**Special Educational Needs Policy:**

**School Name:** Edmund Rice Secondary School, Carrick-on-Suir.

**School Address:** Mount St. Nicholas, Carrick-on- Suir, Co. Tipperary.

**School Details:** ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

**Mission Statement:**

Inspired by its founder, ERSS Carrick-on-Suir’s mission is to “*To provide a caring Christian community which celebrates effort and talent in an environment of hope and happiness"* , with a vision to *“Learn together, succeed together in a respectful environment.”*

**Ethos**:

As an Edmund Rice School ERSS Carrick-on-Suir seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

● Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values

● Promoting partnership in the school community

● Excelling in teaching and learning

● Creating a caring school community

● Inspiring transformational leadership

Please Note:

Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with the provisions of GDPR legislation as introduced 25th. May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school’s Data Protection Policy.

**Students with Special Educational Needs**

The inclusion of students with special education needs in mainstream schools is a national and international development that is supported in national legislation and in statements and reports that have emanated from such international bodies as the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

With the mission statement above as its guiding principle, the school believes that all children and young adults should be valued equally irrespective of any individual needs or differences. The school is committed to making effective provision, through the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and other agencies, for those students in the school who have special educational needs. Inclusion requires a whole school approach through: school culture, management, organisation, approaches to teaching and programme delivery.

The term “special educational needs” is defined in the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 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”

**Relevant Legislation**

This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and special educational needs and the statutory requirements placed on schools, Boards of Management and the DES by the following legislation:

● 1998 Education Act

● 2000 & 2004 Equal Status Act

● 2000 Education Welfare Act

● 2004 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act These provide a legislative framework for the inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream schools.

The new allocation model is based on circular no. 0014/2017.

**Aims and Principles**

1. To ensure that students with SEN 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.

2. To ensure that all members of staff are aware of the SEN of students and of the contribution they (the staff members) can make in this area

3. To increase the literacy and/or numeracy skills of SEN students to the best of their ability.

4. To ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation but in the context of the whole school.

5. To ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.

6. To enable students to access the curriculum and to develop students’ self-esteem, confidence and feelings of achievement and fulfilment in accordance with the school’s mission statement and related policies.

7. To assist the general teaching staff with the educational management of students with SEN where appropriate.

8. To encourage and foster positive partnership with parents in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home.

9. The school will endeavour to seek from all available agencies the required resources (including staff, funding and materials) to meet the educational needs of SEN students.

10. To co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of the agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in supporting students with SEN.

11. To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources in accordance with circular 0014/2017.

12. Review and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with SEN.

**Organisational Structure**

1. The school practises a system of mixed ability teaching as well as withdrawal of individuals and small groups for the purpose of special educational support.

2. The number of students receiving support in any one year may vary according to:

● The number of students presenting with psychological assessments

● The number of students identified by the SEN team as requiring support

● The resources provided by the DES through NCSE

3. The SEN team consists of:

● SEN Co-ordinator

● Special Education Teacher (SET)

● Classroom teachers

● Guidance Counsellor

● Year Heads

● Senior Management

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Board of Management**

1. To ensure that the school has a comprehensive SEN policy in place that has been developed collaboratively with all the relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.

2. To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant and progressive curriculum is provided in the school.

3. To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN.

4. To ensure that the SEN Policy forms part of the school plan.

5. To ensure that the school meets its requirements in relation to students with SEN under relevant legislation as outlined earlier.

**The Principal/Deputy Principal**

o The Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of the policy and provision for students with SEN

o To appoint SEN coordinator(s) from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the coordinator

o To keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance to SEN

o In consultation with the SEN coordinator to liaise with the DES and other outside agencies.

o To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of hours and funds.

o To promote and support CPD of staff involved in SEN provision, and where relevant whole school staff.

o To provide adequate time for planning consultation and review of all aspects of SEN by the SEN team.

o To appoint staff with interest/qualifications in the area of SEN.

