

St. Angela's School
Ursuline Convent
Waterford

Special Educational Needs

Statement of Policy

School Mission Statement

St Angela's is a girls' Catholic school which aims to cherish the uniqueness of each individual and to develop the full potential of all members of the school community.

Introduction and Background

St. Angela's School is a post-primary girls' school that operates under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The characteristic spirit of St Angela's is rooted in the central mission of Ursuline education. The school's mission statement stresses the dignity and uniqueness of each person, the importance of courtesy and kindness, and the fostering of courage and confidence to live in justice and truth. Within this mission the school community envisions the shared role of teachers, staff, students, parents and management in educating active citizens for society within an inclusive school community.

Inclusion

St. Angela's School welcomes pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) and, in line with the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, recognises "the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment." We endeavour to ensure that these students are free to participate in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable. The school accepts that no student should be bullied or singled out for unfair treatment as a consequence of her disability. Proactive steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is non-judgemental and supportive.

Refer, too, to the School's Enrolment Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Pastoral Care Policy.

SEN Mission Statement

In line with the overall school mission statement, it is our aim to promote and facilitate a whole-school approach to SEN by recognising and respecting each pupil as a unique individual.

Rationale

This policy aims to outline the commitment which this school has in creating a learning environment that is inclusive and supportive of all pupils in line with our mission statement and within the principles of relevant legislation. We see this policy as a reflection of our current practice.

Aims

The aims of the SEN policy are:

1. Promote the emotional, social, educational and physical well-being of students by developing self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of personal responsibility and the ability to live and work with others;
2. Ensure that all relationships within the school are imbued with a spirit of care and mutual respect;
3. Ensure that education takes place in an inclusive environment;
4. Strive to ensure that when students with SEN leave our school, they take with them the life skills they need to participate in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives;
5. Involve parents/guardians in decisions about the education of their children.

SEN Team & Categories

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
- Physical Disabilities – Dyspraxia, Cerebral Palsy, Amelia
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (Hearing and Visual impairments)
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders – Asperger’s Syndrome
- EAL

Roles and Responsibilities of the SEN Team

Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) (Shared Responsibility 2022: 1st and 6th Ms. McGovern, 2nd and 3rd years Ms. Hogan, 4th and 5th years Mr. Schwartz)

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school’s SEN policy, answering requests for advice from teachers, the co-ordination of provision, including liaising with all teachers involved in Special Education teaching (SET), maintaining a register of all students with special needs, establishing and contributing to CPD training in SEN and liaising with external agencies. Keeping Student Support Plans (SSP) up to date for all relevant students. The SENCO has responsibility for all school matters regarding the SEN students enrolled in the school. This responsibility spans from initial enquires to the school until the student’s graduation.

Support teacher (SET Teacher)

The support teacher has responsibility for consultation with parents, teachers and pupils, diagnostic testing, formative and summative assessing and recording students’ needs and progress, setting specific targets and assisting mainstream teachers in adapting the curriculum where necessary. The support teacher can facilitate the management, organisation and co-ordination of interventions for all students receiving learning support and may, as appropriate, provide advice and support to other staff members. The support teacher also has a responsibility for meeting and advising parents and meeting with relevant professionals. The support teacher keeps a record of the content of the day-to-day classes with any students and how the support is offered.

The Principal

The Principal has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of inclusive school policies and procedures in relation to the education of students with SEN while always taking into account the mission statement. The Principal is available to liaise with the SET teacher and the parents of students with SEN when necessary. The Principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff.

Deputy Principal

The role of the deputy principal 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 with SEN. In particular, this may involve the principal delegating authority and responsibility to the deputy principal to work and liaise with other members of staff, parents and various agencies (including the National Council for Special Education and NEPS) to put in place structures and plans to meet the particular needs of students with SEN so as to enable each student to reach her full potential. Each D. P. has a SENCO assigned to the two years for which they have responsibility.

Mainstream Teachers

Within the framework of a whole-school approach to inclusion, mainstream teachers have the primary responsibility for teaching all students, including students with SEN, within their class groups. The mainstream teacher may become aware of the possibility of general and or specific learning difficulties and will bring this to the attention of the SEN department through the SEN Referral process. Consultation occurs between the mainstream teacher and the SEN teaching team in setting individual student targets and in outlining and recording student progress. The mainstream teacher contributes, in consultation with the SENCO, to the learning targets set out in the SEN student's Student Support Plan (SSP).

