

**Special Educational Needs Policy**

**St. Dominic’ s College**

**Table of Contents**

1.0 Glossary of terms

2.0 Introduction

3.0 School Context

4.0 Mission of the school

5.0 Partnership with parents

6.0 Definition of special educational needs

7.0 Categories of special educational needs

8.0 Aims of the SEN policy

9.0 Enrolment in relation to SEN

10.0 Attendance policy in relation to SEN

11.0 Procedures for transferring students from primary school

12.0 Transition from post primary setting to a post school setting

13.0 Procedures for identification, allocation and implementation of SEN including models of support.

14.0 Assessment

15.0 Development, implementation and review of individual education files

16.0 Record keeping

17.0 Accommodations in the physical environment

18.0 Provision of opportunities for students with special educational needs to gain access to learning in the school alongside students without special educational needs

19.0 Procedures by which students are enabled to select an appropriate programme for state examinations and subject choices

20.0 Staff roles and responsibilities

21.0 Links with external agencies

22.0 Links to other policies.

**1.0 Glossary**

Glossary of Acronyms used in this Policy

CPD - Continuing professional development

DES - Department of Education and Skills

EPSEN Act 2004 - Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act

Junior Cycle - (1st ,2nd, 3rd Year)

HSE – Health Service Executive

LCA – Leaving Cert Applied Program (Senior Cycle)

L2LP – Level 2 Learning Program

NCSE - National Council for Special Education

NEPS - National Educational Psychological Service

SEN – Special Education Needs

SENO- Special Education Needs Officer (NCSE)

Senior Cycle (5th and 6th Year)

SET – Special Education Teacher

SNA - Special needs assistant

SST- Student Support Team

RACE- Reasonable accommodation in Certificate Examinations

DARE- Disability Access Route to Education

**2.0 Introduction**

This policy takes cognisance of directives contained in the Education Act 1998, the Epsen Act (2004), The Equal Status Act 2000, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equality Act 2004 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Preparation of this policy drew on the following guidelines: Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs- post primary guidelines (DES 2007, last updated 24 January 2020 and Circular 0014/2017 and Circular 0075/2022.

**3.0 Context**

We are an all-girls secondary school in the tradition of the Dominican sisters under the patronage of Le Chéile Schools’ Trust. The school caters for 779 number of students

In the Special Educational needs department there are 2 SET teachers and 5 SNAs.

The allocation of SEN hours is at the discretion of the National Educational Psychological Service. The school has two learning support classrooms and a smaller additional support classroom. The school has a dedicated SEN office.

**4.0 Mission**

Our mission statement outlines and encapsulates our values. At St. Dominic's College, we are committed to enabling each and every student develop her potential, both in the academic and non-academic fields. We encourage the development of a healthy self-image, whilst teaching the student to respect the backgrounds, traditions and beliefs of all those with whom she comes into contact. We provide an environment in which the student is encouraged to take responsibility for her own work, whilst participating in school activities as part of the community.

**5.0 Partnership with Parents.**

The school welcomes and facilitates opportunities for partnership with parents and guardians.

Every student in St Dominic’s College has their own school journal which is the primary link between school and home.

Some students have a Digital Communication Book. This book facilitates more in depth communication between the school, SNAs and parents.

Parents can also log into our VSware system to view their child’s school report and get feedback on how their child is progressing throughout the year.

On a need basis, phone calls, emails and meetings are held as required with parents and guardians and the SEN team. The meetings are collaborative in nature and have a focus on the student’s needs and outcomes.

The SEN Team facilitate meetings between parents and external agencies. The Sen team act in a supportive role and advocate for the student in these meetings.

