



## **SALESIAN COLLEGE CELBRIDGE**

### **SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY**

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## **Salesian Ethos**

Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesian, and his co-workers strove to create an environment and a way of educating that would bring out the best in young people, especially those most estranged from the educational process, and to meet the social needs of their times. This legacy has become known as the Preventive System and it grew out of the experience of the Oratory, his first educational centre for the young street people of Turin. The Oratory was to be a home that welcomed, a parish that evangelised, a school that prepared for life, and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves. At the heart of all that went on at the Oratory was the development of a positive and respectful relationship between educator and young person based on the three Salesian educational principles of reasonableness, religion, and loving-kindness.

## **Overall Vision**

In its discussion paper on Special Educational needs and curricular issues, the NCCA (1999) state that a precise definition of special educational needs is difficult. They note how some experts believe that all students, can at some time in their lives, have some form of special educational need. Such need may range from a physical disability to exceptional or gifted ability in particular area.

However, the general understanding of students who have special educational needs is that they encounter barriers to learning. In Salesian College, Celbridge, we recognise that all students have common needs, which include a sense of belonging, being respected as an individual and being challenged as a learner. Our experience does show that some students, however, may have particular individual needs that arise from characteristics that are different from all others.

*The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)* defines special educational needs as “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 (2004, No. 1).

The report on the *Special Education Review Committee* (SERC, 1993) defines areas of special educational needs under four broad headings, which embrace a wide range of special educational needs and include:

- General learning disabilities
- Emotional and Behavioural disturbance
- Language and communication difficulties and disorders
- Physical and sensory disabilities

It further describes special education as “any educational provision which is designed to cater for pupils with special educational needs and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made in ordinary classes for pupils of the same age” (ibid, p.18).

## **An Inclusive Learning Environment**

The Board of Management, Staff, parents/guardians and students of Salesian college, Celbridge working in partnership are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all pupils where differences between individuals are accommodated and celebrated. In line with the Department of Education and Skills’ post-primary guidelines for the *Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs* (2007), the College understands that inclusion in education “relates not only to students with special educational needs, but also to a welcome for and an acceptance within the school of all students who have learning difficulties – for example those who are members of the Traveller community, those living in areas of social or economic deprivation, and those whose first language may not be English or Irish” (p.39).

In accordance with the *Education Act* (1998), Salesian College strives to “ensure that the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs are identified and provided for”. We believe that inclusion can have a favourable impact on students with, as well as students without, special educational needs. By adopting such an approach, students are encouraged to accept and value individual difference and to bring this attitude with them into the wider society.

Each child has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation, irrespective of gender, race, ethnic background, family status, religion, sexual orientation, aptitude, marital status, age (Equal Status Act, 2000). The school expects a high standard of behaviour as detailed in the Code of Behaviour, its Anti-bullying Policy and all relevant school policies, and strives to promote positive approaches to achieve this.

At Salesian College, a student “with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or the degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- a. The best interest 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” (EPSEN, 2004, No.2)

## **Aims & Effectiveness of this Policy**

In adherence with the guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills’ *Guidelines for the Inclusion of Students with special Education Needs* (2007, p.17) at post-primary level, we acknowledge that the broad aims of education for pupils with special educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

- Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his or her full potential as an unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum
- Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as a necessary to realise that potential
- Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life

Salesian College is a voluntary secondary school and as such its financial and teaching resources are provided through a combination of Department of Education and Skills grants, fund-raising and annual school charge. School policy is implemented with due regard to the resources available and in line with the requirement of the Education Act to “make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a disability or other special educational need...” (1998, 15.2.g).

At Salesian College the provision of support for those with educational needs is supported, facilitated and coordinated through the School's Learning Resource Department, presently located in four prefabs at the heart of the school site. This arrangement, we believe, allows the school to make the best and most creative use of the resources available to it in the area of special needs provision. A dedicated team of teachers and special needs assistants form the core teaching staff within the Resource Department. This is in keeping with the DES *Guidelines for Post-Primary school – Supporting students with special education needs in mainstream schools 2017, P.5*). This is supported by many other teachers who provide classes in a variety of subjects supporting students with special needs. Literacy and numeracy are central to the work of the Resource Department, but a variety of other subjects add vibrancy to individualised educational programmes. Cooking, Music, Art and PE plus regular social training outings are all part of the programmes within the department.