Mainstream Teacher with Resource Hours

The role of the mainstream teacher with SET hours is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of the SEN student. Teachers with resources hours liaise with the student's parents/guardians, Learning Support Teacher, and other relevant members of the SEN team as well as with the individual student to assess and formulate individual programmes which provide curricular and other necessary support to the SEN student.

Year Heads and Class Tutors

Each class tutor and year head has a responsibility to his or her own class group /year group. The class tutor is responsible for addressing individual student issues within the class group. The class tutor may refer issues and incidents to the year head who has a wider responsibility. The class tutor and year head take responsibility for early signs of discipline issues within their class group as well as other issues (learning and/or behavioural) that may arise. They are the primary point of contact with parents. The class tutor/year head may refer to or collaborate with the Deputy Principal and the Principal thereafter.

The Guidance Counsellor

The core responsibility of the guidance counsellor is to provide learning experiences that assist students to develop self-management skills that will lead to effective choices and

decisions about their lives. The guidance counsellor's role within the SEN team consists largely of the following functions:

- Referring individual students to the SENCO through the SEN referral system
- Counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Personal and social development
- Career information management
- Consultation with parents and staff
- Consultation with community organisations
- Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience
- Referrals to other professionals and agencies
- Evaluation of the guidance and counselling needs and services
- Assessment, e.g., CAT4 (entrance exam) and DATs (carried out in Transition Year)
- The input that the guidance counsellor has with a student with SEN varies from student to student, depending on personnel circumstances and need.

The Chaplain

The Chaplain is available for guidance and support during the school day.

Students with SEN

Where involvement is appropriate, the student may, in consultation with her parent/guardian:

- Be involved in the SSP meeting
- Provide information about his/her own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns.
- Assist in the identification of priority learning needs, targets and strategies
- Give feedback that will contribute to the monitoring and recording of progress (e.g., Learning Log and SSP).

Special Needs Assistants (SNA)

The SNA has responsibility for the care needs and wellbeing of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promotes independence. The SNA has direct involvement with the student with SEN in that the SNA is there to assist, communicate, encourage and support the student and also to help the student with her organisational skills. The SNA plays a role in keeping the student with SEN focused during class as well as observing the student during the school day.

The SNA also has an essential and valued role in collaboration with the SENCO, SET Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads and Senior Management. The SNA provides information on the student's day-to-day progress during meetings with the SENCO and SET Teacher(s). The SNA is also available to assist the SET Teacher and mainstream teacher as the SNA provides the extra support needed by the student with SEN in a manner of note taking, keeping the student focused and the noting of homework where necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities of External SEN Team

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 SEN.

External Agencies

In some cases external agencies, e. g. NEPS, CRC, Visiting Teachers, may be involved in the assessment and support of a student with SEN and may contribute to the development of an Individual Education Plan or student support plan. Apart from expert advice and support to school staff, the agency is often consulted about individual students. The agency may gather information about a student, her skills and abilities, and may plan a programme of support. This information and support is communicated by means of phone calls, texts, emails, receipt of reports and meetings.

The NCSE Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)

The NCSE SENO may refer a student to the SET class and thereafter may be involved in transferring information regarding the student with SEN from the primary school or second-level school in the case of a transfer between second level schools. SENOs are appointed by the NCSE to provide a direct local service to the parents of children with special educational needs and to schools within geographical areas.

This involves informing the school of the NCSE's annual allocation of resource teaching support and learning support hours according to the new allocation mode, serving as the school's NCSE contact person, identifying the needs of children and deciding on the level of resources the school requires to provide them with an appropriate education service. A SENO reviews and communicates decisions on all applications for Special Needs Assistant support for children with special educational needs. The SENO also assists with applications for transport and Assistive Technology. A SENO can advise schools and parents on the facilities, services, and resources available to assist children with Special Educational Needs.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians, 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 difficulties or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted, parents are consulted and their permission sought, by means of written permission. Parents of students who have been awarded SET are encouraged to contact the SET Teacher as well as the Subject Teacher by means of phone calls, text, email or by having a meeting as issues arise. Communication is encouraged at all times. Parents of students with SEN enrolled in mainstream classes are encouraged to contact the SENCO or class tutor or Learning Support Teacher if they have queries or concerns. Parent-Teacher meetings occur yearly and provide an additional opportunity for parents to speak to all teachers involved in their child's education.