**6.0 Definition of SEN**

In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) the term “special educational needs” is defined as 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... (Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

**7.0 Categories of SEN**

To date, the following categories of Special Education Needs have been provided for:

• Borderline/Mild General Learning Disabilities

• Moderate General Learning Disabilities – Down Syndrome

• Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties – ADD/ADHD

• Specific Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia, Dyscalculia

• Physical Disabilities – Dyspraxia, Cerebral Palsy

• Speech and Language Disorders

• Sensory Difficulties (Hearing and Visual impairments)

• Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders

• Students with Exceptional Needs

• Epilepsy

**8.0 The aims of the SEN policy are:**

* To promote the emotional, social, educational and physical well-being of students by developing self-esteem, self-confidence, personal responsibility and ability to live and work with others.
* To ensure that all relationships within the school be imbued with a spirit of care.
* To ensure that education takes place in an inclusive environment.
* To enable students with SEN to leave school with the life skills they need to participate in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives where possible.
* To involve parents/guardians in decisions about the education of their children.

**9.0 Enrolment**

The Board of Management of St. Dominic’s College welcomes applications from all Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of students including those with Special Educational Needs.

St. Dominic’s has always adopted and continues to adopt a whole school approach to inclusion. A positive ethos and learning environment is encouraged, whereby all students including those with special educational and additional needs, feel welcomed and experience a sense of community and belonging. The school promotes the active engagement of each student in their learning and in the life of the school. There is a commitment to developing students’ academic, social, emotional, spirtitual and independent living skills coupled with a focus on high aspirations and improving outcomes for all. Provision is made for students with special educational needs to gain equal access to learning in the school alongside the students without special educational needs. A special autism class has been opened in September 2022.A second one will open in September 2023.

**10.0 Attendance policy in relation to SEN**

Our school attendance policy outlines our strategies and procedures to promote attendance. Furthermore, our SST team and SEN team discuss attendance with Year heads, Guidance Departments and SNAs. Appropriate interventions can be put in place to encourage attendance.

**11.0 Procedures for transferring students from primary school include the following:**

• Pre-entry contact is made between our school and the incoming students, and their parents or guardians. Meetings with the sixth class teachers, principals and SET from main feeder schools happen in May. The SEN team arrange meetings with parents of incoming students where appropriate.

• A good information flow between the feeder primary school and our school is necessary, particularly in relation to students’ achievement, learning strengths, and material covered at primary level. In St. Dominic’s College we analyse information such as registration forms, pupil profile forms, 6th class summer reports, education pupil passports and educational psychological assessments. Transmission and receipt of this information is generally regarded as confidential and disseminated on a need to know basis.

• An information session is had at the start of the academic year to enable teachers, SNAs and Year heads to gain an understanding of the teaching and learning approaches that characterise students’ experiences in primary school in order to help them to make connections with and build on the learning that has taken place in primary school.

• We provide open days (on site and virtual) parents’ evenings, induction events, transfer programmes, tours for classes from main feeder schools, tours for individual and small groups as required. St. Dominic’s students visit sixth class primary pupils to carry out project work in areas such as German and Paired Reading.

St. Dominic’s school provides class tutors and student mentors in the form of prefects and the Big Sister programme.

• A positive school climate that encourages good relations among students and between students and teachers is fostered.

• Students are placed in mixed-ability groupings in first year based on results from the CAT 4 assessments that are carried out in May of sixth class.

• The school has a clear and effective anti-bullying policy. The students and parents are made aware of this anti- bullying policy and of the anti-bullying resources that are available on our school website.

• The availability for all students of a variety of subjects, including subjects with a practical emphasis such as Home Economics and Science, Physical Education, Art and Music.

• The careful monitoring of students’ progress to identify those who need extra support through teacher feedback and school reports on Vsware.

• The provision to parents and guardians of accessible information on all aspects of first year. The school provides accessible information in the following formats: school brochures, school term reports, newsletters, school website, emails, texts, evening meetings and access to their personal VS ware account.

Upon transitioning into first year all incoming students avail of an induction programme. This programme was designed in conjunction with An Forbairt.

**12.0 Transition from post primary setting to a post school setting**

The school staff can make a significant contribution to facilitating a student’s transition to their new setting by making relevant information and documents available to parents and, as appropriate, to the management of the new setting.