The Resource Department at Salesian College aims to:

- Offer educational support to students ranging from the 'total immersion' of two special classes of six individuals for students with autism, to those who require short term learning support.
- Provide a continuum of educational support to all students of the College who require either resource teaching or learning support.
- Respond to the individual educational needs of students and to do so in an inclusive and integrated way.
- Support the teaching process within the mainstream school by supporting students and informing the teaching of students with special educational needs.
- Integrate the students with autism with other mainstream students where it is educationally appropriate to do so whilst providing them with individualised educational programmes.
- Remain faithful to the educational spirit of Don Bosco who was open to the educational needs of his day and showed a willingness to respond to these in an innovative and realistic manner
- Act a model and a resource for the ongoing development of educational services in the field of Special Needs

We believe that the effectiveness of this policy relies on:

- Whole school planning and policies that strive to remain faithful to best practice and the Salesian ethos
- Effective communication between all participants involved,
- The adoption of a team approach involving teachers, students, parents, management and relevant outside agencies,

- A planned transition programme from primary to post primary school aimed at identifying and supporting students with special education needs,
- Ongoing review and evaluation of the strategies and resources available to special needs education.
- The resource department provides an online resource guidebook which provides detailed information of a variety of special educational needs and teaching strategies to promote the inclusion of students with additional needs into mainstream settings.

## **Application and Registration of Children with Special Educational Needs in Salesian College**

Salesian College, Celbridge is committed to the full implementation of education legislation, the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the equality Status Act 2000 and the Education for persons with special Education Needs Act 2004. Salesian College is a mixed ability school and supports the principles of inclusiveness and equality of access and participation for all students.

While recognising and fully supporting parent's rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the College's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills. Salesian College reserves the right to refuse an application to the school, if it deems that the student's special educational needs are of a severity that those needs can only be met within the confines of a special class.

The College welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

## **Special Class for Students on the Autistic Spectrum**

Registration in this special class is in accordance with the school's Admission policy and as outlined below.

This class reflects the inclusive ethos of Salesian college and wherever possible the students in this special class are integrated with other students within the Resource Department and where appropriate within the mainstream school. Student Support plans are provided for all students of the special class for students on the autistic spectrum and these individual plans will be reviewed on a regular basis. Students with autism have greatly enhanced the life within the school and are living testimony to our belief that equality stems from the recognition of and provision for difference, not for sameness.

The creation of a natural learning environment rather than isolating these students in a "stand alone" unit aims to normalise their educational experience. The school will endeavor to facilitate access to multi-disciplinary teams of other professionals where these supports are available.

## **Applications from and Registration of Children with Special Educational Needs**

- The Board of Management, staff, parents/guardians and students of Salesian College, working in partnership, are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all pupils where differences between individuals are accommodated and celebrated.
- Salesian College provides support for students with special education needs in the school in an open and unrestrictive environment and setting.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate students with special education needs.
- Students with special education needs are subject to all school codes and policies.
- Registration in Salesian College is subject to parents & guardians accepting these policies.

## Designated Special Class for students on the Autistic Spectrum (ASD)

- Salesian College has two special classes for students on the Autistic Spectrum, whose cognitive functioning has been established to be in the moderate to average range.
  - Parents/Guardians are asked to indicate that they are applying for a place in the Special Class for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) on the application form along with the Criteria A – E (as detailed above) which applies.
  - When making an application to the ASD class, it is understood and accepted that the parent/applicant understands that they are applying for a special designated class **only. This is not an application for a mainstream place.**
  - An application to our ASD class is an application for this specific educational setting only.
  - Whilst registered in the ASD class it is the school's educational approach to integrate students into mainstream classes where appropriate.
  - Students in the ASD class will participate in all school activities.
  - Salesian College ASD classes are not high dependency unit/ classes/ settings and students will not be in a restricted environment.
  - Students who are registered in the ASD class will follow a five-year programme.
  - Students will be registered with the relevant year group, 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> year.
  - Students registered in the ASD class subject to fulfilling the application criteria may apply for the optional Transition Year Programme.
  - This Transition Year Programme is within the mainstream school and not part of the ASD class programme.
  - Each class has a maximum of **six students** for all years. This is the total number of students in the class.
  - Two ASD classes = twelve students.
  - **The school will not exceed this number.**
  - Any form of communication i.e., phone call, conversation with members of the Resource Department, discussion with Special Education Needs Officer (SENO), meeting with any members of staff, visit to the school, or recommendation from any external agency or person does not equate to “a reasonable expectation” that a place in our ASD class will be offered to an applicant. Such scenarios do not equate to an application to the school.

