

Title of Policy

Special Educational Needs' Policy of The Christian Brothers' Secondary School, Charleville – Draft Document.

Scope.

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of students who have special educational needs. **See Appendix No.1.**

The policy applies to students who are exceptionally gifted, students with learning difficulties, students who may need additional help or support to enable them to derive the maximum benefit from the school.

Link to Mission Statement.

The policy springs from the school's mission statement, which is a commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all, in creating a learning environment within the available resources.

Rationale.

The aim of the policy is:

- * To develop a whole school approach
- * To support C.B.S.'s goal of full inclusion
- * To provide appropriate assessment of the needs of students who may have special educational needs.
- * To assess the school's capacity to cater for the needs identified.
- * To specify what additional resources may be required by the student or by the school.

Legal Framework:

Section 9 of the Education Act 1998 specifies that,

“A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to ensure that the educational needs of all students including those with special educational needs are identified and provided for.”

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 states *“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.*

Goals.

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

- * To identify the special needs of all incoming students.
- * To review the special educational needs of current students.
- * To seek to provide for the needs identified.

Within the constraints of available resources, all students with special educational needs who are admitted to the school shall have access to, participate in and benefit from an education suitable to their needs.

The school shall seek adequate resources, equipment and accommodation from the Department of Education and Science and other relevant agencies. The school will make every effort to maximise the resources available to students with special educational needs. These include visiting teachers, resource teachers, special needs assistants, therapists, psychologists, counsellors, technical aid and equipment etc. The school will endeavour to provide access and accommodation for such personnel in the school buildings.

Assessment of Need:

Using a battery of tests, which include screening tests, diagnostic tests, psychological assessments and information from parents, a committee consisting of principal, deputy principal, guidance counsellor and learning support teacher will assess the special needs of students upon entry to the school.

Reassessment and re-evaluation with teacher observation and parental consultation will be an ongoing process.

The school will make an assessment of its capacity to respond adequately to these needs.

Special Needs Provision:

The school endeavours to give every student access to a full curriculum. Learning support may be provided for those students identified as experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy.

A reduced curriculum may be designed for students whose special educational needs would make full access very difficult. In that event, a special programme (I.E.P.) can be established for that student tailored to that student's needs. This decision would be made following consultation with the NEPS psychologist, principal, deputy principal, learning support/special needs teacher, guidance counsellor, class teacher, class tutor, parents and student.

Learning support and extra tuition may be provided to the student by withdrawal during the timetabled class for the subject following consultation with pupil,

parents and subject teacher. In the case of a student for whom an Individual Educational Programme has been devised, extra tuition may be provided during the timetabled class for subject(s) which are no longer part of his curriculum e.g. science in the case of some students or a language in the case of others.

Students who are new to the school.

Application for entry to the school is made on a standard application form. **(Appendix No.2)**. This form invites parents to discuss the special needs of students with the resource teacher to ensure that application for additional resources to the Department of Education and Science is made as early as possible. Parents are requested to bring relevant documentation to this meeting.

Where a student's conditions or circumstances change in the course of their career such a student may merit reassessment.

Preparation of an Education Plan.

In accordance with the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004.

The Principal shall ensure that the parents, the Special Needs Teacher and relevant others are consulted in the preparation of the plan and that Council (The National Council for Special Education)guidelines complied with.

The principal shall furnish to parents and the Special Needs Organiser, appointed by the National Council for Special Education, notice of completion of the plan and a copy of the plan.

Plan shall include:

- * Nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents;
- * Nature and degree of the child's special educational needs;

- * Special education and support services to be provided to enable the child to benefit from education and to participate in the life of the school, including services to enable the child to effectively make the transition from pre-school to primary and from primary to post primary;
- * The student's goals over a 12 month period;

Review of the Education Plan:

The principal of the school must ensure that the education plan is reviewed not less than once a year, to check whether the child has received the service required and achieved the goals specified in the education plan if necessary.

Conclusion:

The adoption of a Special Needs Policy ensures that all students have access to, participate in, and gain positive outcomes from schooling, with a view to providing the foundations of a fulfilling life. The staff at C.B.S. Charleville, in co-operation with parents and external professionals, acknowledges the importance of providing support for its students with special needs and is committed to the ongoing reappraisal of its Special Needs Policy with regard to its suitability and effectiveness of implementation.

Appendix No.1.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 defines
Special Educational Needs as follows:

- * “Special Educational Needs” means in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be constructed accordingly.” (2004:5)