**13.0 Procedures for identification, allocation and implementation of SEN support. Also included below are models of SEN support.**

In St. Dominic’s College we employ a staged approach to supporting students. The NEPS Continuum of support provides structure for this and is outlined below:



Allocation of Support for Students

The NCSE Continuum of Support model is used to guide the allocation of extra support for students.

This divides into three levels of support:

***Whole School and Classroom Support for All***

* This involves preventative and proactive approaches in whole school settings across all subjects and students.

Format:

* Building relationships and positive rapport with students.
* Providing diverse learning opportunities.
* Having a code of behaviour.
* Providing learning intentions and outcomes during class.
* Systems to monitor students – rewards, awards and sanctions.
* Student Council initiative and Student Voice Forum initiative as well as several other forums.
* Assessment for learning (AFL) techniques used in class.
* Differentiation in class with mixed ability groupings.

***School Support for Some***

* This involves response to group or individual needs in small group or 1 to 1 settings.
* This is for students who do not respond to whole school strategies sufficiently and need more support.
* A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which are short-term (weeks – end of term), while others are longer term (whole school year).

Format:

* Provide 1 to 1 literacy and/or numeracy support.
* Provide 1 to1 subject specific support.
* Small class groupings for literacy, numeracy and/or subject specific support.
* In these 1 to 1’s/small groups specific key skills that the student(s) need support in are targeted.
* Leaving Certificate Applied Programme offered in school.
* Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme offered in school.

***School Support Plus for a Few***

* This level involves individualised and specialised support for a small number of students generally in a 1 to 1 setting.
* Literacy and numeracy are the focus of most support.
* Support is provided to equip students with particular life skills dependent on the need.
* In certain cases, subject support can also be the focus.
* In specific cases, social and organisational support may be given.

Format:

* Access to Special Needs Assistant(s) (SNAs).
* Individual Support Plans.
* Modified Timetable.
* Level 2 Learning Programme offered in school.
* Access to differentiated resources specific to their needs.
* 1 to 1 support.
* Applications made on behalf of student for assistive technology.
* Access to support classrooms specific to their needs.
* Communication book between school and parents.
* Applications made on students’ behalf for RACE
* Providing information on student for their DARE applications.

**Procedures and criteria for selecting students for learning support**

**Identifying 1st year Students for Support**

The SEN team:

* Meet with 6th class teachers, Principals and SET from main feeder schools. These meetings take place in May each year preceding the student’s entry to the school.
* Analyse incoming information such as registration forms, pupil profile forms, 6th class summer reports, education pupil passports and Educational Psychological Assessments.
* All incoming First Year students are assessed in the second/third term of the school year preceding entry to St Dominic’s College for screening purposes. This helps to identify learning profiles and possible learning difficulties.
* The assessment used is the CAT 4- Cognitive Abilities Test.
* A catch up session for any students who missed the first CAT 4 test is arranged during their first term in First Year.
* The results are compiled and analysed alongside information previously collected.
* 1st year students complete the New Group Reading Test in September of 1st year.
* The results are compiled and analysed alongside information previously collected.
* Using the Continuum of Support Model, students are identified according to level of need**.** (School Support Plus, School Support for Some, Support for All).

**Identifying students 2nd – 6th year for Support**

* All of the above information is on file and consulted.
* Liaising with Year Heads, Deputy Principal with SEN responsibility, Student Support Team and mainstream classroom teachers at various times of the year to identify students in need of support.
* Consulting term reports – Christmas, Summer and Mock Exams.
* Diagnostic testing is carried out as required.

**14.0 Assessment**

The purpose of assessment is for one or more of the following reasons:

• to monitor a student’s progress

• to establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in specific subjects

• to guide the formulation of learning and teaching programmes

• to identify students for placement in class groups

• to select students for additional teaching support

• to assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services

• to inform consultations with the school’s NEPS psychologist, and

• to assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional agency for assessment e.g. Psychological assessment or Assessment of Need (AON) or direct intervention

* To identify students eligible to make an application for Reasonable Accommodations in certificate examinations(RACE)

In St. Dominic’s College we use a combination of formal, informal and diagnostic assessments.

