



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
Academic Year
2018/2019

Griffeen Community College welcomes students with Special or Additional Education Needs (SEN) (AEN) where the school is in position to meet the needs of these students and enrolment is in the best educational interest of the student. This is in line with the EPSEN Act (2004) which recognises

“the need to provide for the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs”.

We recognise each student as a unique individual with different talents. Inherent in this is an understanding that individual needs or learning differences should not prevent a student from flourishing here in Griffeen CC. We endeavour to meet their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, behavioural and care needs through our student focused programmes and it's our aspiration that if a child is identified as needing support, they will receive whatever assistance they require to enable them to reach their full potential (subject to this support being resourced by the Dept. of Education and Skills/NCSE).

The aim of this Policy is to enable students who require support for their learning to enjoy equal access to the curriculum where practically possible and to enable them to fulfil their potential. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy which is amended regularly and available on the school website or by emailing the school office info@griffeecc.ie.

“People with AEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers” (EPSEN 2004)

Aims of the Policy on Additional Support Needs

(The aims of this policy are guided by the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 and circular 14/2017 (new model of allocation) and the corresponding Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017).)

The aims of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department is to encourage, support and enable students with additional educational needs, to reach their full potential in a safe, caring and supportive environment through communication and co-operation with all of the stakeholders.

Griffeen Community College aims to:

- Ensure that students with individual needs are educated in a responsibly inclusive environment.
- Ensure that students with additional support needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other educational needs, as they relate to education.
- Provide, in line with the new model of allocation, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- Affirm that students with additional educational needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from, education as students who do not have those needs.
- Provide for the involvement of parents (*for the duration of this document referral to parents includes guardians*) in the education of their children and in the decision making process in relation to their children. Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home.
- Co-operate and work closely with the NCSE (National Council for Special Educational Needs) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the individual needs of the students and of the contribution they can make in their subject area. Develop staff expertise in supporting students with additional educational needs.

- Ensure that additional educational needs are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school community.
- The SEN department supports the school curriculum through the medium of literacy and numeracy. As well as academic success, the personal development and social skills of every student with additional educational needs are a primary focus for the department.
- The department co-operates and works closely with the relevant stakeholders and support agencies with regard to the education of students with additional needs.
- Provide programmes that meet the individual needs of the student. At junior cycle such programmes may include Level 2 learning programmes (L2LP's), Skills for life (QQI Level 2), short courses, social skills, literacy and numeracy support.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Acknowledge the primary responsibility of the subject teacher and work to support staff in meeting the needs of the student.

The objectives of the policy on Additional Support Needs are:

- To assist in the transition of students with Additional Support Needs from primary school to second level
- To create a programme for a student with Additional Support Needs
- To give feedback to parents and the relevant staff as to the students' progress while encouraging supportive involvement.
- To support the school staff by providing information on Additional Support Needs in order to insure the inclusion of all students and details of further learning opportunities.
- To support students with SEN in State Examinations and in the transition to further study or to the world of work.
- To seek that where possible all personnel within the SEN Department are suitably qualified.
- To review and re-evaluate this policy.

Stakeholders

A multifaceted approach is essential to effectively support every student in a holistic manner. The recognised stakeholders in the education of a student with Additional Support Needs include; the student, parents, the Principal of the school, the Board of Management, the SEN Department and coordinator, Special Needs Assistants, teachers/tutors, the year head, the career guidance department (where applicable), the DDLETB Psychological Support Services (PSS) and any other external agencies that work with the student to assist in his/her academic development. Ultimately, the responsibility of the education of the children with Additional Support Needs in Griffeen Community College rests with the Board of Management. The Board, and the Principal acting on its behalf, will monitor implementation of the Additional Support Needs programme on an ongoing basis to ensure best practice, will promote a whole-school approach to additional education provision and will appoint the appropriate staff to operate the programme where possible.

Enrolment of Students with SEN

The Board of Management and staff of Griffeen CC will endeavor to meet the educational needs of all applicants including the academically gifted and talented and students with special or additional educational needs within the parameters of a mainstream setting. The school will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for these students.

As it may take some time for the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to process such applications, parents are strongly advised to provide written documentation to the school by February of the year of entry and discuss the child's individual needs in advance of making an application to attend the school.

