




## Special Educational Needs Policy

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# St Raphaels Special School

## Introduction

St Raphaels Special School is a Catholic co-educational special school that comes under the patronage of the archbishop of Dublin and the trusteeship of the St John of God Hospitaller Services Group. St Raphaels Special school caters for children aged 5-18 years of age who function in the moderate, severe or profound range of intellectual disability. In addition to their primary intellectual disability St Raphaels school also caters for pupils presenting with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behaviours of Concern, physical disability and medical/health needs.

## Classes:

The school currently has the following classes

10 classes for pupils with a dual diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and Mod, Sev/profound I.D

3 Classes for pupils with Sev/Profound ID

3 Classes for pupils with Moderate ID

Within the school our Classes are named as follows.

**Evergreens;** ASD classes

**Cherry Blossoms:** Severe/Profound ID classes

**Copper Beech;** Moderate ID classes

Each of the 16 classes has one class teacher. The SERC recommendation/baseline number of SNAs is met i.e. 2 SNAs for Evergreen classes, 2 SNAs for Cherry Blossom Classes, 0.5 for Copper Beech classes.

Our classes also have SNAs above the SERC allocation. How these SNAs are deployed is at the discretion of the Principal and is allocated based on the needs of the pupils in the class. Focus is on the needs of the whole school, consequently the school cannot guarantee long term predictability in personnel. Allocation of SNAs, above SERC allocation, to the school, is at the discretion of the NCSE.

## Class Profile:

Classes are mixed age but the age profile will be based on the following criteria

Junior classes = aged 5 to 8

Middle classes = aged 9 to 12

Senior classes = aged 13 to 18

Every effort will be made to place the pupil in the age-appropriate class, it is recognised that this may not always be possible but if this is the case the most suitable class will be selected. Pupils from the junior classes already enrolled in the school will be given priority for places in the senior classes.

The allocation of staff to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in staff.

When staff are absent from a class the school will do its utmost to provide a sub. Currently this can be extremely difficult in relation to teachers. The directive from the dept in relation to teacher's absences is to split classes and allow them to join another class. It is recognised by the Board of Management and the school management team, that due to the profile and needs of our pupils, this will not work in St Raphaels Special School. If a teacher is absent and a sub cannot be obtained the familiar SNAs will remain in the class and follow the timetable that has been established by the teacher.

### **Admissions:**

The number of new places that become available annually will depend on the number of pupils that are discharged from a given class each year.

The schools admissions notice will reflect the class profile in which the vacancy exists.

Parents seeking admission for their child must meet with the criteria outlined in the schools Admission Policy.

All applications for admission must be accompanied by a letter of eligibility from the NCSE and specify the need for a special school (not Class)

See also the school's admission policy.

### **Individual Educational Plan**

Class teachers will devise an IEP for all the pupils in their class, IEP targets will be established during the first term of each academic year in consultation with parents/guardians.

IEPS will be reviewed by the class teacher during the year. IEPs and IEP reviews are accessible to parents through the Aladdin App.

### **Strategies**

Strategies will be devised for each pupil outlining the pupils strengths and needs. Strategies provide all staff with the information on how to get to know the child and how best to support the child. Parental consultation will be requested when the strategies are devised. The strategies are regularly reviewed and updated.

### **Parents Responsibilities**

- Parents must fully accept the Schools code of behaviour, and all other policies currently in place, or which may be drawn up from time to time by the schools Board of Management.

