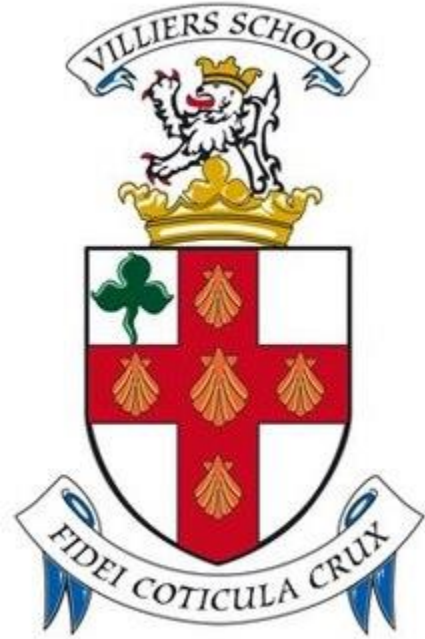


# Villiers School



## Special Educational Needs Policy

2024

## **Mission Statement**

Villiers School provides a broad and balanced education within a caring community. Our aim is to develop life and learning skills in all of our pupils, so that they can face the challenges ahead with awareness and integrity.

## **Rationale**

“Special education needs means a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate and benefit from education on account of enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition” (Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004).

This policy aims to ensure that all students with special educational needs are included and receive the optimal educational experience during their years at Villiers School to realise their potential.

## **Statement on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Villiers School is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) both within our school community and in the wider community. Villiers School strives to foster a safe and inclusive culture with equality at its heart so that diversity can flourish. We embrace our diversity as a strength, and we work with sincerity to enable all in our community to grow and flourish equally.

We place inclusive principles and practices at our core and are fully committed to understanding the challenges that exist for our community under the nine grounds for discrimination identified under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, namely, gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

We seek to proactively address these, to the best of our abilities, whether this be in respect of recruitment, the curriculum or school culture:

- Through a DEI focus in our policies, practices, and procedure
- Through appropriate training, development and experiences
- Through promoting these principles across the curriculum
- Through a commitment to Global Citizenship Education (GCE)
- Through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Discrimination, in any form, is not accepted within Villiers School, we aim to be a leading voice for equity, diversity and inclusion in Irish education.

## **Aims**

Villiers School aims to provide an inclusive environment for all students with special educational needs and to ensure that each student has the support needed to access, participate in and benefit from their education in Villiers School.

It is the aim of the School to ensure that the inclusive education offered, will allow each student to develop a sense of belonging to the school and the wider community.

## **Objectives**

The objectives and values underpinning this policy are:

- To support students who have any form of special educational need and to minimise its impact on their education and development, thus fostering positive self-esteem
- Promoting an environment which meets students' learning, physical, social, emotional and sensory needs
- Acknowledgement of and support for each student's role in the school community
- Priority given to the nurturing of positive teaching and learning relationships
- Recognition of individual talents and abilities
- Promoting strong collaborative relationships between students, staff, parents (including guardians) and support agencies
- To ensure that every student has access to as wide a curriculum as possible, with the goal to sit traditional state examinations – the Junior Cycle Programme, the Transition Year Programme, the Leaving Certificate and, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- To facilitate students in L2LPs (Level 2 Learning Programmes) where appropriate
- To include all students socially and academically
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to meeting the needs of individual students
- To encourage and facilitate continued professional development of all staff, in order to maintain a wholly inclusive environment.

It must be noted that this SEN Policy should be considered in tandem with the relevant DES circulars, DES Guidelines for Post Primary Schools – Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, the 'Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools' and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Guidelines, NEPS Continuum of Support, using the 'Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act' 2004 (EPSEN), Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2002, Disability Act 2005 as a framework.

## **Enrolment of students with identified special educational needs**

Prior to a student's commencement in Villiers School, it is the policy of the School to endeavour to plan for the special educational needs of the students entering our care.