“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.” (EPSEN ACT, 2004; paragraph 2).*

In making provision for additional educational needs students the following information is required:

Has the student had access to any of the following resources?

- a) Special Needs Assistant
- b) Special class- Outreach class/ Special School /ASD class
- c) Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher
- d) Assistance with behavioral modification – in a mainstream or special setting
- e) Professional Assessments and Reports. (Report should be forwarded to school and ideally should be min 2 years old)
- f) Any additional resources to help with the identification of additional educational needs
- g) Help in areas including visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
- h) Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.
- i) Assistive Technology information (Laptop, Monitor etc.)
- j) EAL Students- English as an Additional Language

If an expert report is available it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

Griffeen CC welcomes students with additional educational needs who fulfil the regular enrolment requirements. The availability of specialised learning support is dependent on the allocation of annual resources to the school from the National Council Special Education (NCSE) in consultation with the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO).

Please note:

1. All students with additional needs who accept a place in Griffeen CC become part of the school community and will be treated equally under our Code of Positive Behaviour.
2. Access to student’s records and individual educational plans (IEP’s) from primary or other schools will be necessary to cater for the needs of SEN students. This information must be provided when a place is accepted in Griffeen CC in order that the school can apply to the NCSE for the resources needed to support students with additional educational needs.
3. Parental permission will be sought for access to any relevant medical or psychological reports. In the absence of such reports, Psychological Support Services (PSS) assessment or similar may be necessary.
4. Griffeen CC, in co-operation with the SENO, PSS and or other relevant authorities, will inform the Department of Education and Skills of whatever resources, equipment or personnel will be required to cater for the special needs of the applicant.

5. Subject to the provision and availability of the necessary resources, the Principal and/or relevant teacher will, as soon as possible, arrange to meet with the parents of the student to discuss the student's needs and the school's capacity to meet those needs.

The SEN Team

Ultimate responsibility for the education of children with individual needs in Griffeen CC rests with the BOM (Board of Management). The BOM, and the Principal acting on its behalf, will work with the SEN team and all staff to monitor implementation of the SEN programme to ensure best practice, will promote a whole school approach to special educational provision and will also appoint various staff to operate the programme. The staff team will include several people as described below.

Principal/Deputy Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the development and implementation and review of the school's policies on Additional Educational Needs. She will sanction exemption from certain subjects as required and in accordance with associated circulars, ensure adequate timetabling of hours for student support, as well as facilitating meetings of, and continuous professional development for the SEN Department.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO will have overall responsibility for the management of daily operations of the SEN Department.

Special Education Teachers (SET)

A team of staff (where allocation allows) will teach students requiring learning support. Where required they may develop student support files for these students. They may offer advice to subject teachers and other dept. on differentiated teaching methods and resources in their subject areas. They will liaise with external agencies if requested to do so by management. Where there are a large number of students with SEN, admin duties may be assigned to these teachers or the SENCO.

These duties will be reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priorities of the SEN department are addressed.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Dependent on the allocation of Special Needs Assistants granted by the Department of Education and Skills, a small team of staff will cater for the care and support of students in a non-teaching capacity. They will provide assistance as required and duties will vary depending on the needs of any student. SNAs will also carry out duties as assigned by the Principal.

Class Teachers/Tutors

The class teacher plays a central role in the successful inclusion of students with additional support needs in mainstream classes. It is expected that regardless of ability, all teachers will implement differentiated approaches for teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that the skills of all students including students with Additional Educational Needs are catered for. All teachers must make themselves aware of the Additional Educational and Support Needs of students and this information is made available to all staff through the database set up for Additional Supports from the beginning of the school year. A summary of these findings is also available on vshare under the SEN tab under individual student profiles and a shared drive document.

Teachers must bring any concerns regarding student barriers to learning, to the attention of the SENCO/Principal/Deputy Principal as they play an important role in the early identification of students with SEN.

A class teacher/tutor may refer any student they are concerned about to the SENCO through the referral email outlining concerns and observations. This is the first step in the screening process and allows the SEN team to identify the nature of the SEN being experienced. It's during this time that the learning, emotional,

behavioral and social needs of the student are observed, reviewed and evaluated. The SENCO will gather all the relevant information and consult with school management, the parents and the student. Learning supports will then be put in place in line with the new model of allocation. Where it is agreed SNA support is required, an application will be made to the NCSE.