SEN Model of Organisation Identification Process

Students with SEN are identified in the following manner:

Mainstream Students

New Students

The transfer of information in the transition from primary to second-level is very important. The enrolment form requires information pertaining to identifying students with SEN. Each year an open day is held to assist parents and the school with the process of sharing information about prospective students. Parents are requested to inform the school of any special educational, medical or other need. This information is provided by means of the school enrolment form and the interview process.

Students with SEN may be identified following consultation with the feeder primary schools. Our Guidance Counsellors and SENCO visit feeder primary schools in order to ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary school for all students, including students with special educational needs. Regular communication exists between the management of St. Angela's School and the feeder primary schools within the area.

Students in need of extra support are identified using Educational Psychological Reports as well as standardised tests, including Drucondra, Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4), Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT4), Dyslexia Screening Test (DST). WIAT II. Refer, too, to Circulars.

Parents of students with SEN can also make contact with the school. Once contact is made, the SENCO is available to the parent for further contact and information.

SENCO Referral

Existing students

If parents/guardians have concerns related to their daughter's educational needs, they may contact the school secretary who will direct them to the appropriate department.

Classroom teachers, tutors and year heads may become concerned and highlight the need for a student to be considered for SET in the event of noticeable difficulties arising in class. This concern is brought to the attention of SENCO through the SEN Referral process. The SENCO informs school management. Subsequently, the SENCO may carry out assessment, if necessary, with permission of parents/guardians, and may recommend additional supports. In the case of extra care needs, the SENCO may recommend that parents, in conjunction with the school, apply to the school's SENCO for SNA support.

If a student has not been identified as having a special educational need until after enrolment, the permission of parents/guardian is sought to have the student assessed by the appropriate professionals (NEPS Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, etc.). The student may receive support until such an assessment is carried out; this is allocated on a basis of need and resources available.

The SEN and Guidance Departments follow the Department of Education and Skills Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit's guidelines and recommendations on Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools from May 2017 in Circular Letter 0035/2017. This circular provides a list of assessment instruments, including ability and achievement tests and web-based resources that are approved for use in guidance and/or learning-support contexts in post-primary schools. Such assessment instruments are used to assist the Core Team in identifying students who have additional educational needs as well as using term reports and progress reports of students progress at that moment in time.

The New Special Education Teaching Allocation Model

The school follows the Department of Education and Skills Special Education Section's new Special Education Teaching allocation model, as per Circular No 0014/2017. The new Special Education Teaching allocation provides a single unified allocation for special educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. This single allocation allows all schools to provide special education teaching support for all students who require such support in their schools. Schools deploy resources based on each student's individual learning needs.

SEN Classroom

SEN students are identified in the following manner for enrolment into the learning hub:

- Referral from Primary School with appropriate assessment.
- Parental referral and concern by means of the school enrolment form and/or a meeting with the relevant personnel within the school.
- Subject teacher referral.
- SENO referral to the school.
- In-house referral system

Special Class (introduced in academic year 2022-2023)

The purpose of the special class is to impart students with a diagnosis of ASD with skills that will work for them throughout their lives, allowing them to participate in society at a level commensurate to their ability and to live fulfilling lives as independently as possible. This class was opened at the beginning of the 2022/2023 academic year.

Aims and Objectives:

- To provide a whole school response to the needs of students with ASD within the overall ethos of the school.
- To provide a safe, nurturing and happy environment in which students are guided and supported.
- To provide a predictable and consistent environment where students' needs are implicitly understood and met, thus reducing students' anxieties.
- To identify and seek solutions to difficulties that students experience as early and as thoroughly as possible.
- To encourage parental co-operation and involvement and to keep parents/guardians regularly informed of progress.
- To work in partnership with parents/ guardians, students, the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and other outside professionals.
- To set achievable and manageable targets for students attending the ASD Class.
- To employ a variety of resources, equipment and teaching strategies to ensure students can access the curriculum at a suitable level.
- To provide access to an extended curriculum whereby students are taught in the areas of social skills, life skills, self-management and self-regulation skills.
- To attempt to meet the sensory needs of students in ASD class using available resources and surroundings.
- To promote and encourage the integration of all students in the ASD Class within the mainstream school.

Role of the ASD class teacher

- To support the delivery of the mainstream curriculum in a way that meets the needs of students with ASD, this will include programmes on the areas of Social Skills, Life Skills and stress management strategies.
- Development of a Student Profile which is updated as the student travels through their years in the school.
- Assessing and recording students' needs and progress.
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each student in the form of the Student Support Plan.
- Direct teaching of the students on a one-to-one basis or group setting within the ASD Class.