This is carried out in the following manner:

1. Meetings are held between student, parents, Head of School and SEN Coordinator as required and as appropriate
2. Copies and details of psychological assessments and/or other professional reports including most recent school reports are submitted by parents and guardians
3. Primary schools forward Educational Passports of incoming students
4. Contact may also be established, once parental consent has been given, with speech therapists, occupational therapists and any other agencies, which may be involved with the educational progress of the student in question

Wherever possible the SEN department expect to be informed of any student with an identified special educational need, in the academic year prior to their entry to Villiers School. Parents of incoming students are formally requested to forward all relevant professional reports.

All incoming Form I students are assessed through the Scholarship exam including PPAD-E , usually in May, prior to commencement, to establish an initial indication of their cognitive ability. At this stage all Form I students will have formally been offered a place in Villiers and will have formally accepted this place. If concerns are raised at this point, the SEN team will liaise with mainstream teachers at the beginning of each academic year, and monitor the relevant students' progress during the first term.

The following steps have been set in place to ensure a smooth transition from primary to post-primary school:

1. Parental visits to school;
2. Student visits to school;
  - a. Meeting with Head of School
  - b. Shadow days – incoming students attend lessons and lunch with a personal Form I guide, in order to experience post-primary education, become familiar with the environment and develop an understanding of the experience and expectations of students at Villiers
  - c. Scholarship Day
3. Meetings with staff from students' primary school(s) where applicable;
4. Communications with parents to ease the transition to Form I;

5. Making all school employees and students aware of the need for an inclusive school environment and what this entails (Epsen Act 2004) e.g. locker location, dining hall accommodations, etc.;
6. Liaise with SENO to apply for additional support personnel and/or equipment if required;
7. If any health and safety issues arise from a student's mobility and care needs, we endeavour to quickly identify and, where reasonable, put appropriate strategies in place in consultation with relevant specialists where applicable.

### **Procedures**

**The procedure of supporting students with Special Educational Needs in Villiers School is as follows:**

#### **1. Identification:**

- SEN team available to discuss queries with parents of potential students on Open Day each year
- Parents are asked to provide SEN information for their student on the Open Apply application by filling out the Additional Educational Needs Form
- Individual communication(s) with parents/guardian of student with SEN (Special Educational Needs) are facilitated at this early stage, as it will help to fully inform the school
- Submission of professional reports where relevant are to be uploaded onto the Open Apply system
- Educational Passport (NCCA Guidelines 2016) is transferred from primary school to include 6th class report card, My Profile, My Child's Profile.
- Specialised Induction & Orientation for students with complex needs (as described above).
- Screening and Testing, pre and during Form I, Form III, Form IV and Form V
- Teacher referral

Students with special educational needs are an integral part of the classroom environment in Villiers. Each individual student's needs are assessed by the Special Educational Needs Team, in consultation with parents and with reference to professional reports and teacher observations where relevant. Information given by parents and in reports is treated with the upmost sensitivity. The student, based on their identified need, is positioned on the SEN Register in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support. This information is relayed to teachers during staff meetings, by email or in person by visiting the SEN department. In addition, there is

a restricted access data base containing the SEN register which teachers may consult via an approved SEN team member.

The position of students on the Continuum of Support is adjustable based on review, therefore teachers are encouraged to continually link with the SEN Department and view the SEN Register.

To aid teachers in their support of SEN students in their class, all teaching staff were given a laminated resource entitled 'Teaching/Learning Reference Guide to assist the NEPS Continuum of Support'. Additional advice is available through the Core SEN team and other specific teachers with relevant experience.

If concerns regarding a student arise through teaching, which were not previously identified, the SEN team will work collaboratively with mainstream teachers to establish the needs of that student and place them accordingly on the Continuum of Support.

## **2. Categorisation of SEN:**

The school categorises Special Educational Needs in line with current descriptions outlined in the EPSEN Act 2004 and Circular 0014/2017. These are detailed as follows:

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Severe Emotional Disturbance
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder/ Developmental Language Disorder
- Down Syndrome
- Multiple Disorders
- Disability arising from an assessed syndrome
- Mild/Borderline General Learning Disability
- Specific Learning Disability – Dyslexia and Dyscalculia

- Students where English is an additional language EAL along with students with exceptional ability are identified and additional support may be offered.