**SEN Coordinator**

o Liaise with the Principal regarding all SEN matters.

o To attend all relevant meetings o In consultation with the Principal and Guidance Counsellor coordinate the allocation of resource hours in line with the Department’s New Allocation Model.

o Co-ordinate the SEN team and liaise with class teachers as necessary.

o In consultation with school management and the Guidance Counsellor, compile a database of special educational students at the start of each school year

o Disseminate all relevant information to staff

o The SEN team will adopt the NEPS continuum of support as a model of best practice in identifying students in need of support.

**The SEN team consists of:**

• SEN Co-ordinator

• Special Education Teacher (SET)

• Classroom teachers

• Guidance Counsellor

• Year Heads

• Senior Management.

**SEN provision includes:**

o 1-1 support

o Small group support

o In class support

o Reverse integration for students with social difficulties

o Withdrawal

o EAL

o Behavioural Support

o Emotional support and self-esteem building

o Exempt Irish

o Team teaching where provision allows

**The development and delivery of Student Support Plans (SSPs) and Personal Pupil Plans (PPPs) is the responsibility of SET in consultation with the teaching staff and relevant personnel.**

**Special Education Teacher (SET)**

o Teach individual and small groups of students requiring learning support.

o Develop individual programmes for those students

o Liaise with subject teachers and other departments on employing differentiated teaching methods and resources in their subject teaching.

o Liaise with outside professionals when requested to by management.

o The role of the SET who has resource hours in the SEN team, is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of the SEN students.

Where possible, teachers with resource on their timetable are asked to attend meetings with the SEN department where the needs of the students are discussed and the teacher is asked to help formulate the individual planning.

**General teaching staff**

o To make a provision for students with SEN in their classes and subject areas.

o To be part of a whole school approach in relation to literacy and numeracy.

o To develop a positive ethos in the classroom for fostering an inclusive approach to meeting social and educational needs.

o The class teacher is responsible for the teaching/learning of students with SEN in his/her classes. They are required to identify needs in their subject area, plan for differentiated learning and liaise with the students’ parents/guardians in all aspects of SEN provision.

o To identify training needs and to secure training where needed.

o Class teacher should inform the SEN team of any concerns regarding special educational needs arising in their classroom.

o The class teacher is welcome to contribute to the student support planning process of the SEN student.

**Parent/Guardian involvement**

o To work in positive partnership with the school and other agencies.

o To support and encourage their child in their education.

o To support and engage in the planning process.

o To supply all relevant documentation and reports pertaining to students with SEN.

o Parental/guardian permission will be sought before a child will be given learning support.

**Students with SEN**

o To co-operate with the agreed programme, and its evaluation by participating in appropriate tests and assessments

o To contribute to the programme being drawn up to support their needs.

o To support and engage in the planning process.

**Identification of Students with SEN**

The school in conjunction with parents aims to identify possible needs at an early date so that appropriate resources can be applied for and be available to support students.

This process will usually involve the following, as appropriate to the identified student:

o At Open Night parents/guardians are informed that, on offer of a place, if their son has assessed needs or issues that might give rise to SEN, they should contact the school as soon as possible.

o Consultation with parents/guardians and primary school reports.

o Access to psychological reports (permission from parents/guardians for access to same needed).

o Analysis of screening tests (DRT)

o Use of continuum of support.

o Teacher opinion

o If necessary referral to the appropriate agency is made.

Where students do not have a psychological assessment, those with the lowest reading age coupled with below average DRT Scores are prioritised for support. Parental/guardian permission in writing is sought for same. 1-1 appointments are offered to parents/guardians by the SEN team if needed. Where students have assessed needs, appropriate applications are made, in good time, to the SENO.

**Categories of SEN**

The categories of SEN are those provided by NCSE for the purpose of applying for resources from the Department of Education:

● Borderline/Mild General Learning Disability

● Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties

● Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia/Dyscalculia)

● Physical Difficulties

● Speech and Language Disorders

● Gifted Children

● Issues around self-esteem and anxiety

● Support around mental health issues

● Sensory Impairments

● Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders

**Assessments**

The school expects that students will be assessed as follows:

● Standardised Assessments prior to entry to school.

● NEPS Assessment can be requested where deemed necessary.

