

Wesley College

Special Education Needs Policy

1. Aims

Wesley College Dublin is committed to providing an education for its students in a caring and supportive environment. The aim of the College is that all students achieve their full potential. In order to achieve this goal some of our students may require supplementary teaching, additional resources, classroom support or the provision of specialised equipment. In all cases it is the intention to integrate students socially and academically.

2. The Special Needs Team

The Special Needs Team comprises the Special Needs Co-ordinator, Learning Support Teacher, Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. The College Guidance Department may also be involved in this team. The Special Needs Co-ordinator is responsible for the managing and organising of learning support and resource teaching under the direction of the Principal.

3. Definition

The students who fall within the Special Needs definition include

- Pupils with learning difficulties and disorders
- Pupils with physical and sensory disabilities
- Pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders
- Pupils with other special needs

4. Assessment:

All students entering 1st Year are assessed in the following ways:

- Formal testing will be used to assess reading comprehension, verbal reasoning and numerical ability. This will normally take place in February prior to entry into the College.
- The Year Head will endeavour to meet with primary school teachers as part of the assessment process. A Learning Support/Resource Teacher may accompany the Year Head at such a meeting.
- Parents are requested to complete a Pupil Details Form, and to forward to the College information on special needs including reports from a psychologist where this is available.
- Where in-coming pupils are identified as having special needs, staff will meet parents and pupils to build a picture of the individual, their particular strengths and their specific learning difficulties.
- Further formal testing will be carried out again in September to ascertain further needs, where necessary.
- Pupils with special learning difficulties will be further assessed by the Special Needs Team and outside agencies, as considered appropriate, to identify on-going specific needs and to develop appropriate strategies to remediate difficulties.
- This process is continued to Junior Certificate where exam provision, e.g. reasonable accommodation is made in consultation with students / parents / teachers. This process can also be continued in some cases up to Leaving Certificate.

The College will not be in a position to properly assist students with special needs where relevant reports are not submitted, or where information regarding family difficulties are not communicated to the relevant Year Head or Special Needs Co-ordinator.

A Pupil Details Form will also be completed for students entering the College in a year other than 1st Year. Reports concerning special needs will also be requested of parents/guardians in this case.

5. Provision

Learning support provision is seen in the context of a whole school approach. The Special Needs Team takes primary responsibility for learning support provision and provides information to subject teachers as necessary. The aim of each teacher is to develop the individual student to his/her full potential. In addition to this:

- The Special Needs Team will endeavour to provide appropriate levels of support for pupils as part of the whole school approach.
- A number of pupils will be allocated to learning support class(es).
- Pupils with learning difficulties will be withdrawn in small groups where the timetable permits.
- Support teachers may offer learning support in the classroom.
- The Special Needs Team under the direction of the Co-ordinator will liaise with Year Heads and Subject Teachers to advise on particular learning difficulties and suggest strategies for the classroom.
- A student with special needs may be exempt from the study of certain subjects. This will occur following consultation with parents/guardians.

The College is allocated additional teaching hours by the Department of Education and Science on the basis of psychologist reports submitted to the Department in the academic year preceding the year of entry of a pupil. The College may not be in a position to allocate additional support, to exempt pupils from certain subjects or withdraw pupils from normal class where no such report has been completed and submitted in good time.

The level of support provided to a pupil with special needs will be based on the resources allocated from the Department of Education and Science for that pupil and on an assessment of the needs of that pupil undertaken by the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Parents/guardians should be aware that where a pupil is withdrawn from a class for the purposes of special needs support it will not be possible to make good all of the topics missed as a result of absence from the class.

6. Tracking and Communication

A tracking/communication system operates in the College. This includes:

- College and home liaison. The home/school partnership for students with special needs is of considerable importance.
- College and home liaison with outside agencies, e.g. psychologists, speech/language therapists, visiting teachers etc.
- Ongoing communication with subject teachers/class teachers/Year Heads/Deputy Principal/Principal.

7. Role of Special Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating the Special Needs Team in the College and for ensuring the provision of special needs support for all pupils identified as having special needs. In particular the Co-ordinator will:

- Read, interpret and disseminate information from psychological reports, as appropriate
- Work with and support where possible subject teachers who work with pupils with special needs
- Allocate additional teaching hours to pupils, as appropriate
- Organise appropriate teachers for these hours, as appropriate
- Organise the continued testing of pupils, on an annual and individual basis, where deemed necessary

- Liaise with parents, internal support groups, the relevant Year Head and outside bodies, as appropriate
- Source resources for use with special needs pupils
- Organise reasonable examination accommodation, where appropriate
- Seek to identify students with specific learning difficulties.

- Co-ordinate Individual Education Plans

- Keep all records regarding student progress in the area of special needs

8. Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist pupils with disabilities in an educational context. SNAs may be involved in supporting the student both in an academic context within the classroom and in the wider sphere of their personal and social education outside of the classroom.

Their duties are assigned by the Principal and Special Needs Co-ordinator. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal.

Approved by the Board of Management
Wesley College
20th March 2007