A professional diagnosis is not a requirement to receive support in Villiers School, however a professional report can frequently offer advice and support specific to the individual student's needs. In the absence of a professional report, where a need has been identified, students may be categorised by the area of their difficulties. In line with the NEPS Continuum of Support and as referenced above, if concerns are raised the SEN team in collaboration with parents and mainstream teachers observe and monitor students' progress. Different interventions and supports can be discussed and implemented with the intent to review and increase, if no improvement has occurred.

There is a fluidity to the position of students on the SEN Register and the Continuum of Support, which directly influences the level of intervention for the students. The main objective is to support students in an inclusive environment.

### **3. Profiling Students:**

**An indication of all students' ability and potential is established through:**

- PPAD-E: Post-Primary Assessment & Diagnosis- English (Form I)
- Cognitive Ability Testing CAT 4 (Form I and Form IV)
- WIAT III: Spelling & Reading (Form III and Form V)
- PASS -Pupil's Attitude to Self and School (Form IV)

**Additional Information is sometimes required to inform Student Support Files and it is sourced through the following:**

- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test Third Edition
- DASH test handwriting assessment
- Teacher Observation Sheets & Questionnaires
- Teacher Referral Forms
- SEN Core Team Weekly Meetings
- SNA Observations
- Parent/Guardian - Teacher Meetings
- Parent/Guardian Meetings
- School Reports, including progress reports, term reports and effort mark reports

- Educational Assessments and other Clinician Assessments.

#### **4. Provision of Resources:**

- Allocation of resources is based on Resource Hours and Special Needs Assistant support approved by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and in accordance with Circular 0014/2017. Support deployment is supported by Student Profiling outlined above. The intensity of additional support that is provided for students with low achievement and students with additional educational needs should be based on their needs and should be provided differentially through the Continuum of Support process.

Support teaching is granted in the following ways to help support the student:

- The subject teachers, in consultation with SEN Team will consider ways in which the teaching and learning can be differentiated or adapted to suit the needs of individual students.
- Co-operative Teaching
- Intervention in an area of need over a specified time frame
- Extraction for Individual and Group Teaching (withdrawal)
- Support is offered in literacy and numeracy as a priority, based on findings of Student Profiling. These supports are provided by subject specific teachers where possible.
- The purpose of support is to enhance a student's learning and attainment in literacy and numeracy. There is flexibility to provide for changing and emerging needs and is dependent on available resources in the school.
- Students in withdrawal are supported in the subjects which they are studying, by subject specific teachers where possible. Withdrawal lessons shadow the schemes of mainstream classes, so students with SEN have an opportunity to develop necessary skills to access the content with their peers in mainstream. This may be achieved through pre-teaching content, reinforcing content or skills-based learning.
- Access and support from a Special Needs Assistant is given to students in accordance with allocation from NCSE and in conjunction with recommendation from Clinician reports. Individual care needs of the student are central to the support offered from the SNA. Core aim is to foster independence and develop self-management and organisational skills. A Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) is devised outlining the priority of each student's care needs. Cognisance is given to emerging needs of students and diminishing needs as students progress through post primary education, therefore PPPs are regularly reviewed by SEN Coordinator and relevant SNAs.

#### **5. Support Agencies:**



In keeping with the ethos of the school with emphasis on the holistic development of the student the school works in a collaborative nature with the following support agencies;

- NEPS–National Educational Psychologist Services.
- Primary Care Teams
- Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists & Physio-therapists.
- SENO–Special Education Needs Organiser through National Council for Special Education.
- Limerick Intervention Services HSE.
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services- CAMHS HSE.
- Visiting Teacher Services for Deaf and Visual Impaired.
- Educational and Clinical Psychologists.
- Medical Personnel
- Jigsaw
- Permission is sought from parents before consultation is initiated. Supporting the needs of the student and family is central to engagement with support agencies.

#### **Provision for IB Candidates with special educational needs**

All IB students will be catered for under the mission statement, aims and objectives of the Villiers Special Educational Needs Policy.

In Villiers we aim to meet the needs of the range of learning profiles which are supported by the IB's approaches to teaching and learning. As per IB's Programme standards and practices (2010) we will demonstrate our support for a diversity of learning. This will be done through the support for students with learning and/or special educational needs and support for their teachers.