● Review of any assessments already completed by outside agencies.

● Assessment through assessment tools as recommended by circular 0035/17

● Assessment through general teaching subjects.

**SEN Model of Organisation.**

**Identification Process:**

Special Education Needs students are identified for enrolment in the following manner.

**Mainstream Students:**

**New Students:**

The transfer of information to ensure effective positive transition from primary to second-level is essential.  The enrolment form requires information pertaining to identifying students with SEN. Each year an open day is held to assist parents and the school with the process of sharing information about prospective students.  Parents are requested to inform the school of any special educational, medical or other need, and supporting documentation where possible. This information is provided by means of the school enrolment form.

Students with SEN may be identified following consultation with the feeder primary schools. Passports are also received from the Primary schools. Regular communication exists between the management of Presentation Secondary Tralee and the feeder schools within the area.   Pupils in need of extra support are identified using the standardised tests including Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) that first years take in the March prior to their first term in ERSS.

Once contact is made, the Special Education Team is available to the parent for further contact and information depending on whether the student is enrolled in mainstream.

**Existing students :**

If parents/guardians have concerns regarding their child’s progress, they may contact the school secretary who will direct them to the appropriate person on the SEN Team.   Classroom Tutors and Year Heads may have concerns and highlight the need for a student to be considered for learning support in the event of noticeable difficulties arising in class.   If a student has not been identified as having a special educational need until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought in order to further assess the student. In-school interventions and 10 strategies will then be used, and the assistance of outside agencies may be engaged (e.g. NEPS, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist.). If a student has had a prolonged absence from school due to illness, bereavement etc., transient support is put in place for the student.

**Models of SEN Support:**

In assessing and deciding which students will receive supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context, the following options are considered:

• Team Teaching / Zone teaching

• Support Teaching

• Access to SNA in all / specific classes

• Small group withdrawal for specific topics

• Individual withdrawal

• Reduced Curriculum in consultation with SENO/EWO

• Alternative programmes: L2LP

All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and student.

**Programme Planning.**

**Individual Learning Plan (ILP) / Student Support File:**

According to “The Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines” (2007): “The individual learning plan (ILP) is an effective process through which a student’s special educational needs can be addressed and by which an appropriate education can be provided for him/her.”  This process has been drafted in accordance with the Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools – supporting students with Special Students with SEN - 09/2017.

The I.L.P process involves:

• Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.

• Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)

• Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)

• General profile based on formal/informal assessment.

• SEN provision

• Priority Need

• Setting targets for each priority learning need

• Identifying the strategies and resources required and available

• Relevant documentation

• Setting the date for review:  A review as often as necessary given the altering needs of the student.

“The Inclusion of Students with SEN Post-Primary Guidelines” [2007]    An ILP is put in place for each individual student with SEN and the following have an input in the formation of the students ILP:

The SEN Team, parents/guardians, student, the Deputy Principal, Principal, mainstream teachers,   the SNA and the relevant agencies as previously mentioned.

**Personal Pupil Plan:**

A ‘P.P.P.’ is attached to the IEP/SSF of those who are in receipt of SNA assistance.

**Timetabling.**

**Mainstream**:

School management allocate class periods of learning support to both student and teacher.    SEN Students in the Mainstream Classroom: Students are included in mainstream classes as appropriate taking cognisance of the student’s ability and available resources.

**Access to Curriculum.**

**Mainstream:**

Both the Special Education Teaching Allocation Circular and Guidelines for Post Primary Schools inform best practice regarding the SEN student in the mainstream classroom.

**Access to Resources:**

Resources are accessed and allocated in the following way:

• Sharing of school facilities

• Grants available for purchase of equipment and computer programmes

• Timetabling of specialist rooms where feasible

• Regular discussions regarding allocation of support

**SEN Team:**

The SEN Team and SNA’s have regular meetings, formal and informal.   During the school day SNA’s and mainstream teachers regularly communicate via the student’s journal, if not directly with the SEN Team.