Assessments used are in line with Circular 0058/2019.

**Formal methods of assessment** include standardised testing such as CAT 4 and NGRT and certain diagnostic tests. State examinations, such as the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations, and end-of-term school examinations are also formal methods of assessment.

**Informal methods of assessment**

Informal methods of assessment include classroom tests, informal observation and feedback by the teacher and the SNA team, evaluation of homework, informal analysis of students’ language and social development. Such methods are useful for assessing aspects of a student’s general behaviour, social interaction with others, and organisational skills. Informal methods are also useful in monitoring a student’s progress and in diagnosing specific strengths, needs, and learning preferences. Informal assessment can provide valuable baseline information for planning and teaching. Informal assessment methods can be applied in the normal classroom setting, and the information gathered can lead directly to planning for teaching and learning.

**Diagnostic Assessment**

The in-school diagnostic assessment by teachers of students with special educational needs can be carried out through the use of either formal or informal methods of assessment. The objective of diagnostic assessment is to identify the student’s learning strengths and needs. This assessment may be carried out in preparation for the development of a student support plan for an individual student and may

• deal with such areas as literacy, mathematics, and learning needs in other areas of the curriculum

• provide information on the student’s knowledge, skills and learning style on which the development of the student’s learning programme can be based

• provide a basis for discussion with the student and others in regard to the setting of learning goals and objectives in the individual educational plan.

The Diagnostic tests include the following:

For literacy diagnostic testing the WIAT III – Wechsler Individual Achievement Test is administered.

For numeracy diagnostic testing the MALT 4 – Maths Assessment for Learning and Teaching is administered.

For hand writing speed DASH – Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting is administered.

**Referral for psychological assessment.**

The SET monitor students' academic progress along with class teachers, Year Heads and Student Support Team.

At times the need for a psychological assessment may be deemed necessary, this can be due to concerns about a student's lack of progress or evident difficulties. Term assessments, feedback from students, parents, teachers and diagnostic testing can all help evaluate the need for psychological assessment.

These assessments can be conducted by NEPS, outside agencies (HSE)or privately outside the school.

A priority list for NEPS assessments is established each academic year. This is reviewed as the year progresses.

**15.0 The development, implementation and review of individual education files**

In St. Dominic's College some students may have educational files created for them. These are students who have been identified by the SEN team as needing such files to aid the students’ learning and development.

To create these files, information is gathered from a range of sources - subject teachers, year heads, tutors, SET's, the student support team, primary school, assessments, parents and students themselves.

These files are used to help guide strategies and SEN allocation that will be implemented to ensure the student is experiencing success in their learning and development. Where relevant, information from these files is shared with teachers to ensure that they are aware of such strategies that have been adopted for the specific student. In some cases, information from these files is shared with relevant agencies, with parental consent e.g. NEPS.

These files are used as a working document and are updated and referred to on an ongoing basis.

These files are kept in the SEN office in a locked cabinet with the SET having sole access to them.

**16.0 Record keeping**

School records are stored in the Principal’s PA office (locked filing cabinets). SEN assessments are stored in the assessment filing cabinet office in this office.

There is limited teacher access to these files. Management, Guidance and SEN departments have access to these files. Furthermore, other SEN records are stored in the SEN office in a locked filing cabinet.

In the event of an outside agency assessing a student, information from the school may be sought. This is often in the form of student profiles, referral forms, assessing checklists etc. When such forms are completed by the school these forms will be returned to the relevant outside agency directly by the school.

In the event a student with special educational needs transfers from St. Dominic’s College to another school parental permission is required to share confidential SEN information such as assessments with the student’s new school.

**17.0 Accommodations in the physical environment**

The school staff liaise with the visiting teachers for both the hearing impaired and the visually impaired students, as well as consulting with the teachers and parents of these students in feeder schools to plan for and ensure maximum accessibility in our school.

