

# **ST. Vincent's Secondary School**



## **Learning Support Department Plan**

**2014/2015**

# Index

## Contents

1. School Context
2. Rational
3. Mission Statement
4. Aims of Policy
5. Definition of SEN
6. Categories of special Educational needs
7. SEN Team
8. Role of resource/learning support department within the school
9. Role of learning support teacher
10. Collaboration
11. Role of SNA
12. Identification Process
13. Preliminary screening and student profiling
14. Model of SEN provision
15. Program planning
16. Individual educational plans
17. Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)
18. Review and evaluation
19. Reasonable accommodations RACE
20. Timetabling and Resource provision
21. Communication
22. Record Keeping
23. Enrolment process
24. Liaison with other professional agencies
25. Appendix

## **1. School Context**

St. Vincent's is an all boys secondary school in Glasnevin. It is part of the Edmund Rice School's Trust.

We promote an inclusive environment where all students can work to reach their full potential.

In September 2014 we have moved towards mixed ability throughout the entire school. The reason behind this change was to create a more inclusive environment.

## **2. Rationale**

This document outlines the provision provided for students with special education needs in St Vincent's. It is written in the context of the following pieces of legislation

- The Education Act 1998
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Education For Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN).

## **3. Mission Statement**

Our Mission Statement reads:

*"St Vincent's aims to provide a quality Catholic Education for all, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, which promotes leadership, fosters community and respects diversity"*

## **4. Aims of Policy**

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures to:

- Gather information about known Special Educational Needs of all incoming students as per the continuum of support.
- Identify emerging needs to support pupils as much as possible subject to resources.
- To communicate to staff procedures to be followed.

## **5. Definition of SEN**

According to the EPSEN Act of 2004; in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly.

## 6. Categories of special Educational needs

To date, the school has provided for the following categories of students with Special Educational Needs:

- Borderline/ Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties—Attention deficit disorder (ADD), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Specific Learning Difficulty—Dyslexia
- Physical disabilities—Dyspraxia. Dyspraxia is a difficulty with thinking out, planning and carrying out sensory / motor tasks.
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (hearing & visual impairments)
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g. Asperger's Syndrome)

In addition to these categories we understand that under **circular 08/02** the following categories of SEN exist also:

- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe / Profound General Learning Disability
- Assessed syndromes eg: Down's Syndrome.

## 7. SEN Team

The special educational needs team consists of:

- Chairperson – Principal
- Secretary – Post holder
- Coordinator
- Literacy coordinator
- DEIS Coordinator

### Objectives of SEN Team

- To gather information from Primary School about known needs.
- To promote Literacy and numeracy for pupils with SEN.
- Promote whole school approach to inclusion and integration of all pupils with SEN into mainstream classes.
- To facilitate an effective referral system of students who may need support with emerging needs.
- To distribute information from professional reports to subject teachers.
- Identify and prepare pupils for RACE.

## **Specific duties**

- Identification of SEN – all staff
- Assessing students with specific learning difficulties - Post holder
- Yearly literacy and numeracy testing- Post holder and DEIS Coordinator
- Psychometric testing- Guidance Team
- RACE application- Post holder
- Resource application- Guidance Team
- Minutes from SEN meetings – Post holder

## **Identification of SEN**

- Known SEN: The SEN team will use our yellow sheet, see appendix, to gather information from the primary school regarding the known needs of their students.
- Emerging SEN: All incoming students, where possible, will be assessed using the CAT. Based on these results appropriate support will be put in place within available resources.

## **8. Role of SEN Department within the School**

The role of department is to gather information on students with SEN. Using this information the department identifies the needs of the students and then seeks to provide appropriate support within the resources available to the school. The department provides information to the wider staff. The department oversees the planning, program and progress of the resource teacher and SEN student. It also oversees the purchasing of resources.

## **9. Role of SEN Teacher**

The role of the SEN teacher is to provide support for children with special educational needs. The teacher should collect all relevant information relating to the students assigned to them (complete the SEN folder). They should be aware of the specific need/ areas of concern for each student and a tailored scheme of work should be written and reviewed.

## 10. Collaboration-

**Parents:** Parents, through their unique knowledge of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties in their child at home. The SEN department advocates a partnership of collaboration and co-operation with parents of students with SEN.