In line with IB schools worldwide, Villiers will aim for all students to experience positive learning environments based upon the IB's four principles of good practice. These are: affirming identity and building self-esteem; valuing prior knowledge; scaffolding; and extending learning (Learning diversity and the IB programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes, 2010:5)

#### **Assistive Technology**

When a student meets the criteria as laid down by the National Council for Special Education, we will then make applications for grants to purchase necessary equipment.

The equipment purchased under the grant scheme will be used in accordance with the terms set out in the SEN- Assistive Technology Policy.

We also liaise with students, the ICT Coordinator, subject teachers and parents to ensure that each student obtain the maximum educational benefit possible from their Assistive Technology.

Presently in Villiers school there are students who use a range of assistive technology, e.g. laptops/notebooks, C-Pen reader pens and Kindles, mobility aides, hearing aids and more.

### **Reasonable Accommodations and Examinations**

In consultation with students and parents the SEN department assist students who meet explicit criteria set out by the State Examinations Commission, to make an application for Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examination (RACE).

The RACE scheme is in place so that students of Form III and Form VI who meet specified learning, hearing, visual or physical criteria may apply to receive reasonable accommodation, ensuring the state examinations they are about to sit next June, are both accessible and fair for all. A separate, similar system is in place for students following the IBDP.

As mentioned previously all Form III and Form IV students participate in standardised testing. The results of these tests will be the first indicator whether the potential to make an application is valid or not. This standardised testing must be within 12 months of the application.

Once an appropriate standardised score is identified, supplementary evidence is necessary before an application can be made, e.g. samples of student's past exams.

Recent developments with RACE, means that certain accommodations approved at Junior Cycle may be reactivated at Leaving Certificate if the need persists and a reactivation application form is submitted. New emerging needs may also be accommodated at Leaving Certificate, but explicit criteria and evidence of need is required. Some Junior Cycle approvals may not carry through to Leaving Certificate, for example access to an individual centre, scribe.

Leaving Certificate applications are prioritised by the State Examinations Commission. Schools usually receive confirmation of accommodations by January. As a result, we endeavour to emulate these accommodations as best we can, for the relevant Form VI students in their Pre-Leaving Certificate examinations.

Unfortunately, schools do not receive confirmation of Junior Cycle accommodations until approximately March of the year of the Junior Cycle examinations. Nonetheless, we aim to supply appropriate accommodations where possible for their Pre-Junior Cycle examinations.

It is the policy of the School, where a clear need has been identified and, in our best judgement, it is highly likely a student will meet the explicit criteria set out by the SEC at the time of their examinations, to facilitate the student with reasonable accommodations in in-house exams. These in-house accommodations are limited to resources available to the School at the time and it must be noted that ultimately, for Junior Cycle, and Leaving Certificate examinations, any

application for accommodations is approved at the discretion of the State Examination Commission. The same applies to the IBDP application process.

### **Role of parents**

Within the SEN department, we rely on every parent to provide us with all the necessary information which can best support their student during their time in Villiers Secondary school.

Villiers SEN department endeavours to work in partnership with parents to enhance their student's education. It is expected that every parent will recognise the role that they must play in supporting their student during the school day, e.g. the supervision of homework, along with the provision of suitable materials and equipment for each day.

The SEN department has an 'open door' policy in relation to students who may be under pressure or suffering any kind of stress. It is expected that such concerns will be relayed to the department by parents in the knowledge that the information will be treated with the utmost respect and sensitivity.

It is the policy of the SEN department to be available to meet parents of incoming SEN students, if requested, prior to their entry to Villiers School.

We are available to meet with parents (by appointment) to discuss their student's needs.

### **Whole School Monitoring, Evaluation and Ongoing Review:**

As with all school policies this policy is evaluated/reviewed on an ongoing basis in line with Department of Education Policy, continual evaluation by School Management and Special Educational Needs Team.