**Wheel chair accessibility:**

The school has a lift near the staff room which allows access to the Lima, and the Columba blocks. In the case of access to the Sienna and Veritas blocks, accommodations have been made to ensure that students are not impeded from attending all classes that are usually based in these blocks. Alternative classrooms are available for students who cannot access Sienna and Veritas blocks. Teachers move to facilitate a student with mobility issues.

There is a ramp into Halla Lydia and there is a wheelchair lift in the reception area. The student entrance is universally designed for access to all. There is a stair lift from St. Patrick’s Hall to the school canteen. There are many wheelchair accessible bathrooms throughout the school.

**Accommodations for Visual Impairment**

**Way finding**

The school provides a map of the full school building. There are internal signposts throughout the school. There are external signposts throughout the campus.

The top step of each stairwell is painted in yellow to help students who are visually impaired to navigate the school.

**Circulation of students throughout the school**

The school operates some one way systems to avoid congestion on corridors and stairs.

Students and staff are encouraged to walk on one particular side of corridors to encourage the flow and movements of staff and students throughout the school.

In some cases noise cancelling headphones may beprovided for students with SEN who find circulation and attendant noise overwhelming.

**External recreational areas**

The school has a very large campus with 2 gated exits. The school has one fully enclosed courtyard and other courtyards are partially enclosed.

**Assistive technology.**

Applications are made on behalf of students to the NCSE where appropriate. When assistive technology is granted it can be in the following forms:

Laptops and specialised software

C pen

Audio Microphone

Accommodations are made to ensure that the devices are fully charged and accessible in all classes.

**18.0 Provision of opportunities for students with special educational needs to gain access to learning in the school alongside students without special educational needs.**

Students with special educational needs in St. Dominic's College, in accordance with their abilities and special educational needs, are provided with opportunities to
participate in a meaningful way in the full range of activities in the classroom.

St. Dominic's College strives to create a teaching and learning environment that is characterised by structure and organisation.  Strategies that incorporate clear objectives for teaching and learning and that engage students and motivate them to work purposefully towards a learning goal are implemented across the school. Students with special educational needs are involved in learning tasks that are presented at an appropriate level, with adequate time given for completing the task; students are permitted to present their work in a variety of ways, and opportunities are provided for the application and generalisation of new knowledge and skills in a variety of situations.

Teachers are made aware of the, The NCCA Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities, which provides detailed guidance for teachers in relation to curriculum differentiation in the various subject areas.

Students with special educational needs in St. Dominic's College have access to education for a full school day, that is, 28 hours of instruction per school week with typically 6 hours of instruction per school day, and for a full school year, that is, 167 days per school year (166 days from 2023 due to the new St Bridget’s Day Bank holiday. The school management ensures that the appropriate structures exist in the school for encouraging and facilitating the attendance of students with special educational needs. The school investigates the reasons or circumstances that give rise to a student not being able to attend school for the full school day or the full school year, so that support and accommodations can be provided to maximise the student’s attendance, participation, and learning.

It is recognised that in order to provide an education of the highest quality to the full cohort of students, including students with special educational needs, teachers should access continuing professional development opportunities that are appropriate to their own career stages and that enable them to address the needs of their students.

**19.0 Procedures by which students are enabled to select an appropriate programme for state examinations and to make suitable choices.**

St Dominic’s College offers the following programmes:

Junior Cycle

L2LP

Transition year programme

Leaving cert established

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Leaving Certificate Applied

A prospectus is offered to all incoming first years and students transitioning to senior cycle.

Information sessions are offered to students and their parents around subject choices and programme choice in school and at evening meetings. These information sessions are provided by the programme co-ordinators, the guidance team and subject teachers.

The school has a Guidance department that assists students and parents in this endeavour.

Open nights both virtual and physical enable students to select an appropriate programme

**20.0 Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

* Supporting learning is the collaborative responsibility of all. It is envisaged that the Board of Management, principal teacher, classroom teachers, Special Education Teachers, SNAs, parents and children will all contribute to the development and implementation of the school’s policy on Inclusive and Special Education.