**Students:** The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle that underpins effective SEN provision. Students are encouraged to contribute to their own learning targets and to develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught.

**Classroom teacher:** The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class. It is particularly important that all class teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes account of learning difficulties. The class teacher also plays an important role in the early identification of pupils with SEN. The class teacher is alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and brings their concerns to the attention of the SEN department via email, [learningsupport@stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie](mailto:learningsupport@stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie). A key element of successful SEN provision is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the SEN teaching team. All class teachers use differentiation to include all pupils in each lesson.

**Specialist teacher with Resource hours:** The role of the subject teacher, who has Resource hours in the SEN department, is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of SEN students. Teachers with Resource on their timetable will attend an initial meeting with the SEN department. At this meeting the learning needs of the student are outlined. The teacher is expected to formulate programmes of their own which provide curricular support to the SEN student. The SEN department works in close collaboration and consultation with those specialist teachers in the creation of relevant and resourced programmes of study. The teachers use the SEN folder provided to record all plans.

**Guidance Counsellors:** The Guidance Counsellors role within the SEN team consists largely of the following functions:

- Counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Psychometric testing and initial entrance exam
- Career information management

- Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience
- Referrals to other professionals and agencies in consultation with the resource coordinator and management.

**The Board of Management (BOM):** Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on Special Education Needs provision. The Board of Management will:

- Make decisions in relation to application for enrolment by students with special educational needs.
- In relation to applications for the enrolment of students with Special Needs, the Board of Management will request a copy of the student's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available will request that the student be assessed as soon as possible. The purpose of the assessment is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the student relative to her special needs and to profile the support services required.
- Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs of the student as specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the DES to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the student outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teachers for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport service or other.
- The Board or its representatives will meet with the parents of the student to discuss the student's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held which may include parents, the Principal, the primary school teacher, learning support teacher, special class teacher, resource teacher, Home School Community Liaison Officer or psychologist as appropriate.
- It may be necessary for the Board to decide to defer enrolment of a particular student, pending the receipt of an assessment report and/or the provision of appropriate resources by the DES to meet the needs specified in the psychological and/or medical report.
- The BOM will oversee the writing, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
- The BOM will support continuous professional development for all teachers in the area of special education.
- The BOM will ensure that staff and parents are consulted regarding policies, procedures and decisions made for students with SEN.
- The BOM will provide opportunities for parents to be involved in decisions regarding their child's education.

**Role of Principal:** The Principal will assume overall responsibility for the school's Learning Support programme.

- The principal will be responsible for establishing, implementing and monitoring whole-school policies, programmes and procedures (including assessment and screening) which support the learning of all students in the school, including those students with a special educational need. He will liaise with the BOM, teachers, relevant staff and parents to ensure the success of this.
- The principal will liaise with the deputy principal and be responsible for the allocation of learning support/resource hours in keeping with department of education and skills guidelines.
- The principal will liaise regularly with the Learning Support Coordinator.
- The principal will liaise with the Learning Support team at a regular meeting.
- The principal will liaise if necessary with outside agencies, for e.g. the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).
- The principal will inform mainstream and learning support teachers of opportunities for continuous professional development in the area of special educational needs.
- The principal will liaise with the deputy principal, the learning support department and School Completion Programme team to successfully facilitate the transfer of all students including those with a SEN, from primary school to post-primary school.
- The principal will liaise with the post – holders in applying for reasonable accommodation for state/in-house exams.
- The principal will oversee the implementation of reasonable accommodation for state/in-house exams for students who have been deemed eligible for this.
- The principal, where relevant, will oversee the planning, implementation and review of individual education plans (IEPs) for students with resource hours.
- The principal will liaise with the coordinators of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, the School Completion Programme and the National Behaviour Support Service school team in relation to students with a special educational need.
- The principal will facilitate the assessment (psychological or otherwise) of any student who is thought to have a special educational need.
- The principal will liaise with the deputy principal where relevant, regarding matters pertaining to students with a special educational need.



## 11. Role of SNA

As laid out in *circulars 0030/2014*, the role of the Special Needs Assistant is as follows:

**Role of the SNA in support of the student:** Responsibility for the care and well being of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promotes independence.

