

Special Needs Policy



all different
all equal

Mount Temple
Comprehensive School

1. Introduction

This draft policy aims to outline the approach of Mount Temple to the inclusion of students with special educational needs.

The school mission statement states:

“All of us are different, all of us are equal. We respect this diversity and promote inclusion. We endeavour to create an environment in Mount Temple in which all members of the school community have the right to feel safe and to be protected; and to enjoy learning, teaching, working and extra-curricular activities in the school. The school emphasises tolerance, appreciation of diversity, politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property as basic principles of behaviour.”

The Mount Temple Learning Policy also articulates the values underlying the ways in which we learn. It states (5.1) that Mount Temple is comprehensive: “Comprehensive education seeks to include all students equally, with their diverse needs – including those with special learning needs, with particular giftedness and with specific talents...” The Learning Policy also clearly states (5.2) that “the community of Mount Temple recognises...that the creation of tolerance, the challenge of inclusiveness, the securing of a learning space where difference is embraced is not something accomplished once and for all, but is an educational path travelled every day”.

The SEN Policy below is developed in consistency with the School’s ethos, Learning Policy and improvement processes, to provide for good practice in meeting the needs of all our SEN students. The school will endeavour to continue to move beyond compliance with DES Guidelines to exemplary practice.

2. Aims

- To provide a framework for a whole school approach to teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs.
- To develop cohesive and inclusive practices which help us to embrace differences within the student population.
- To develop and hone inclusive teaching strategies within the classroom, such as differentiation, team teaching, and teaching support, to enable pupils with disabilities to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.
- To facilitate a team approach (subject teachers, SEN year coordinators, learning support and resource teachers, special needs assistants, counsellors, Dean of Discipline, Chaplain, management,) for all staff involved in SEN provision in the school.
- To provide a framework for frequent dialogue to encourage the involvement of parents of pupils with special needs, as well as other professionals and agencies involved with students.

3. Inclusion

Inclusion for Mount Temple means that the school will endeavour to ensure that students of all levels and abilities may access the curriculum through differentiated approaches to classroom teaching and through special needs programmes. Inclusion means that all students, irrespective of ability, will be given the supports in so far as is practicable that enable them to reach their educational potential.

4. Enrolment

The Mount Temple Admissions Policy clearly articulates the rights of students with SEN.

“The Board of Management is supportive of the principle of inclusiveness in particular regard to students with a disability or special educational need. Mount Temple is proud of its reputation in regard to integrated provision for children with disabilities and with special educational needs. It is, however, a Comprehensive, mainstream school. Where, during the application of the admission criteria, a place is offered to a child with disabilities or special educational needs, the school will use the resources, both financial and human, provided by the Oireachtas and/or Department of Education & Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for such students.”

5. Objectives

- To support the personal, social and emotional development of students with special educational needs.
- To identify and meet those needs through liaison with professionals and parents, screening, assessment and observation.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in students.
- To develop a graduated approach of action and intervention
- To disseminate information about students with special educational needs, with due regard to confidentiality
- To liaise with subject teachers, form teachers, year heads, counsellors, school management and external bodies.
- To prepare and apply for reasonable accommodation for certificate examinations for eligible students.

6. Identification

The school will establish the child’s requirements and learning needs based on all available information, including psychological reports, primary school reports and visits, home contact, previous support, SENO advice, teacher referral and professional judgement and tests:-

7. Providing Support – Core Principle

The School strives to provide support to all students with school-identified needs within the limited resources provided by the DES.

8. Providing Support- Strategies

The school uses a number of strategies, based on identified need, and taking account of available resources, to provide support to students, including the following.

- In-class support from the subject teacher.
- Support from an SNA
- Working in small groups or on an individual basis.
- A modified curriculum appropriate to a student’s needs.
- Maintaining records of all student information
- Where appropriate, use of the WIAT II tests by resource teachers to investigate any literacy or numeracy needs.
- At exam time (in-house and state), the School will endeavour to facilitate separate centres for students qualifying for reasonable accommodation under the DES guidelines.

9. Roles

Supporting the education of students with special educational needs is a responsibility shared by all: the Board of Management, the Principal, learning support and resource teachers, year heads, class teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and students.

Board of Management

- The Board should oversee the development, implementation and review of the School's SEN policy.

The Principal

- The Principal has the overall responsibility for the operation of services for students with special educational needs.

The Class Teacher

- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his or her class.

Special Needs Assistants

- SNAs assist in the care of pupils in the school. Duties are non-teaching and they are assigned by the Principal, in consultation with the Learning Support/Resource Teacher.

Parents/Guardians

- Parents and guardians are their children's primary educators. They can support the work of the school by ensuring regular attendance, supporting school policies, keeping in regular contact with the school, supervising homework and study and praising student's efforts and achievements.

Students

- Students have a responsibility to participate in setting and achieving targets. They must strive to improve their learning. Good class behaviour and study habits will maximise achievement.

Other Students

- By adhering to the ethos of inclusiveness of Mount Temple can contribute to the attainment of their potential by all students.

SEN Co-ordinator

Coordinates resource hours, timetable, programmes, facilities and resources.

- Assesses pupils on an ongoing basis.
- Liaises with outside agencies, class teachers, other school personnel and parents/guardians.
- Maintains student records.
- Provides supplementary teaching.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This policy is ratified by the Board of Management of Mount Temple on 26th January 2016
It will be monitored from 2016 to 2018 and reviewed in 2018/9.

Signed: J. Jones (Chairman BOM)

Issue 1 (Jan 2016)