**Role of the Board of Management:**

- The Board of Management has the responsibility for overseeing the development, implementation and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of students with special educational needs. In this regard the board should:

• make arrangements for the preparation of a school plan that lays down the objectives and the measures that will ensure equality of access to and participation in all aspects of the activities of the school by students with special educational needs to the greatest extent practicable

• arrange for the publication of the school policy on the education of students with special educational needs. This document includes the school’s policy on the admission and participation of students with special educational needs and the arrangements for identifying these students and for providing for them in the school. Boards of management should note that enrolment and admissions policies that seek to exclude students with special educational needs are contrary to the policy of the Department of Education and Science and are prohibited in recent legislation. (See sections 1.9.2 and 2.4.1.)

• arrange for periodic reviews of the range of curriculum provision within the school to ensure that suitable programmes are on offer to all students, including those with special educational needs

• ensure that reasonable accommodations are made within the school for students with special educational needs

• contribute to the development of awareness among teachers, non-teaching staff members and students of the needs of students with special educational needs and of their particular responsibilities for the inclusion of these students in the school

• provide support for in-career development opportunities for teachers in special education

• arrange for the storage, dissemination and transfer of confidential reports and other records relating to students with special educational needs and provide a secure facility for the storage of these documents.

• ensure that the resources available, including additional resources provided by the Department of Education and Science (such as additional teachers and special needs assistants), learning resources and classroom accommodation are used to make appropriate provision for students with special educational needs

The board will ensure that the school staff and parent representatives are consulted in relation to decisions, policies and procedures for the education and inclusion of student with special educational needs.

. **Role of the Principal:**

* ‘The principal has overall responsibility for the school’s learning support programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs’. (Learning Support Guidelines), The Education Act (1998) and the EPSEN Act (2004) have all reiterated this responsibility.
* In St. Dominic’s College, the Principal:
* Assumes overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school’s policy on Inclusive and Special Education in co-operation with the SEN Department, the Deputy principals, Year Heads, the classroom teachers and SNAs.
* The Principal may delegate all or part of this responsibility to other members of staff such as the Deputy Principals, the SEN or Year Head team.
* Monitors the implementation of the school policy on Inclusive and Special Education on an ongoing basis.
* The Principal ensures that parents of children with SEN have the opportunity to meet with the SEN, Year Head and or Deputy Principals to discuss their concerns.
* Looks for new opportunities through following up to date research and linking in with the supports services on how we can offer the best service we can in St Dominic’s College for special and Inclusive Education.
* Ensures that a system is in place to monitor the identification of students for support teaching.
* Oversees the implementation with the Deputy Principal and SEN team of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify students with special educational and additional needs so that these students can be provided with the support they need.
* Encourages continuous professional development of the staff to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of inclusive and special education.
* Informs relevant teachers about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
* Best practice involves the principal meeting with the SEN team at strategic times during the school year and for the Deputy Principal to discharge part of this duty by attending a weekly meeting with the SEN department and reporting back to the Principal and Care Team weekly meeting. At these two weekly meetings we regularly review progress and implementation of the policy.

**Role of the Deputy Principal/s:**

* The role of the Deputy Principal/s is to work with the Principal in establishing and promoting whole school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students including those students with SEN in particular.
* This may involve the Principal delegating authority and responsibility to the Deputy Principal/s to work and liaise with other members of staff, parents and other agencies in order to put in place structures and plans to meet the particular needs of students with SEN so as to enable each student to reach their unique individual potential.
* A Deputy Principal is assigned particular responsibility for SEN. The Deputy Principal meets with the SEN team on a weekly basis to help co-ordinate support and discuss relevant SEN issues. Issues are cross referenced the with the SST on a weekly basis, the deputy co-ordinates the SNA scheme, liaises with Senco, and visiting teachers. The deputy overseas the applications for assistive technology, overseas the implementation of race in some school exams such as mock exams.