**Appendix 1**  
**Department Action Plan 2024**

<b>Task</b>	Erasmus participation in STAIRS project; linking with 6 schools across Europe to share information on inclusion.
<b>Timeframe</b>	This is a 2 year initiative beginning with the kick off meeting in Norway (November 2023). This international project involves linking with 5 other school partners and sharing information regarding SEN in our distinct educational environments. We will have the opportunity to travel with students for 3 mobilities: Portugal, Malta & Spain. There is will be a additional leader mobility to France at the end of the project.
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The STAIRS group will produce two collaborative books of work on themes of 'good practice' regarding inclusion for SEN and 'Digital Story Telling' as an SEN practice.
<b>Review date</b>	September 2024
<b>Evaluation</b>	

**Department Action Plan 2023**

<b>Task</b>	New SEN Register with interactive links to information, resources and Student Support Plans. MS Excel will be used and each form groups will be given a sheet; there will be links to the NCSE website and information websites for differentiation.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Term 1- Roll out of SEN register Term 2- The inclusion of Student Support Plans for Form groups 1, 2 & 3
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The new MS excel SEN register will be utilised by staff and frequent updates will be given to disseminate information with greater transparency. This will aid mainstream differentiation for students with needs.
<b>Review date</b>	September 2023
<b>Evaluation</b>	This initiative was highly successful for dissemination of information to staff. We will continue to use this moving forward and implement this into our new roll call system, Tyro, once it is set up.

**Department Action Plan 2022**

<b>Task</b>	Sensory Room
<b>Timeframe</b>	Term 1- costings and application

	Term 2- painting and purchases Term 3- operational
<b>Success Criteria</b>	Students will be able to have rest and movement breaks in the sensory room to alleviate stress and anxiety. Any student in the school needing a sensory break could use this facility.
<b>Review date</b>	September 2022
<b>Evaluation</b>	The Sensory Room has been an amazing addition to the Resource Centre; it is in use for the majority of classes throughout the day and has been beneficial in helping students cope throughout the school day. A sign-in & out system has been put in place to ensure that students are safe and using the room for its intended purpose. Moving forward, we have been given additional money to add to the furnishings which were purchased at the beginning of September 2022. We plan to add lighting, noise cancelling headphones and weighted blankets. We will continue to review the room and plan to add

### Department Action Plan 2021

<b>Task</b>	Introduction of the L2LP
<b>Timeframe</b>	Over Term I, Term II and Term III
<b>Resources</b>	Staff in-service provided through the NCSE
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The success criteria will be based on: the upskilling of relevant staff the learning outcomes for participating students
<b>Review Date</b>	This plan will be reviewed in Term III, after students have worked through the L2LP for one academic year
<b>Evaluation</b>	The L2LP programmes are in full swing with two students: one in form 2 and another in form 3. They are busy building up evidence in their portfolios. Bonnie Dowling is coordinating this effort at the moment. We will look to add more students where appropriate.  NOTE: We have learned that a student must have MGLD to participate in L2LP. This will greatly impact who can avail of this programme.

## Department Action Plan 2020

### Priority

In line with our Action Plan from 2019, which saw the SEN department upgrade our standardised tests from the WRAT 4 to the WIAT III (UK standards), we now need to look at the CAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) that we are currently using. We have been using the paper form of the CAT 3 tests which are time consuming to administer and correct. We would like to move to the online CAT 4 tests with GL Assessments which are completed in a timely manner by students and generates results and a comprehensive report for each student instantly. Instead of administering these tests to Form II and Form V students, we will prioritise incoming Form I students and Form IV students.

<b>Task</b>	Update Standardised Testing (CAT4) to the online format for Form I and Form IV students
<b>Timeframe</b>	Within the first term
<b>Resources</b>	Consultation with the GL Assessment team, advice from NEPS psychologists, online CAT 4 tests- level E (Form I) and Level G (Form IV), SEN team members to become adept with the delivery of online tests and generating appropriate reports.
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The success criteria will be formed in relation to the reports generated from the online CAT4 tests and the time saving measures which the online testing will provide the SEN team. Our intention would be not only to share relevant reports generated via GL Assessments with relevant teaching staff but also with parents. We will use this data to inform our Continuum of Support and to identify possible candidates for L2LPs.
<b>Review Date Evaluation</b>	September 2021 Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 lockdowns, the SEN department was unable to complete testing with Form II and Form V students in term two. However, the WIAT III was used with the Form VI students in term one of 2020 to determine eligibility for RACE 2021. Students' attainments with the WIAT III were somewhat lower compared to attainments with the WRAT 4. The State Exam Commission has also disallowed the use of the WRAT 4 scores so the movement towards the WIAT III has proven to be a necessity. The SEN department will continue with the WIAT III for the Word Reading and Spelling tests moving forward.

