

# **Ballinteer Community School**

## **SEN Policy**

### **1 Aim**

BCS seeks to provide inclusive education as described in Section 2 of the EPSEN Act of 2004:

A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with—

- (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or
- (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.

### **2 Mission Statement**

We aim to support students with Special Educational Need (SEN) within a mainstream second level school environment. The purpose of this support is to enable each student to reach their potential and 'level the playing pitch' when they sit state examinations. The SEN Department operates within values and scope of the Ballinteer Community School Mission Statement.

### **3 The SEN policy is intended to be read in conjunction with all of BCS's other policy documents and national initiatives, including:**

- . Admission Policy
- . Guidance Policy
- . Anti Bullying policy
- . SPHE Policy
- . Code of Behaviour
- . The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies
- . School Health and Safety Policy
- . All other Ballinteer Community School policies.

## 4 Definition of Special Educational Need

BCS provide supports for students in both the low incidence, high need category and the high incidence, low need category as outlined below:

Low Incidence, High Need	High Incidence, Low Need Category
Physical Disability	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (Please see footnote.)
Hearing Impairment	Borderline Mild General Learning Disability
Visual Impairment	Mild General Learning Disability
Severe Emotional Disturbance (Please see footnote.)	Specific Learning Disability
Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders	
Assessed Syndrome	
Specific Speech and Language Disorder	
Multiple Disabilities: Please note that Multiple Disabilities will have to be assessed individually.	
<b>Note: EBD and Severe EBD can only be supported if the student is regularly attending Child Psychiatric Services (EG Lucena) or medicated.</b>	

**BCS does not currently cater for Moderate General Learning Disability or Severe/Profound General Learning Disability as presently all students must partake in mainstream classes with a maximum of 5 hours per week with a Resource Teacher.**

## 5 Roles within the SEN Department

### Resource Teachers:

- Tailor individual educational programmes to the needs of students with low incidence high need SEN. They provide the specialist teaching and support

to enable to students to successfully participate in mainstream second level education and grow in independence.

### **Learning Support Teachers**

- Provide subject specific teaching for students with high incident, low need SEN. They also spearhead the Literacy Initiative.

### **Key Teacher**

- Is a role assumed by Resource or Learning Support Teachers who co-ordinate the provisions for students with high incident, low need SEN, although they may not teach them. They are a point of contact for parents and make the necessary applications for resources and examination accommodations for the students.
- Subject Specific Tuition may be given by a subject specialist teacher.

### **SNAs**

- The role and duties of the SNA are more clearly defined in DES Circular 10/76 and Circular 07/02.

### **Health Service Staff**

- Are funded by the Health Service Executive to look after the personal care of students with physical disabilities and are part of the special unit.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Provide reports and provide vital information to Ballinteer Community School when the student makes application from primary school.
- Maintain regular contact with their son or daughter's Resource Teacher or Key Teacher throughout the student's time in Ballinteer Community School.
- Allow the student to grow in independence and prepare for self advocacy when the student progresses to third level education or employment by changing and adapting the role of parent/guardian as the child in their care matures and their needs change. It is to be expected that the relationship with Ballinteer Community School personnel will also change as the student develops.

## **6 The SEN Register**

The SEN register is a list of students who have special educational needs (SEN). It includes the following information about the students:

- Name
- Strengths
- Category of disability
- Supports provided
- Potential area of difficulty
- Exam accommodations for state and house exams
- Suggested teaching and learning strategies.

## **7 Communication**

Ballinteer Community School recognises that effective communication about the strengths and needs of students with SEN is vital and the Resource Teachers are in regular contact with:

- Teachers
- SNAs
- Guidance Counsellor
- Parents
- Students
- NCSE
- NEPS
- Other outside agencies involved with individual students.

A summary of information about students on the SEN register is disseminated to all teachers in a confidential way that can only be accessed by staff.

## **8 Privacy and Confidentiality**

The SEN department follows best professional practice of keeping personal records such as psychological and medical reports under triple lock, in a locked cabinet, within a locked room in a locked school.

Parents and guardians of SEN students must agree that SEN Dept. personnel will share details of the students' reports with their subject teachers and special needs assistants so as to maximise the educational benefit to the students of their enrolment in BCS .

## **9 Resource Applications**

SEN department staff apply to the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) in the National Centre for Special Education (NCSE) in March and September when applications are accepted. Applications are for the following supports:

- Resource hours
- SNA support
- Assistive Technology
- Transport (physical disabilities only)

For further information, see [HYPERLINK "http://www.ncse.ie/"www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie/)

## **10 Adaptations to Building and Classes for Students with Physical Disabilities**

Application will be made to the Department of Education and Skills for adaptations to the school, including special furniture for students with physical disabilities.

Personal Egress and Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) will be prepared for these students in conjunction with the school safety officer and those on the fire safety team.

## **11 Screening and Testing**

Students are screened for literacy difficulties when they start in Ballinteer Community School and each year in junior cycle in accordance with the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan.

The Resource Teachers and Guidance Counsellor also screen any students who are experiencing difficulties. If indicated the student may then be referred to National Educational Psychological Service for a full assessment.

Third and fifth year students are assessed for examination accommodations (see below).

## **12 Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations (RACE)**

Applications are made to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for RACE in both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate in accordance with the the SEC's guidelines. For further information on reasonable accommodations see [HYPERLINK](#)

["http://www.examinations.ie/reasonable"](http://www.examinations.ie/reasonable)[www.examinations.ie/reasonableaccommodations](http://www.examinations.ie/reasonableaccommodations)

Applications for 3rd year students are made in the October before the student's Junior Cert and applications for Leaving Cert students are made at the end of 5th year.

### **13 Teaching Methodologies and Strategies**

Inclusion is supported by many strategies including:

- Differentiated teaching where the teacher
  - i. Changes the delivery to suit a student
  - ii. Alters the content of the lesson for some students
  - iii. Sets different homework or classwork tasks.
- Team teaching when two teachers co-teach the same class
- Withdrawal of students to a Resource room in small groups.

### **15 Staff Development**

- Disability awareness
- Accessible fonts
- Yearly seminars
- Notice board

### **16 Development and Evaluation of SEN Department**

SEN department staff review their practices annually in terms of best practice and in consultation with school management, subject departments, parents/guardians of SEN students and SEN students. Improvements in procedures follow.

This SEN policy has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management of Ballinteer Community School on the 18 -04-2013.

David O'Connell, Principal.

