental and Singing lessons (individual); Traditional Irish Music Group; Instrumental Ensemble;

Other clubs include:

Science Club; Gardening Club; Debating; Green Schools' Committee; Board games; Literacy club; Arts & Craft Club;

Creative Committee, Mindfulness group

After School Study is provided for students in 3rd, 5th & 6th Yr.

Homework Club is established for 1st and 2nd Years.

Areas for further development

- To further support the transition from Primary to Secondary School. – (*e.g., to provide a quieter time for students with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) to visit the school prior to the Open Evening.*) We already offer a visit with a tour with a SNA.
- To further develop a culture of Co-Teaching in the school.
- To encourage staff to further develop skills in Special Education through CPD.

Acronyms

AED Additional Educational Needs

DES Department of Education and Science

EAL English as an Additional Language

EPSEN Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004

IEP (Individual Education profiles) Individual Education Plan

IPLP Individual Pupil Learning Profile

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

OIDE - DES Oide Schools' Support Service

PCSP Primary Curriculum Support Service

NCSE National Council for Special Education

SDP School Development Planning

SEN Special Educational Needs

SENO Special Educational Needs Organiser

SESS Special Education Support Service

SIM School Inclusion Model

SNA Special Needs Assistant

SSF Student Support Files

Ratification

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in January 2023.

Signed: *Patricia Bourden*

Chairperson, St Louis High School Board of Management.