### **Role of the SNA in collaboration with the teacher:**

The role of the SNA is pivotal and important in the school. We recognise the enormous contribution our SNA's make to the school.

- The SNA is privy to confidential information pertaining to SEN pupils. As such confidentiality is of paramount importance.
- The role of the SNA is not as an educator but as an assistant to the student in line with their needs
- The SNA attend a meeting with the SEN department at the beginning of the year to discuss student's needs.

## 12. Identification Process

**Identification of SEN:** An important role of the SEN department is to establish the procedures necessary for the preliminary screening of pupils and subsequent selection of pupils for more detailed diagnostic assessment. Central to this process is the class teacher and the parent.

**School based identification:** A class teacher and/or tutor can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN department via email, [learningsupport@stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie](mailto:learningsupport@stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie) Any referral made by a class teacher or tutor must be forwarded to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who will begin a broader profile.

This first step in the screening process allows the SEN team, in co-operation with Guidance Counsellors and Principal to identify the nature of SEN being experienced. It is during this time that the learning, emotional, behavioural and social needs of the student are evaluated.

**Parent Referral Process:** When a parent notifies the school regarding an SEN concern, the Principal/SEN Co-ordinator, with the parents' approval, initiates the administration of the preliminary screening process (as outlined above). Once the

Principal/SEN Co-ordinator forms the view that the student may have SEN, the Principal/SEN Co-ordinator will advise the parent in relation to appropriate assessment.

### **13. Preliminary Screening/Student profiling:**

If it is deemed appropriate the Principal/SEN Co-ordinator initiates a process of formal and informal assessment to be conducted by the SEN department.

#### **Informal Assessment:**

- Observations from mainstream teachers.
- Consultation with parents.
- Student Journal.
- Meeting with pupil.

#### **Formal Assessment:**

- Review of entrance tests.
- Review of in house exams and reports.
- Behavioural record if appropriate.
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellors.
- Review of previous professional assessments
- Review data supplied by primary school (yellow form)
- Initiate preliminary assessment by NEPS psychologist

Following this screening/profiling stage decisions are made as to appropriate support warranted.

- Needs for monitoring/support in mainstream setting.
- Purposeful Withdrawal.
- SNA support
- Support is given within the resources of the school.

All information / data gathered are recorded in the student's profile.

### **14. Model of SEN provision:**

In assessing and deciding the level of SEN support the following options are considered:

- Team Teaching
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes

- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Curricular reduction

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The student's ongoing support will be based on their response to the intervention in place. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum.

### **15. Programme Planning:**

The objectives of the assessments conducted by the SEN department are to identify the pupil's learning, behavioural, emotional and social needs. As a result of the information generated by this assessment process, the Principal/SEN Co-ordinator may consider it necessary to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) created in consultation with NEPS psychologist, Principal, class teachers, resource teachers, parents and pupil to best enable the student to progress in school. Only students granted hours are given IEP's.

### **16. Individualised Education Plan (IEP):**

IEPs include:

- Targets
- Assessment criteria
- Possible Resources and Techniques
- Possible strategies for use in class
- Ideas for support teacher/SNA
- Outcomes (reviewed twice yearly)

An IEP sets out the short-term goals needed to meet the priority learning needs of the pupil.

The SEN partners including the Principal, NEPS psychologist, Guidance department, resource teacher, class teachers, SNA, parents and the pupil himself have input into these plans where possible.

### **17. Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)**

This is a new area and will be reviewed by May 2015. The NBSS Team in conjunction with the Learning support team are responsible for the IBP.

An IBP sets out the short-term goals needed to improve student's behavior with the long – term aim of enabling the student to reach their educational goals.

The SEN partners including the Principal, NBSS Team, Guidance department, resource teacher, class teachers, SNA, parents and the pupil himself have input into these plans where possible.

## **18. Review/Evaluation:**

The progress of each pupil should be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the term. Twice yearly the resource teacher/SEN Co-ordinator, in consultation with the SEN partners evaluates the merits, progress and weaknesses of the programme. These evaluations help to form the basis of future planning. The primary purpose of this review is to determine whether or not the agreed learning targets have been achieved and to decide the nature and level of Resource support, if any that should be provided in the future.