## Department Action Plan 2019

### Priority

We have been using the WRAT 4 for a number of years and while it provides accurate indications of students' attainment scores, it is an American based system and we feel updating the testing to a tool which uses UK samples, may be more applicable to our students.

<b>Task</b>	Update Standardised Testing
<b>Timeframe</b>	Over Term 1 and Term 2
<b>Resources</b>	Consultation with neighbouring schools, NEPS link psychologist, private psychologists and third level Special Ed educators
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The success criteria will be gathering information from knowledgeable sources and evaluating the appropriate testing for Villiers. Based on this information, securing access to supports and resources for students, such as funding and making a purchase within the timeframe will be a clear indicator of the success of this action.
<b>Review Date</b>	This plan will be reviewed in term two, after testing has been used.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 lockdowns, the SEN department was unable to complete testing with Form II and Form V students in term two. However, the WIAT III was used with the Form VI students in term one of 2020 to determine eligibility for RACE 2021. Students attainments with the WIAT III were somewhat lower compared to attainments with the WRAT 4. The State Exam Commission has also disallowed the use of the WRAT 4 scores so the movement towards the WIAT III has proven to be a necessity. The SEN department will continue with the WIAT III for the Word Reading and Spelling tests moving forward.

### Department Action Plan 2018

#### Priority

In line with the NEPS Continuum of Support, we need to develop teaching methodologies that will ensure maximum inclusion in the mainstream classes and withdrawal only when deemed necessary. In order to support students with special educational needs, we need to broaden the practice of cooperative teaching across more subjects.

<b>Task</b>	Increase the practice of cooperative teaching in a number of different subjects in the School.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Over the course of the academic year
<b>Resources</b>	In-service provided by NCSE for individual teachers Application for in-school seminar for whole staff, provided by NCSE

<b>Success Criteria</b>	The success criteria will be seen through teachers embracing the practice and a culture of cooperative teaching is established in the school, across multiple subjects with clear learning benefits for students.
<b>Review Date</b>	This plan will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.
<b>Evaluation</b>	There were varying degrees of success with respect to the cooperative teaching that went forward this academic year. Success was dependent on several factors: on the ability of co-teachers to plan collaboratively, if the teachers shared subject knowledge (ie. if two maths teachers were able to teach together) and if there were clearly defined roles established between the co-teachers to create a harmonious classroom environment. The benefits of co-teaching for the students were apparent and it is the intention of the SEN department to continue to implement cooperative teaching where appropriate.

### **Department Action Plan 2017**

#### **Priority**

Due to the volume of students with SEN in our School, we feel that it is imperative to have a simplified resource, which is more accessible to teachers outlining all SEN students, their needs and the primary area of support, to assist teachers in their planning and teaching for all.

<b>Task</b>	Dissemination of SEN Student Profiling through SEN List
<b>Timeframe</b>	Over the course of the academic year, two year groups focused on per term.
<b>Resources</b>	Students professional reports, existing SEN lists, secure School network
<b>Success Criteria</b>	The success criteria will be seen through the establishment of an accessible list and the increased awareness of SEN needs among all teaching staff.
<b>Review Date</b>	This plan will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.
<b>Evaluation</b>	This was a success as an accessible list was created and subject teachers utilised this list to become more aware of the needs of SEN students in their classes. Furthermore, throughout the course of the academic year, in-services on planning for SEN students were attended and our original list has now been adapted to the format of the SEN Register, provided by NEPS in line with the new Continuum of Support.



## **Other Relevant Policies**

Please also refer to the following policies:

- (1) Code of Behaviour
- (2) Anti Bullying Policy
- (3) Intimate Care Needs Policy
- (4) Admissions Policy
- (5) Student Acceptable Usage Policy
- (6) Child Safeguarding Statement
- (7) Data Protection Policy
- (8) Inclusion Policy