All teachers will:

- Be aware of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with students with Additional Support Needs
- Seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with Additional Educational Needs
- Take responsibility for their own continuous professional development particularly with regard to high incidence difficulties.
- Develop an attitude of ownership to the education of students with Additional Educational Needs in their classes
- Where a student has an SNA, the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the SENCO.
- Support and encourage independence in students.

Students

Students have a critical role to play in the development of and reflection on their own learning. The committed participation of a student means that he/she can become:

- Part of the development of their learner profile and their priority learning targets
- More aware of different teaching and learning styles that best support them in accessing the curriculum.
- More independent as learners and enabled towards taking responsibility for their own learning
- Successful as learners and gain the ability to develop skills and strategies to maximise their own learning
- More aware of working co-operatively with others and understanding the concept of a team approach to enquiry and formulation of responses to tasks set.

Parents

The effectiveness of any assessment or intervention will be crucially influenced by the involvement of the students' parents. Parents are expected to support the work of the school with the student and to ensure the correct use and maintenance of any aids or equipment that are provided to the student. Parents are expected to keep the SENCO or class teachers updated with developments in terms of need reports/ supports/ medical updates etc.

Communication

From enrolment, information on SEN provision is provided to parents and throughout the year further details and updates will be communicated to parents. In return, parents are expected to keep the school updated with developments from their perspective and to work closely with the school to make their child's learning experience as positive as possible.

Parents are invited to contact the school throughout the year in addition to, Parent/Teacher/Student meetings. Parents are always contacted if a student is to be referred for assessment and afterwards to discuss the outcome of the assessment, the development of the student's learner profile and the review of this profile.

Identifying students who require Support

Under the new model of allocation individual students are no longer granted specific hours from the NCSE based on their diagnosis. From March 2017 schools will have the autonomy to allocate teaching resources based on the level of a student's need, rather than based on diagnosis alone.

Decisions on the support offered to students will be made based on several criteria. These include and are not limited to:

- Information gathered from psychological assessment (where the student has one)
- Information gathered from parents
- Information gathered from primary school
- Teacher referrals
- Formal and informal school assessment
- Observation by class teachers
- Communication with outside agencies
- Student self-referral – check in with Tutor/ class teacher re difficulties being encountered.

A student support file is then developed to support the student. This plan will be monitored and reviewed and student progress will be recorded.

Methods of identifying students with individual needs and learning differences

Information from Primary School pre enrolment

- The SENCO will contact all feeder schools to identify possible students with Additional Support Needs on confirmation of them accepting a place in the school.
- Information given from parents before entry to school
- The SENCO/and or Principal will meet with parents. All documentation, concerns should be passed onto the school in accordance with the Admissions Policy and in order to ensure that adequate resources can be accessed for the student when they arrive.
- It is to be understood that the ability of the school to respond to the educational needs of any student applying for admission is dependent on the Dept. of Education and Skills supplying the appropriate facilities and resources to allow the school to answer that need. It may therefore be necessary for the BOM to defer enrolment of a student pending provision of appropriate resources by the DES to meet the needs of that student at that given time.

Screening of 1st Years

Group screening/assessment of all 1st Year students. The procedure employed in GCC begins when incoming first years accept their place. We will gather all standard test scores from primary schools prior to GCC enrolment. We will administer standardized tests (not identified here to protect the integrity of the testing process and to limit the possibility of coaching for the tests).

These assessments help to identify academically gifted and students with special or additional educational needs. All test results are confidential. Where assessment results and observations of subject teachers indicate a possible cause of concern, parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the SENCO/ SET teacher and/or the Principal. This is to facilitate any external assessments that may be thought necessary and to allow an appropriate programme of support to be developed for the student.

First year classes will be drawn up on a mixed ability basis. From the results of the tests students who need learning support may be identified. The psychological reports that we receive from primary schools are also carefully perused and applications for supports are sent to the NCSE if required.

All students are screened using standardised screening tests in literacy and numeracy. Students who are achieving below the 10th percentile in literacy and numeracy may be recommended for further diagnostic assessments. Having liaised with the relevant staff, the SENCO may decide this course of action, the SENCO

may decide that the student's needs do not merit their involvement. In many cases a student's needs may be resolved through the provision of differentiated work suited to their needs.