- Collaborating with class teachers to support inclusion in the mainstream classes.
- Monitoring and managing student's behaviour and progress.
- Meeting with relevant outside professionals as required for the student's development and wellbeing.
- Co-ordination of timetables and tasks for SNA's.
- Ensuring availability of a comfortable space for students at break and lunchtimes.
- Regular and ongoing communication with SNAs in relation to students' progress
- Meeting and maintaining regular communication with parents/ guardians.

Models of SEN Support

- Team Teaching
- Support Teaching: Through the New Special Education Teaching Allocation Model, High-Incidence Learning Support, including EAL, Low-Incidence Resource Teaching Support, Support of Subject Teacher through differentiation.
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Special Class (introduced in 2022-2023 academic year)
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Curricular reduction
- Cross-Age Peer Tutoring

Transition-year students volunteer to serve as peer tutors in the Learners' Hub as well as in subject classes in the junior cycle. Some of the benefits of the Peer Tutoring programme: the learner gains from the experience and knowledge of the helper; the helper reinforces what she learned for the JC Exam (after all, teaching is the highest form of learning); the helper earns credits for the community involvement requirement for the Gaisce Award; develops self-esteem for the helper and learner; the helper and the learner enjoy the experience; the school can offer individualized attention to a greater number of students.

Student Support Plan (Also referred to as Individual Education Plan—IEP): Collaboration for Success

This is the overall plan for the holistic development of the student, it is started when the student arrives into the Ursuline and is a detailed description of where the student is with their education it outlines clearly their strengths and weaknesses what their thoughts are of how things are working and outlines the priorities that we as a school needs to set for the coming year.

According to “The Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines” (2007):

“The individual education plan (IEP) is an effective process through which a student's special educational needs can be addressed and by which an appropriate education can be provided for him/her.”

The IEP process involves:

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details, using the NEPS template “My thoughts on School”.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- SEN provision
- Priority Learning Needs
- Identifying the student’s strengths and abilities
- Setting targets for each priority learning need
- Identifying the strategies and resources required
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances.

“The Inclusion of Students with SEN Post-Primary Guidelines” [2007] Refer to pages 96-100.

An SSP is put in place for each student who has been identified as needing extra support in the form of Resource Teaching Support. The following stakeholders contribute to formation of the student’s IEP:

- Student with SEN
- Parent/Guardian
- Class Tutor
- Subject Teachers
- Resource Teacher
- Learning Support Teacher
- SNA
- Relevant agencies, as previously mentioned

Collaboration for Success: SSP

The Classroom Teacher

- The teacher is the leader of learning within his or her classroom and has primary responsibility for all the students in his or her class, including students with special education needs
- The SSP’s primary purpose is a teaching and learning plan.
- The Classroom teacher consults and works with the student’s SET teacher(s)

The SET Teacher

- The SET teacher consults and works with the student’s classroom teacher(s)
- The SET teacher teaches students with special educational needs on a 1:1 withdrawal basis, small group withdrawal, and team teaching, when appropriate.

The role of the SET Support Teacher [from Circular SP.ED 20/17]

A Support Teacher assists schools in providing support for children with special educational needs arising from disability by:

- (a) Assessing and recording child needs and progress;
- (b) Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal;
- (c) Direct teaching of the children, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class;
- (d) Team-teaching --so long as the children concerned are deriving benefit from it;
- (e) Mentoring colleagues on teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and suitable software and a range of other related matters;
- (f) Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher, as necessary;
- (g) Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the childrens' interest - e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers, special school or special class teachers.

The Student

- The student with special education needs is an active, capable learner.
- The special education needs of many students can be met by class and school- wide strategies.
- All students needing support will have a learning plan that feeds into a SSP. Those at the top of the continuum of support should have a more detailed IEP.
- Student engagement, learning and achievement depend on the relationship between the teacher and the student.
- Student voice (or supported voice) will shape the IEP so the sense of the person is not through prescriptive goals. Students can monitor their own learning through their IEP goals. Smart targets should be set.
- Schools' and teachers' attitudes and willingness to 'stand in the shoes' of the student with special education needs are critical to students' progress and achievement.
- IEPs are a way of adapting the school curriculum to fit the student rather than expecting the student to fit the school curriculum.