## Required Criteria for Consideration for Application for our ASD Class

- The school has referred to the NCSE “*Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes for Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2016. Page 3*” when considering applications for the ASD class.

- Only those students with a diagnosis of Autism, whose cognitive functioning has been established to be in the moderate to average range

AND

who has a formal recommendation from an educational psychologist i.e National Educational Psychological services (NEPS) or relevant recognised psychological services for a post-primary special class.

will be considered.

- Applicants to the ASD class must have a definitive diagnosis of autism whose cognitive functioning has been established in the moderate to average range at the time of their application.
- Applicants to the ASD class must have a definitive formal recommendation for a post-primary special class setting at the time of their application.
- Salesian College will not accept formal educational psychological assessments and reports which recommend multiple educational settings for a student with a diagnosis of ASD.
- The school will only consider applications for the ASD class that includes a clear and definitive statement advising / recommending / supporting a special class setting at post-primary level.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse the consideration of an application for the ASD class without this formal report.
- Salesian College requests that such reports with a definitive and formal recommendation for a specialized post-primary ASD class must have been conducted within the last two years.

- **The applicant will be contacted by the school following their application and will be requested to send in the required reports/assessments to support/verify the application.**
  - This request is in keeping with the school's obligation to adhere to the NCSE guidelines on Special classes (*Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes for Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2016*).
- By applying for a place in the ASD class parents & guardians authorise Salesian College to contact the stated present primary school in advance of any consideration of the application to confirm and assess the information in the submitted educational/psychological reports from the parents/guardians presented to the school following their application. This is in keeping with the NCSE "*Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes for Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2016. Page 4*".
- The school must verify for the NCSE for its Department of Education allocation and resources that students who may be considered for application in this class are eligible for registration in the class hence the request for this information on application.
- Salesian College cannot consider applications to the ASD class who do not have a formal and definitive recommendation for a post primary special class.
- This recommendation must have been made within the last two years.
- Failure to fulfill the requirements or present evidence of a formal recommendation for a post-primary special class and a formal diagnosis of autism will result in the refusal of an application.
- Refusal of an application means refusal to consider an application.

- Refusal to consider an application will result in a refusal to enrol.
- Because of the particular requirements in the running of the ASD class, and as a result of the lack of available places in the Celbridge, Ardclough & Straffan area, in the event of oversubscription for available places from any criteria category (A-E as listed above) for our ASD class, a lottery will be conducted under the supervision on an Independent Assessor i.e. A Peace Commissioner or a local Solicitor or a Public Notary to draw up a waiting list for our ASD class. In attendance at this lottery will be the Principal or Deputy Principal(s), a member of the Board of Management and a representative from the Parents Association.
- As a place in our ASD class becomes available the school will offer this place to the student on the waiting list.
- **This waiting list is for the ASD class only.**
- The available places will be offered and allocated in the waiting list order starting with Criteria A, B, C, D, E and so on until all available places have been allocated.
- Late applications (F) from any criteria category will be processed at the end of this process.

## **Contact with DES & NCSE**

- In relation to registration of students with Special Education Needs contact may be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding special need resources to which the student may be entitled.
- The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of these students can be met.
- In consultation with parents/guardians Salesian College may request the Department of Education and Skills to provide necessary resources e.g., special needs assistant, specialized equipment or furniture, transport etc.

- It is noted that it may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. This may impact on the commencement of attendance of a student to the school.

## **Circular 14/2017**

- Salesian College acknowledges the aims and objectives of Circular 14/2017.
- In accordance with Circular 14/2017, the management and administration of the DES resources is at the discretion of the Board of Management. Circular 14/2017 does not supersede the Board's overall responsibility to manage the school.
- Salesian College will not exceed the sanctioned number of places in the two ASD classes.
- It is the school's position that the application of Circular 14/2017 does not equate to using the DES SEN (General allocation model) annual allocation for the provision of the supports and resources equivalent to that of a specialized setting such as a designated ASD class or other DES recognized special classes.