****Students who transfer from another post primary school.**

Any student with SEN who transfers from another post primary school will be assessed according to the criteria used for assessing 1st year students and will have the appropriate resources made available to them.

On-going assessment of students

It can emerge that a student who was not previously identified as having Additional Educational Needs is experiencing barriers to learning. For students who continue to cause concern, referral to the SEN Department may be appropriate.

If the SEN Department decides that a student would benefit from further intervention, the student will be informally assessed. Parents are informed and their consent is sought prior to any assessment taking place. The outcome of this test will determine what course of action is taken.

The results of the assessment may indicate that a student does not have a learning difficulty. In this case the students' needs are supported through the structures available to students, such as Year head or Tutor support. If the assessment indicates that the student does have a learning difficulty a decision may be made to refer the student for a formal PSS (Psychological Support Services assessment)

In its operations the school shall be guided by the new model of allocation for establishing a continuum of assessment and support.

Irish/ Modern Foreign Language Exemptions (MFL)

Exemptions are processed in accordance with the rules and guidelines set down by the DES (criteria set out in Circular M 10/94).

If a student has an Irish exemption at primary level, parents must notify Griffeen Community College and present the Irish exemption certificate on enrolment. Students who are exempt from Irish may be provided with small group teaching during this time in the areas of literacy, numeracy and social skills if the school allocation allows but **an exemption from Irish does not mean that students will not participate in some Irish classes for junior cycle.**

Allocations of Support

Griffeen Community College aspires to educate students with SEN in an inclusive setting where possible. This is supported with the in-class support of SNAs and may take the form of collaborative teaching settings or smaller teaching groups for particular subjects.

As directed by NCSE, the new model of allocation resources in the school will provide supports to students based on their needs in the Continuum of Support.

The SEN team will interpret the outcome of assessments and consider the most appropriate form of intervention for the student, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

If withdrawal of students with SEN from mainstream classes for additional support classes is deemed necessary, permission will be sought from parents. If deemed appropriate by the Principal and/or SENCO, a student may have timetabled support classes with a specific subject teacher. Where possible, withdrawal from mainstream classes will be timetabled to coincide with language exemptions. The provision of literacy and numeracy classes will be rotated termly to ensure that students are not withdrawn from the same subject in any given year.

Provisions of Support

Griffeen Community College aspires to provide a model of responsible inclusion that best meets the needs of the individual student. Support which allows students to achieve their learning targets within the mainstream classroom is the preferred method of provision. Where possible, the provision of collaborative teaching is in place to help students achieve their objectives.

- Individual classes are only used where a student requires specialised individual support.
- Small group classes are based on similar need profiles and the capacity to withdraw students at the same time. The organisation of these groupings is the responsibility of the SENCO.
- Withdrawal classes will take place in the case of an Irish/ MFL exemption or non-exam subject time where possible.
- Small classes may be used where groups of students are given Numeracy & Literacy, social skills and organisational support.
- A small number of students, for whom it is deemed, after consultation with relevant stakeholders, cannot sustain a full curriculum, will have their timetable reduced. In as far as possible and additional support classes will be provided.
- The provision of Level 2 Learning Programmes will be rolled out as part of the new Junior Cycle for students who have general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.

Approaches to Learning

Griffeen Community College believes that learning takes place most effectively in the context of a caring relationship and that positive teacher/student relationships foster trust and promote self-reliance and initiative in the student. Lessons are conducted in a secure, supportive and disciplined manner. The pupils and staff interact in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect.

The SEN Department staff will provide a variety of experiences/activities during the course of study and during a lesson, if possible. Teachers will try to identify the learning style of the individual and use suitable methodologies while acknowledging to appeal to the kinesthetic, auditory, sensory, verbal-linguistic, visual and interpersonal intelligences by creating opportunities for both individual and group activities.

School Programmes

Griffeen Community College recognises that programmes such as the Junior Cert Schools Programme and the Leaving Cert Applied Programme can be of great benefit to students and the school. We will continue to monitor our students' needs in relation to possibly establishing them into the future.

Administration Issues in the SEN Dept.

Communication of Information

All staff have access to the Additional Support Needs database, when required. This provides information about all students with Additional Educational and Support Needs and is updated regularly to provide important information to all staff.