## **19. Reasonable Accommodation**

Special arrangements for candidates who because of temporary, permanent or long term disability have special assessment needs in exams may apply to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for a reasonable accommodation(s) to be made to facilitate them taking the examinations.

Special arrangements are designed to assist a candidate in demonstrating his achievements in an exam setting.

All applications for reasonable accommodations are considered in light of a published Framework of Principles as set out by the Expert Advisory Group on examinations.

### **Junior Certificate**

In St. Vincent's reasonable accommodations are made for Junior Certificate students on the basis that they met the strict criteria set out by the SEC.

### **Leaving Certificate**

Application is made through the school. An up-to-date psychological report is usually required. There is a strict criteria which the applicant must adhere to, to be granted reasonable accommodations. Applications are made in 5<sup>th</sup> Year.

This work will be completed by the RACE Co-ordinator.

## **20. Timetabling of Resource Provision:**

This area is currently under review due to changes in the structure of classes. It is our aim to work towards mixed ability classes.

- Resource hours will be provided as per the list of students accessing supports granted by the SENO.
- Other students identified as having learning support needs will be allocated time from the other available resources where possible.

## **21. Communication**

### **-SEN team**

Members of the SEN team meet regularly with senior management to review school SEN provision.

**-SEN register:** Beginning in September 2014, every teacher will receive a detailed update of all pupils with SEN.

This register includes:

- Name of pupil
- Category of difficulty
- Potential areas of difficulty
- Support being provided
- Suitable teaching strategies/methodologies
- Potential provision at State Exams
- New staff are briefed by resource department

## **22. Record Keeping**

- The secretary has the duty of taking minutes during the SEN meetings.
- A minute's folder is kept recording all meetings by or involving SEN team personnel.
- A student profile is kept on every student with SEN.

## 23. Enrolment Process

**Enrolment policy:** The school's Admission and Enrollment Policy is a substantial document and may be viewed on the school's website [www.stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie](http://www.stvincentsd11.scoilnet.ie)

**Transition from Primary to secondary school:** St. Vincents Secondary School seeks to foster a climate of support for incoming students that is flexible and allows for creative responses to individual needs.

**Sharing of information:** In making provision for students with SEN a member of the SEN team visits each of the feeder primary schools before the entrance exam assessments to ensure that any reasonable accommodations needed are put in place. Also, with parental permission, important information relating to each student is obtained. For example, has the student access to any of the following resources?

- Special Needs Assistant
- Special class setting
- Support or help from either the learning support or resource teacher.

We gather all relevant documentation available from the primary school regarding their special educational needs. A student profile is then prepared for incoming students with SEN and appropriate supports are planned.

**Steps in moving to St. Vincent's Secondary School:** The following steps are followed to help the transition from Primary to Secondary School:

SEN team are available to meet with parents of incoming students by appointment. Where specific concerns regarding SEN students are in evidence, contact is made with parents and needs/resources available discussed. SEN team liaises with Guidance department regarding SEN student provision for CAT assessments in February of each year. SEN department reviews results of CAT assessments.

**Assessment procedure:** The CAT assessments along with information gathered from the primary schools forms the basis on which class groups are formed. The purpose of these assessments is to identify learning needs that have not yet come to light, and to get a sense of the student's ability.

Further testing may be done to find out more data regarding the student's SEN to enable the resource department to put in place appropriate supports.

Where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student's individual needs are discussed.

**Ongoing monitoring of progress and support of transfer to second level:** The school operates an induction programme. This is facilitated by the form teacher and Guidance Counsellors.

#### **24. Liaison with other professional agencies:**

The SEN team liaise with a number of agencies, such as those listed below.

**National Council for Special Education (NCSE):** The National Council for Special Education has been established as an independent statutory body. The council has authority to:

- Carry out research and provide expert advice to the Minister for Education and Science on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services.
- Provide for a range of services at local and national level in order that the
- educational needs of children with disabilities are identified and provided for, and
- Co-ordinate, with health authorities, schools and other relevant bodies, the
- Provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities.