**The SEN Team**

* There are currently two members of the SEN team, who work with the Deputy Principal who has responsibility for SEN.
* **Role of the SEN Team and the SET (special education teachers)**
* Identifying students with SEN.
* Testing- administering literacy and numeracy testing.
* Devising individual student files based on need in line with the Continuum of Support
* Teaching literacy and numeracy skills.
* Working with management on allocation of SEN support and timetabling of this support.
* Working with management on SEN planning and whole school planning.
* Liaising with Career Guidance Team.
* Liaising with Year Heads and parents.
* Acting as members of the Student Support Care Team.
* Working with Junior Cycle Coordinator regarding implementation of the Level 2 Learning Programme.
* Working with Programme Coordinators regarding selection of students for Programmes and relevant SEN information pertaining to said students.
* Sharing relevant SEN information with staff via meetings, the SEN google shared drive and emails.
* Liaising with main feeder schools with regards to incoming First Year students through meetings and following up on any issues arising from the incoming forms (registration forms, pupil profile forms, 6th class summer reports and pupil passports).
* Liaising with NEPS and other SEN organisations on relevant SEN issues.
* Provide input to Deputy Principal for SNA timetables.
* Take part in relevant CPD.

**Role of the SNA**

* SNAs are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs.
* Special needs assistants are recruited specifically to assist the school in providing the necessary nonteaching services to students with assessed care needs. The allocations of posts are reviewed each year.
* SNAs may be assigned by the school in the case of a student with assessed educational needs compounded by a significant medical need, impairment of physical or sensory function. SNAs may also be assigned to students whose behaviour is such that they are a danger to themselves or others.
* Clear instructions and support are given to the SNAs by the Principal and Deputy Principals in relation to the duties that they are expected to carry out.
* They communicate effectively with teachers on all aspects of the student’s provision and attend meetings relevant to their role.
* When engaged in assisting a student in relation to a particular learning task, this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.
* SNAs normally carry out their duties within the school premises. On occasion an SNA may be required to accompany a student to a venue outside of the school, providing assistance, coordination and reassurance.
* SNAs are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential.
* The duties of the SNA are assigned and supervised by the Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management, in accordance with Circular 30/14. This circular outlines the purpose of the SNA scheme and its implementation. Both primary care needs and secondary care needs are further outlined in this circular.
* There is a Digital Communication book in place which allows for effective communication between parents and the SNA team. The SNA team regularly share information on the student’s progress and any concerns they may have.

**Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

As per section 9c of the Education Act 1998 all students receive appropriate guidance, i.e. vocational, educational or personal.

In relation to SEN the Guidance Department will:

* Liaise with the SEN Department in many areas and work closely together.
* Require testing and additional information from SEN in the following areas: Educational assessments, RACE and DARE. This also involves completing forms and engaging in meetings to gain more information on the student’s profile.
* Address referrals made by the SEN department. The Guidance Counsellor may provide support to students who may have emotional or behavioural issues (linked to learning difficulties or recent diagnosis).
* There is constant communication between the SEN department and the Guidance Counsellors at the SST meetings. The Guidance Counsellors are involved in meetings with Educational Psychologists and in the development of our SEN policy.
* Help to conduct the incoming First Year meetings with the Primary schools to gather information on the students.
* Coordinate the testing of the incoming First Year students.

**Role of the LCA coordinator**

* Collaborate with SEN team in identifying potential LCA candidates.
* Investigate individual needs of LCA students with specific educational needs through engagement with student, parents, SEN team, class teachers, Year Heads and Guidance Counsellors.
* Ensure the LCA teaching team has an opportunity to attend CPD with LCA focus and SEN needs within LCA to ensure teaching and learning experience can be adapted to specific needs.
* Encourage the teaching team in LCA to use differentiated teaching and learning approaches for students sharing success criteria where appropriate.
* Devise strategies to benefit students with SEN as part of module planning and overall LCA planning.
* Seek clarification on SEN needs and relevant exemptions for LCA students by liaising with Management, SEN team and Guidance Counsellors.
* Meet regularly with the LCA teaching team to monitor progress and provide feedback.
* Communicate with Year Heads to observe and monitor students’ participation and engagement in the LCA programme.
* Monitor work experience which provides a hands on learning opportunity especially beneficial to SEN students