The SSP

- Targets are sometimes called behavioural, instructional or performance objectives. They should describe the knowledge, skills or understanding that a pupil is expected to have by the end of a particular time period.
- **Targets should be SMART:**
 - S** – specific (behaviour, conditions, criteria)
 - M** – manageable and measurable
 - A** – achievable and agreed
 - R** – realistic and reviewable
 - T** – time bound
- **Targets should include:**
 1. **Behaviour:** the observable action; what the pupil must do to demonstrate mastery of the task (e.g. “say the alphabet”)

2. **Conditions:** the conditions under which that behaviour is expected to occur (e.g. “given the oral direction, say the alphabet from memory”)
 3. **Criteria for Acceptable Performance:** to what extent the pupil will be able to perform the action (e.g. “...in thirty seconds with 100% accuracy”)
- Also, the author(s) of SSP targets takes into account additional considerations: What would it be like to walk in the shoes of the student? Why would the student want to pursue a particular target? Does the work towards the target improve or enhance the student’s quality of life?
 - Goals from the SSP must be embedded in everyday classroom practice so the SSP becomes a living, working document which is updated to reflect changing needs for that student within the classroom, school or community.
 - The SSP team agrees the frequency of review of the SSP, but the plan must reflect current teaching and learning needs.
 - SSP formats may be shaped by team agreement according to student’s needs. The final decision belongs to the parent and the classroom teacher.
 - SSPs inform but do not replace the school’s obligations to report to parents.

Timetabling

Planning ahead for allocation of SEN hours will happen the last term of the previous year, some allocation will roll over to the next year eg: Exemption from Irish. A focus on the exact needs of the student and compiling of this information is required so that proper planning will be in place by Sept of the following year. Individual SEN may have to wait until the completion of the Master timetable.

Access to Curriculum

Mainstream

Some students with SEN are exempt from the study of additional languages. Where the allocation allows those with exemptions and SEN needs should get SEN at this allotted time.

Access to Resources

Resources are accessed and allocated in the following way:

- SEN Library
- Tablets and headphones.
- Sharing of school facilities
- Department budget available for purchase of equipment and computer programmes
- Timetabling of specialist rooms
- Regular discussions regarding resource allocation

Examinations and RACE

Applications are made for Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations (RACE) provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. The following are the range of accommodations available to the students which

are applied for by the RACE Coordinator (post holder and member of the SEN Core Team) and Deputy Principal as per circular criteria. RACE applications are submitted to The State Examinations Commission (SEC). The SEC determines whether or not accommodations are granted on an individual basis.

- Reader
- Scribe
- Reader and Scribe
- Tape Recorder
- Special Centre
- Spelling and grammar waiver in the language subjects
- Extra Time
- Use of Computer

Communication

SEN Team

SENCO all have time allocated on their timetable for Planning.

SET teacher, the SENCO and SNAs communicate on an ongoing basis, sometimes formally and sometimes informally.

The SEN Team meet regularly.

- Meetings with the School Psychologist, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Physiotherapist and SEN classroom teacher occur; these are arranged on a need basis by means of a phone call or email.
- Meetings take place between class teachers and SEN classroom teacher. These can be informal or formal.
- Teachers may organise meetings with the Learning Support Teacher regarding students enrolled in mainstream education.
- SEN team attend care team meeting on a regular basis.
- Meetings with outside agencies, including SENCO, NEPS, SESS, Visiting Teachers, etc.
- In addition there are also staff meetings, in-service training days and staff development days.

Register of Students with SEN is placed in the SSP folder for each Year.

At the beginning of the new school year all teachers and members of the SEN team receive a detailed confidential register of all pupils with SEN. This register includes:

- Name of pupil
- Year/class group of pupil
- EAL
- Language study exemption
- Category of difficulty
- Potential provision for State Exams
- Whether or not an educational psychological report is on file in the school

Liaising with parents

Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:

- School Open Day

- Parent-teacher meetings. These occur on a yearly basis and are organised by school management
- Extra meetings scheduled by appointment
- Letter to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone calls
- Text messages
- Meetings with Multi-disciplinary team
- Meetings involving community agencies
- Meetings with Principal and SEN Co-ordinator
- IEP Process

Informing Teachers and Support Staff--Health and Safety of Students with Special Educational Needs

- At the beginning of each school year, members of the Core SEN Team meet with all support staff to bring to their attention any concerns related to health and safety of particular students with special educational needs.
- Teachers are informed through the list of students with health/medical concerns
- Support staff and teachers are updated when new information becomes available.

Record Keeping

At present a full record of educational psychological reports are kept in the Deputy Principal's Office.