## **Parental Involvement**

Salesian College, Celbridge recognises the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Therefore, we welcome their full involvement in their son's education. The Resource department will discuss with the parent their son's special educational needs and consult with them in a real and meaningful way as to how these special educational needs are met by the school.

Parents are consulted and invited to participate in the making of all decisions of a significant nature concerning their son's education. Parental involvement may range from initial contact discussing their son's special educational needs, to direct involvement in the design and implementation of an Student Support File for their son. Contact with parents/guardians of students with special education needs is on-going through-out the school year and the time of the student in the school. Parents/guardians are welcomed visitors, by agreement, to the Resource Department.

## **Transition of Students from Primary to Salesian College**

Salesian College organises on an annual basis an information session for potential students and their parents/guardians. This is our Open Day normally held during the first school term. This is outlined in the Admissions Policy. During this Open Day and as part of the formal guided tours members of staff from the Resource Department are available to meet with parents and inform them of the services and procedures available for students with special educational needs. Staff are available by appointment for follow up discussions and visits if required to assist with any queries regarding an application and subsequent registration if offered a place in the school.

In the school's registration form parents/ guardians are asked to provide the school with information relevant to the education needs of their son. The information sought seeks a brief outline of the specific learning difficulty, existing support being provided in primary school, relevant agency support in place and subject exemptions.

A member of the Resource Department visits the Primary School of the incoming registered students to identify those students with special education needs and to discuss with their teachers the precise nature of their needs. By agreement with the local primary schools standard test results , if completed by the student, and if available , may be made available to the Resource department and may be used by school management to ensure, as far as is possible, that classes in Salesians are of mixed ability. Contact will also be made with the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) when it is appropriate.

The Resource department administers standardised tests to all in-coming first year students to confirm the identification of students with special education needs and to identify other students who may require additional educational support.

The Resource department takes responsibility, in consultation with parents/guardians and school management, for applying to the National Council for Special Education for the teaching and other resources appropriate to the needs of the individual students.

The Resource department, with due regard to the confidential and sensitive nature of the information, aim to provide relevant details to staff members dealing with any student with special educational needs. Resource personnel also take responsibility for providing relevant teaching staff with an audit of students who attend the Resource Department for resource teaching or learning support. This audit will list the general nature of the educational need. A

member of the resource team will liaise with Form Teachers in order to provide additional support for students with special educational needs and facilitate more regular contact with parents/guardians than would normally be possible.

## **The Work of the Resource Department and Ongoing Intervention and Support**

In consultation with the student, their parent/guardian and subject teachers the Resource department will design and implement a programme of educational support, monitor the progress of students with special educational needs and, when necessary, make changes in the programme. The resource department will aim to support the student with special educational needs in all area of the curriculum, as well as, providing targeted teaching in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The Resource Department uses a variety of educational settings, one to one teaching, small group and larger group setting wherever appropriate to the needs of the individual student.

Resource personnel work in close collaboration with the Year head, Form tutors and Subject teachers. They also work closely with the school's Guidance department to monitor the progression of students through the school. Special attention is given to students who show signs of regular non-attendance, difficulties with classwork and homework, social and discipline difficulties, and poor exam results. As needs arise, individual students in consultation with their parent/guardian are offered access to the supports available within the department. Parents/guardians may ask for their son to be considered for learning support and intervention.

In the selection of students for supplementary teaching, priority will be given to those who are performing at or below the tenth percentile on standardised tests of literacy and mathematics. Some intervention may be on a short term and focused basis. Resource staff will inform the student and his parent/guardian of the planned duration of the intervention and when it is felt that progress is sufficient to allow the student to continue in the mainstream school without such intervention.

Counselling may be provided within the department reflecting the schools core value of providing a holistic service to our students. Only by working with the students in an atmosphere of unconditional respect can we hope to heal the brokenness which prevents students from being able to access and engage with the school curriculum. The creation of an environment conducive

to learning for all our special needs students is the central and on-going challenge to those working within the Resource Department.