**Role of the Year Heads**

* The Year Head refers students for additional supports that the SEN team may be able to put in place.
* The Year Head refers students based on progress reports and other methods of feedback from teachers such as formal term reports.
* The Year Head communicates with parents/guardians who may highlight that there is a need for support in a subject, based on student ability and ongoing results.
* The Year Head consults with the subject teacher and SEN team in the cases where students themselves seek support in a subject. Year Head meetings may also provide additional information to aid this process.

**Role of the subject teachers**

The role of the subject teachers:

* To make themselves aware of the special educational needs of students in their classes by consulting the SEN folder.
* Differentiate their teaching so that these students can learn in the mainstream class and reach the targets set out for them.
* Familiarise themselves with the different strategies that correspond with the different types of needs and conditions that students may have.
* Be familiar with assistive technology and know how to use it if the need arises.
* Engage in continuous professional development to ensure the teacher is aware of the latest research and developments in this area.

**Role of the Parent**

Parents can shed valuable light on their child’s strengths, needs, learning differences and learning styles and they can play an active part in the development, implementation and review of their child’s education and progress.

The role of the parent is:

* To share information such as reports and exemptions with the school. Parents help the school by keeping relevant staff informed of any concerns they may have about their child’s progress.
* To work in a collaborative fashion with the Year head and support staff and teams to help with their child’s progress.
* To regularly check the school journal and Vsware for communication about their child’s progress. In the case of certain students who have access to the SNA scheme, parents will be supportive partners in the use of the Digital Communications book, that SNAs use for regular communication.

**Role of the Student Support Team**

A student support team is a central part of the student support system in a school. It is the overarching team concerned with the progressing of actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students. It is a mechanism through which many of the existing student supports are co­ordinated and planned.

 A student support team acts as a school hub, bringing coherence to the support system by coordinating the valuable work of departments, teams and/or groups such as the Special Education Needs (SEN) department, along with guidance and pastoral staff. School Leadership also has a significant role guiding and supporting the school’s student support team.

What the SST is:

An opportunity to work collaboratively at a weekly meeting of principal, deputy principals, guidance counsellors, SEN team, Chaplain and pastoral care team, in a supportive way to address the social, emotional, behavioural and academic needs of all students

In St. Dominic’s College the core purpose of the SST is

* To focus support re. students’ social and emotional development
* To implement actions that are preventative, proactive and reactive to students’ social and emotional development
* To look holistically and systematically at wellbeing within the school community.

Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools; A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing and Existing Team (2021).

**21.0 Links with external agencies**

St. Dominic’s has fostered and maintained positive links with a significant number of outside agencies. These include:

* CAMHS
* Clinical Psychologists
* Daughters of Charity
* Dragon Fly training.
* JCT
* Jigsaw
* NCSE
* NEPS
* Occupational Therapists
* PDST
* Relevant HSE departments
* SENO
* Speech and Language Therapists
* State Examinations Commission
* Visiting teacher for visually impaired students
* Visiting teacher for hearing impaired students

This list is not exhaustive, and the school will develop further links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate**.**

**22.0 Link to other policies**

Attendance policy

Child protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Anti- Bullying policy

Attendance policy

RSE policy

Admission policy

Assessment and reporting policy

Code of Behaviour policy

Data protection policy

Educational Tours policy

Guidance policy

LCA admission policy

Privacy policy

School improvement plan

Remote teaching and learning policy

Transition year admission policy

Vetting Policy

Critical incident policy

**This policy was ratified:** 6th December 2022.

**Date of new review:** December 2025 unless change is required before then.

 Frances Cooke

Chairperson of the Board of Management Dec 6 2022

 Ann Cameron

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management Dec 6 2022