Meetings between Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist and SEN classroom teacher occur; these are arranged on a need basis by means of a phone call or email.    Meetings between class teachers and SEN classroom teacher, these can be informal or formal.   Teachers may organise meetings with the Learning Support Teacher regarding students enrolled in mainstream education.

Senior Management Meetings occur within the school on a regular basis and issues regarding students with SEN may be discussed at these meetings.

SST and Care meetings identify students in need on a transient basis.

Meeting and communication occur with the SENO and EWO, on an informal and formal basis.  In addition there are also staff meetings, in-service training days and staff development days.

**SEN Pupil Register:**

At the beginning of the new school year all teachers and members of the SEN team receive a detailed register of all pupils with SEN. This information is exchanged with staff at the start of each school year, and stored as part of the student’s ILP.

**Liaison with parents:**

Liaison with parents/guardians is achieved in the following manner:   School Open Day, Parent-teacher meetings, Transition days, letter to the parents, Student Journal, Telephone calls, Text messages, ILP Meetings, Progress Meetings, Meetings with Multi-disciplinary team, Meetings involving community agencies, meetings with Principal and SEN Team.

**Record Keeping:**

At present, a full record of psychological reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual students file in the Middle Management office, in a locked cabinet. Due to GDPR, parents will now be asked to send a soft copy of these reports and each copy will be stored electronically in the students file on VSWare. All ILP’s are available on the Teacher Shared Resources System.

**Enrolment and Assessment.**

**Admissions Policy:** The school welcomes students with SEN as per the schools admissions policy.  (See school website.)

**Transition from primary level to second level:**

See Transition Policy

**Mainstream:**

At our Open Evening parents are encouraged to meet with the SEN team to discuss any specific needs of their child either currently identified at primary level, or, concerns they may have going forward to post primary. The Principal, Year Head and SEN Team make contact with and visit all feeder schools enrolling new students.  These visits help to both build the students profile and access information and advice regarding the student requiring support. All relevant documentation is requested to be forwarded to the school. This allows the school to put an appropriate plan in place to meet the needs of the incoming students from the start of the new school year.

**Assessment:**

All SEN students are encouraged to take the first year screening test depending on their ability. We currently use the following tests: CAT (Cognitive Ability Test), WRAT 4, Neale Analysis. The purpose of the entrance exams is to identify learning needs that are yet come to light, to identify exceptional learning needs to ensure a mixed ability class setting. Where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student’s individual needs are discussed. All screening occurs with parents’ permission. All students undertake the WRAT 4 spelling and writing tests which helps the SEN team to identify students’ needs.

**Evaluation**

All students with SEN in ERSS Carrick-on-Suir are assessed on an on-going basis. Assessment may be formal, informal, summative or formative.

The results of entrance tests are not disclosed to parents/guardians. However, where a concern arises, parents/guardians may contact the school and a student’s individual needs are discussed.

The successes of any intervention strategies are monitored on an on-going basis through formal and informal assessment.

The SEN department review and discuss SSPs/PPPs on a regular basis.

State exam results of students with SEN are reviewed on a yearly basis to inform and ensure best practice.

**Materials**

The SEN department has a range of materials, texts and reference material available to all teachers to support their work with students with SEN. The Principal supports the SEN Coordinator, in the purchase of resources for the SEN Department on a needs basis. A specific annual budget is not set.

**Links with outside agencies**

The school and the SEN Department and SET in particular will liaise, as required, with the following agencies with best practice and student welfare as its guide.

This is not an exhaustive list:

1. Primary schools

2. NEPS

3. NCSE – SENO

4. (NEWB) TUSLA

5. HSE: O.T. and Speech and Language Therapists

6. TUSLA

7. Library Services

8. Dyslexia Association

9. CPD supports

10. Visiting teacher services for Deaf and Visually Impaired

11. NCSE - SESS

12. C.A.M.H.S

Parental/guardian permission will be sought for consultation with appropriate agencies listed above at 2, 3, 5, 6 (where appropriate).

**Approval:**

This policy has been distributed to staff, parents and students for their approval.

Amendments have been made after consultation with these stakeholders.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir;

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be due for review on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_