The Resource department, in consultation with the school management, takes responsibility for the organisation and implementation of learning support in the mainstream school through team teaching and monitors the use and effectiveness of these teaching resources. The 'teaching team' will typically be made up of the mainstream teacher and either the resource teacher or the learning-support teacher. The members of the teaching team share responsibility for the planning and provision of instruction to the class. The resource teacher and learning support teacher usually pays particular attention to students with special educational needs or those with low achievement and endeavours to ensure that these students experience success in their learning programmes.

The Resource Department and the College follow the curricular programmes as prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Paragraphs 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

## Exceptionally Able Students

The NCCA Guidelines for *Exceptionally Able Students* (2007) uses this term to describe students “who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students” (2007, p.7). An exceptionally able student is one who has the capacity for or demonstrates high levels of performance in an academic area or within a domain specific ability in a non-academic area. Eyre (1997) observed that the greatest obstacle to successful provision for able students was inappropriate school and pupil attitudes. Salesian College also recognises that able students can be found among young people who have a disability or among children identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007).

Salesian College seeks to meet the challenges of exceptionally able students by seeking to:

- maintain an ethos where it is acceptable to be bright
- support teachers in developing extension activities as part of a differentiated curriculum
- encourage all students to be independent learners
- recognise achievement
- be aware of the effects of ethnicity, bilingualism, gender, religion, and social; circumstances on learning and high achievement
- provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs
- always provide work at an appropriate level

## Student Support Files

Those students who attend the two special classes require an student support file to target their particular educational needs. The plan will be drawn up in line with the relevant subsections of EPSEN 2004. The Resource Department will, in consultation with the other educational partners, parents, pupil, school management, subject teachers and other outside agencies, take responsibility for the design, implementation and review of the Student Support File on an annual basis. The review will be carried out in line with EPSEN Subsection 11 as statutorily enacted.

“The plan is only a draft plan until parents have been consulted” (NCSE Guidelines on the Student Support Filing Process, 2006, p.54) and as such parents and guardians are asked by the school to

formalize the plan by signing it. The school recognises the right of a parent to make appeals in relation to their son's education plan in line with the statutory enactment of EPSEN Subsection 12.

A copy of the plan is made available to parent/guardian while a further copy will be held in the Resource Department where it is available for updating and adjustment. A copy of the plan is accessible on request from all the educational partners involved in the particular individual educational plan.

Where a pupil with an existing Student Support File is transferring from one school to another, this will be carried out in accordance with the statutory enactment of EPSEN, Sections 8 & 9.

## **Outside Agencies**

The Resource Department will liaise with the teaching staff, other schools and any outside agencies providing support to students with special education needs. Visiting teachers for the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impairment, National Educational Psychologists, Special Educational Needs Organisers, Social Workers, Network Disability Team and members of the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Guidance Clinic are some of partners with whom the Resource Department liaises in order to provide a full service to students with special education needs.

If a pupil has not been identified as having a special education need until after registration, the permission of parents/guardians will be sought to have the pupil assessed by the appropriate professionals. This may involve a recommendation to attend an outside agency or where possible it may involve an educational assessment by the school's NEP's Psychologist. The school acknowledges at this point that the manner and provision of NEP's supports and interventions directly available to schools is changing therefore the school can only work within the system as it evolves and therefore cannot always guarantee specific supports and interventions.

## Irish Exemptions

As detailed in the Department of Education Circular 0053/2019 Salesian College will adhere to the stated guidelines and grounds for the granting of an exemption in Irish – Section 2 is referred to here:

### 2. Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

- 2.1 An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal teacher, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student where he/she is the applicant, the class teacher, special education teachers, and the student. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.
- 2.2 The circumstances in which a student may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish Exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only: a. students whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of their primary education) was received outside the State and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish

Or

students who were previously enrolled as recognised students in a primary or post-primary school who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the State and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment

Or

c. students who:

- i.) present with significant learning difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning over time (Irish and, or, English).

Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment target-setting evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (word reading, reading comprehension, spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review.

and

- ii) at the time of the application for exemption present with a Standardised Score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.”

Parents & Guardians who wish to apply for an exemption must refer to Circular 053/2019 which details the full process of application.

Salesian College, where appropriate, will take account of the literacy learning needs of students who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special education teaching resources. To support inclusive practices, a student who is exempt from the study of Irish should be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests. Therefore, exemption from Irish does not equate to removal from an Irish class.

## **Curricular Modification**

Exemptions from French/German are considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents/guardians, class teachers, learning support teacher, guidance counsellor and the school management.