- A close level of co-operation with the class teacher and any other staff that support their child e.g. SNA, school nurse, bus escort etc in a mutually respectful and collaborative manner.
- Fostering a positive attitude about school in the Child.
- To guarantee they have access to the Aladdin App and make sure that all details on the app in relation to their child are up to date and accurate. Parents should regularly check Aladdin for notifications etc from the school. Parents should also request any change of personal information on the Aladdin App e.g. change of phone number. If their child is absent from school parents are requested to verify the reason for their absence on Aladdin. The school newsletter will also be available to parents through Aladdin.
- Parents should accept permissions (or not) using the Aladdin App. It is parental responsibility to ensure that permissions are completed on the Aladdin App and they are further requested to highlight to their child's class teacher where permission is not given.
- Parents should have access to the Seesaw online journal which will be used by class teachers in a variety of ways depending on the needs of the pupils in their class. Seesaw will also be used to share the class newsletter with parents.
- To read the school diary daily and provide information in the diary for the class staff.
- To complete all forms or requested information in a timely manner, including the pupil update information form after any school break/holiday.
- Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available on an ongoing basis.
- To fully co-operate with school nurses in relation to any medical requirements for their child.
- To co-operate fully with the school if their child is unwell, including informing the school of an illness of any nature, even if the pupil does not need to be absent from school. If your child does present as unwell the attendance policy will be followed, however it should be noted that it may be necessary to ask the pupil to remain at home when unwell even if general protocol suggest they can return, this is done in an effort to protect the whole school community and for the wellbeing of our pupils.
- To be contactable if necessary, during the school day and to provide an "in case of emergency" number to the school.
- Parents are expected to be available to accompany their child for certain appointments e.g. vaccinations, hearing and vision screening etc. These appointments may take place during the school day or on school grounds, but it is parents responsibility to be present.
- To guarantee their child's Kardex is up to date and reflects all medications, including non-prescription medication and creams etc. that their child may require at times in school.

## **School Transport**

School transport is overseen by Bus Eireann who issues the runs to individual

contractors. The school provides the bus escorts. It should be recognised that the school has no control over the provision of drivers. If the bus escort is not available for any reason the school will do their utmost to replace the escort. Parents should be aware that despite the schools ongoing recruitment endeavours there is a limited number of sub bus escorts and they may not be able to meet the needs of the pupils on the bus. If a replacement escort cannot be provided it is the parents responsibility to bring/ collect their child from school for the period when no escort is available.

### **Curriculum**

The primary school curriculum will be implemented in our junior and middle classes. The junior cycle is currently implemented in our senior classes, with the gradual introduction of the senior cycle when further clarity and training is provided.

### **Outdoor Learning**

Outdoor learning environments have been created throughout the school. This is in recognition of the benefits of outdoor learning for pupil wellbeing and engagement. The benefit of outdoor learning across all curricular areas is recognised. Cross curricular links are established for outdoor learning activities and learning outcomes are tracked. (parents are reminded of their responsibility to apply suncream to their child during months with higher UV levels as they will be participating in outdoor learning activities)

### **Assessment.**

St Raphaels Special school uses both informal and formal means of assessment (see assessment policy for further information)

### **Changing Needs**

Where Pupils have emerging needs, once enrolled in the school, contact will be made with the CDNT, NCSE and/or NEPS.

### **Training**

Staff continually upgrade and refresh their skills with relevant training to meet the needs of our pupils.

### **School Year**

The school follows the standardised school year for primary schools. Summer Provision is not part of the school year. The delivery of the summer provision in the school is reviewed annually. It is dependent on the availability of familiar staff to oversee the programme and to work during the two weeks in July. If July provision is provided each class is considered individually and if it is feasible for that class to participate. It is at the discretion of the overseer which classes can operate for July provision. Parents should not engage with staff who work with their child during the academic year in relation to July provision and the decision of the overseer must be accepted.

## **Assistant Principals**

The Assistant Principals Role in St Raphael's School have been established to support teachers in meeting the identified needs of all pupils.

## **Uniform**

The recommended school uniform is a navy tracksuit with the school crest (available from the school office). It is recognised that some pupils may not be willing to wear the uniform due to sensory issues etc. If this is the case the pupil should wear clothing that they are comfortable with and that allows them to engage in their school day.

## **School Events/Celebrations**

Participation by families in school events/celebrations is greatly encouraged as we come together as a whole school community.