*(See Circular PPT 01/05 for detailed outline of role of NCSE).*

**Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO):** The SENO represents the local delivery aspect of the work of the NCSE. There are approximately 70 SENO's employed nationally and all have a qualification and work experience relating to service delivery to children with SEN. SENO's have responsibility for:

- Co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of educational services to children with SEN.
- Processing applications for resources for children with SEN.
- Regular and detailed engagement with organisations such as health authorities, the DES, the Inspectorate and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

**National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):** St. Vincent's Secondary School has an assigned psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service. The service that is delivered by NEPS operates under the following framework:

- Consultation about individual students
- Recommendations and advice on individual students needs
- Advice on classroom strategies and resources
- Advisory work in relation to SEN policy and practice
- Consultation and recommendations in relation to R.A.C.E. (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations)

- Full psychological assessments available to students.

Student's cases are presented to the NEPS psychologist and each case prioritised for assessment on its merits by the psychologist in consultation with the SENCO and school Principal.

### **National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)**

The NBSS provides St Vincents with support for students who are currently exhibiting difficult behavior.

- Consultation about individual students
- Recommendations and advice on individual students needs
- Advice on classroom strategies and resources
- CPD for Staff.
- Funding for assessments
- Facilitating the delivery of Catch Up Literacy and Catch up Numeracy.

**TUSLA:** Referrals will be made as appropriate by school management to the TUSLA.



## **25. Appendix**

Yellow form

Referral Form

I.E.P Template

Minute Template

[https://www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/SpecialEducation/Archive/EPSENAct04\\_IntforTeachers.pdf](https://www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/SpecialEducation/Archive/EPSENAct04_IntforTeachers.pdf)

STUDENT PROFILE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick the appropriate box**

**1 ACADEMIC ABILITY**

- Above average in his class group
- Average in his class group
- Below average in his class group
- In receipt of learning support in 6<sup>th</sup> class (or prior)

**2 ASSESSMENT**

Has this student ever been psychologically assessed  Yes  No

If yes, please tick the nature of the assessment and the year of assessment. PLEASE ATTACH COPY

	Nature	Year
• Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Speech	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3 SPECIAL NEEDS**

Is this student in receipt of any:

	Yes	No
1 Learning Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 SNA Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Resource teacher support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Assisted Technology Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 EAL Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4 **SOCIAL ABILITY**

- Makes friends easily
- Has no real problems socially
- Can find it difficult to make friends

5 **EXEMPTIONS FROM IRISH**

Does this student have an official exemption from Irish from the Department of Education and Skills. If Yes, in what year was the exemption granted. **PLEASE ATTACH COPY**

Yes  No  Year

6 **SPECIAL TALENTS**

Does this student excel at any particular activity e.g. sport, music, writing, art, drama, dance etc.  
If yes, please give details

---



---



---

7 **PARENTAL SUPPORT**

Are parents generally supportive Yes   No

8 **BEHAVIOUR**

Please give a brief account of the student's general behaviour:

---



---



---

9 **RESULTS OF RECENTLY ADMINISTERED TESTS**

Area	NAME OF TEST	DATE OF TESTING	STANDARD SCORES/ QUOTIENT	PERCENTILE RANK
Ability				
Reading				
Spelling				
Numeracy				
Other				

## Staff Referral form

Students Name \_\_\_\_\_

Students class group \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think this students need support in the area of

Academic ability

EAL

Speech and Language

Occupational therapy

Behavioural support

Please outline your concerns

Please give specific examples of how this student is currently struggling

Are you aware of any other issues effecting this students ability to engage with school

# Individual Education Plan

<b>Name</b>		<b>DOB</b>		<b>Year/ Class</b>	
<b>Area/s of concern</b>		<b>Start date</b>		<b>IEP NO</b>	
<b>Form Teacher</b>		<b>Proposed Support</b>		<b>Support began</b>	
<b>Supported by</b>					
<b>Targets</b>	<b>Achievement Criteria</b>	<b>Possible resources and techniques</b>	<b>Possible Strategies for use in class</b>	<b>Ideas for support teacher/ assistant</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Parent/ guardian contribution</b>					
<b>Student's Contribution</b>					

## SEN Department Meeting

Date:	Topic:	Attendance:
Decision:		
For the next meeting:		