Other curricular modifications are considered for individual students but only in exceptional circumstances. Consultation between all relevant partners is deemed essential when making such decisions. No exemption from any subject is automatic or a student entitlement.

The timetabled periods which become available due to such curricular modifications may be used, if possible, to implement individual resource interventions and learning support.

## **Access**

Every effort is being made on the part of the school management to ensure the school site offers a high degree of access for pupils with physical disabilities. The school continues to upgrade the facilities within the school in order to cater for students with both physical disabilities and special educational needs.

## **Senior Students**

At Senior Cycle the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is intended to meet the needs of those students who are not adequately catered for by other Leaving Certificate programmes or who choose not to opt for such programmes. While the LCA programme has been running in Salesian College for a number of years, its availability each September is dependent on the number of suitable applicants that year.

Students who have availed of learning support or resource teaching hours during the junior cycle may feel that the LCA offers them the most appropriate learning environment. This is, however, just one of the options open to pupils who also have opportunity to apply for a place in Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Vocation Programme and the established Leaving Certificate Programme.

Additional literacy/numeracy interventions may be provided to senior students where deemed appropriate and within available resources.

Study skills programmes are offered to all senior pupils through career classes and through individual support on request.

## **Certification and Examination**

Students with special education needs are prepared for the State Examinations in accordance with their abilities and all students are assisted to reach their full potential in the state examinations. The Resource Department will either support the teaching of the mainstream teacher or be fully responsible for delivering the full syllabus and preparing the pupil for state examinations.

The Resource Department will take responsibility for applying for Reasonable Accommodation in the public examinations for students with special educational needs where it is appropriate to do so and to prepare the students for the use of whatever accommodation has been approved. The Resource Department in consultation with the school management will coordinate the State examinations for those students with special education needs.

The Resource Department will liaise with the Career's Department in any applications for the DARE scheme where this involves a student with a special educational need.

## **Review**

This policy was reviewed in January 2021 and takes in to account Circular 0014/2017, 0053/2019, "Guidelines for Post-Primary school – Supporting students with special education needs in mainstream schools 2017", and other stated legislation.

Salesian College already operates the advised and recommended model of provision of access to educational supports for students with Special Education Needs and for students who the school deems eligible for support.

Whilst the school acknowledges the educational philosophy underpinning Circular 0014/2017, the Board of Management records in this formal school policy that Salesian College is a post-primary voluntary secondary school. Salesian College is not a designated Special school with specific physical and human resources commensurate with those of a specialized setting/ school.

Salesian College will not exceed the DES sanctioned number of places in the two ASD classes – 6 per class, total 12 places. It is the school's position that the application of Circular 14/2017 does not equate to using the DES SEN annual allocation (General Allocation Model) for the provision of the supports and resources equivalent to that of a specialized setting such as a designated ASD class or other DES recognized special classes. (*DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools – Supporting Students with Special Education Needs in Mainstream Schools – Page 24*)

“The Department acknowledges the very significant progress made by schools in developing inclusive practices and provision whereby the vast majority of students with special educational needs now attend mainstream schools. It also recognizes that a small minority of students with significant and enduring needs may require a more specialist setting (for example, special class or special school placement).”

Students in Salesian College will follow the designated national curricula for the stated subjects for the Junior and Leaving Certificate.

The school will endeavor to provide a fair and balanced access for all eligible students i.e., students with definitive SEN diagnosis and students the school deems are in need of support.

The provision of such supports will not impinge on the overall right of the majority of student's right to a safe, unhindered and disruption free teaching and learning environment.

Teachers and students have a right to work and study in an environment free from disruption and harassment. On very rare occasions and always as a last resort, the Board of Management may decide not to enroll a student with special education needs if the school deems to do so would adversely impact on the teaching and learning rights of teachers and students.

The Board of Management reserves the right to retain unto itself the right to make the ultimate and final decision in relation to the suitability of any application to the school taking the overall approach, model and administration of resources into account.

The Board of Management also retains unto itself the right to decide that the enrolment of a student with Special Education Needs would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

**This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This policy will be reviewed based on the needs within the school and on legislative changes.**

**Salesian College has a published Data Protection Policy which was ratified by the Board of Management 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Copies of all school policies are available on request from the school office.**