Reasonable Accommodations (RACE)

The SEN Department will liaise with the State Examinations Commission to secure and facilitate reasonable accommodations for eligible students with Additional Support Needs during State Examinations. Applications, dates and deadlines are given to the school each year by the SEC (State Exams Commission). Parental permission is always sought at this stage.

Students who are eligible for special arrangements for the State Examinations will have the benefit of same during Griffeen Community College house exams, where it is possible for this to be achieved with the resources available.

Assistive Technology

The SEN dept. will liaise with the Dept. of Education and Skills and the NSCE to secure and facilitate personal equipment (such as laptops, mobile devices, notebooks, voice recognition software) for eligible students with identified needs that warrant this support.

Data Protection & Information Sharing

In accordance with The 1988 Data Protection Act/ 2003 Data Protection access to information regarding any student with SEN must be protected. All data is protected under the DDLETB Confidentiality Agreement in line with new GDPR regulations. All information is provided to staff through secure emails (work only) and via notes on vsware. Vsware is a password protected platform. All hard copies of confidential documents are kept in the locked fire proof locker in the main office.

School emails and discussion on VLE regarding students with SEN will only contain students' initials, to protect the privacy of all students.

Homework Procedures

Where SEN homework is given, the same procedures apply as per any other homework. Special emphasis is placed on feedback. SEN work is also recorded in the student's journal, and the journal may be frequently used to facilitate communication with parents.

Links with outside Agencies

Griffeen CC has fostered and is developing positive links with a significant number of outside agencies. These include

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Special Education Support Services (SESS)
- State Exams Commission (SEC)
- Beechpark
- PSS (Psychological Support Services of DDLETB)
- Clinical Psychologists
- Speech & Language Therapists
- Primary schools

This list is not exhaustive and the school will develop further links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate. It may be necessary to hold case conferences with relevant professional experts with the permission and knowledge of the students' parents (and often their attendance) to determine the best approach and provision for that student.

PSS Assessments (Psychological Support Services)

Each DDLETB school is allocated a limited number of assessments per year and priority is based on the needs of the student. Places on the list shall be prioritized according to need, as determined by the Principal and the SEN team.

Access to SNA's

Applications for SNA support are made through the NCSE. If successful, students are granted *access* to SNA support. This means that the number of students in receipt of access to SNA support is often greater than the number of SNA's allocated to the school. Therefore, the SEN team must assign SNA support based on the care needs highlighted. In some classes therefore, there may be no SNA support available. Where there is

SNA access, it is the role of the SNA to support teaching and learning in a discrete manner, so the student can access the curriculum, to promote the independence of the student, and to assist any other students who may require support when not assisting the student with access.

Transport

Applications for transport are made through the NCSE. If successful the students are granted individual or shared transport. The school is not responsible for the selection or supervision of drivers.

Rights of the Board to refuse enrolment:

Admissions for students with SEN

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases and in line with the provisions of this admissions policy. Such an exceptional case could include the following:

- a) In the opinion of the BOM & based on consultation with associated agencies (NCSE/SENO/feeder school)-The student has additional needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
- b) In the opinion of the BOM & based on consultation with associated agencies (NCSE/SENO/feeder school), that enrolment of a child would not be in the best educational interest of the child at that time.
- c) There is a recommendation for the student to attend a specialised ASD class but due to temporary accommodation of GCC there is no provision for an ASD class
- d) Adequate physical accommodation is not available for the applicant
- e) A decision to enrol would constitute a risk to the health and safety of the student concerned and /or other students enrolled in the school
- f) The school curriculum is unsuitable to meet the educational needs of the student and alternative suitable arrangements for an appropriate programme cannot reasonably be made at the school
- g) A decision to enrol would clearly have a demonstrable impact on the capacity of the school to deliver programmes to other students and alternative arrangements cannot reasonably be made at the school
- h) It is not satisfied that it has sufficient information to make an informed decision on the educational needs of the student.

****Griffeen CC will remain committed to its ethos of inclusive education but while it is housed in temporary accommodation it will not have a designated ASD class.**

Any applicant who is refused enrolment on foot of an application under this Policy is entitled to appeal that decision (See current Admissions Policy for appeal procedures).

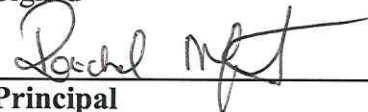
Signed



Chairperson

Date 17/1/19

Signed



Principal

Date 17/1/19