Records of meetings and documents are kept in the locked Staff Room in SSP files. Electronic files are kept in the school's VSWARE system.

Enrolment and Assessment

Admissions Policy

Our school welcomes students with SEN as per the school's admissions policy.

Transition from primary level to second level

Prior to the Open Night, parents are encouraged to meet with the SEN team to discuss any specific needs of their child, either currently identified at primary level or concerns they may have going forward to post- primary.

The Principal and the SENCO make contact with and visit feeder schools enrolling new students. These visits help to both profile St. Angela's School and gather information about students requiring support. All relevant documentation is requested to be forwarded to the school, along with any advice and/or recommendations. This allows the school to put an appropriate plan in place to meet the needs of the incoming students from the start of the new school year.

SEN Transition Support Programme

St. Angela's School has contact with all feeder schools within the community. Once an enrolment application has been made, parents/guardians and their daughter are invited to a private interview/information meeting. A member of the SEN Team conducts the interview to

gather additional information, get to know the student and to pass on information about the school, its policies and expectations and to answer any questions.

In the spring of each year, 6th class students with SEN who are enrolled in the school are invited to attend an orientation programme that is organised and run by the Resource/Learning Support Teachers along with 1st Year Learning Support students. During the orientation, 1st year students make presentations to the incoming students and take their questions, the incoming students are shown around the school, and everyone enjoys some light refreshments while getting to know each other and making new friends.

During the transition programme, SEN students and SNAs are invited to tour the school and to meet with staff and students to help them begin to familiarise themselves with our large school.

Entrance Exam

All SEN students are expected to take the entrance exam. Cognitive Ability Test 4 (CAT4) A modified exam may be offered, depending upon the student's level of ability.

The purpose of assessment of needs and abilities is to identify learning difficulties that have not yet come to light, to ensure a true mixed ability class setting and to facilitate option choice where appropriate. As a policy, we do not disclose assessment test results to parents unless requested to do so. However, where a concern arises, parents are contacted and a student's individual needs are discussed. All assessment occurs with parents'/guardians' permission.

Liaising with outside agencies and the community

It is often the role of the SENCO, to attend meetings and liaise with a number of out-of-school agencies.

Further Areas for School Development Planning

1. Engage more fully with the NEPS Continuum of Support model, in conjunction with our Guidance Department. Also, develop systems of in-house assessment in order to improve on the scope and range of tracking progress of students with special educational needs as well as identifying students who require extra support. Planning should take into consideration what is already being done in this area in the school and should be informed by the Department of Education and Skills Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit's guidelines and recommendations on Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools from May 2017 in Circular Letter 0035/2017. Further, provisions for storing assessment data must meet the obligations relating to access to stored data under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2013, associated regulations, and the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.
2. Continue to build on the consolidation of the Core Team, which is now comprised of five(5) teachers. In other words, Members of the Core Team should teach the majority of Resource Support classes. Students who require extra support in areas outside the Core Team's realm of experience are assigned Resource classes in order to meet individual students' needs. Learning support classes are taught by Resource teachers and mainstream teachers. This planning aim is in line with recommendations published in the 27 March 2009 Whole-School Inspection Report to limit the wider

team to a smaller number of teachers: “In parallel with this planning process, school management should focus on the identification of a core team to deliver these supports and to limit the wider team to a smaller number of teachers. It should be possible within this structure to provide ongoing professional development for this group to build skills, capacity and expertise. This expertise should then be communicated to subject teachers generally to assist in the development of differentiated practice in classrooms to support the ongoing inclusion of these students in lessons.”

3. Improve our in-house referral and SSP systems, focusing a step-by-step process:
Who? Where? When? How?
4. Extra provisions for students who are exceptionally able or gifted. Currently, during first-year “class clinics” (attended by principals, counsellors, SEN coordinator, class tutor) students who are exceptionally able are identified and this info is disseminated to teachers. The needs of students who are exceptionally able or gifted are provided for through differentiated teaching and learning. Additionally, students in this group, along with all students in our school, are encouraged to participate in extension learning opportunities, such as Build a Bank, Young Scientist, Chess Club, TY Peer Tutoring, study abroad (France), DCU Talent Search, etc. Explore and implement additional ways of meeting the additional educational needs of students in this group.
5. Continuing profession development of staff (Core Team, Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and mainstream teachers in the area of SEN).

Policy to be reviewed: Annually

Policy reviewed and revised: September 2022.