



## **Rosemont School Special Needs Policy**

**Reviewed:** October 2017

**Due for review:** 2019

### **Introduction**

Rosemont School's Special Educational Needs policy is based on the school's mission statement.

It has been drawn up according to the guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant educational bodies. Its main concern is the Wellbeing of each student. (See bibliography for more details)

### ***Our School Mission and ethos***

Rosemont is an academically stimulating school with a Catholic ethos that encourages girls to live their faith in the ordinary events of every day. Christian faith is the reason why each individual girl in Rosemont is respected and valued, whether she is a believer or not. Our educational mission draws life from ideals that are sincerely Catholic; these same ideals are open to people with a wide array of beliefs and backgrounds. This partnership is possible because the Catholic faith is a truly humanising faith: the salvation it offers is a salvation that makes us more genuinely human. St. Josemaría Escrivá wanted people to discover in their Catholic faith a basis for unity and solidarity in working with others to build up an authentically human ecology in the world.

Our school was founded by a group of forward-thinking parents in 1977. They recognised that strong, effective partnerships between parents and teachers are essential for children to achieve their greatest potential. From birth to adulthood parents are the primary educators of their children. By forming a real partnership with parents, Rosemont gives students a powerful advantage. We have found that success is certain for students whose teachers and parents collaborate with them in the development of their goals and strategies for pursuing academic excellence.

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with learning difficulties or special educational needs takes in Rosemont School and the philosophy which underpins it. Rosemont School operates an inclusive mixed ability policy where students of all abilities are taught in the same classes. Streaming of classes occurs in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year for core subjects such as Irish and Maths.

**Definition:**

Students with learning difficulties or special educational needs are:

Students whose educational difficulties or special educational needs prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education normally provided for students of the same age.

Students who have been identified as being ‘gifted and talented’ in Rosemont are also included in this policy on SEN. Please refer to the Gifted and Talented policy for more information.

Note: for the purpose of this policy document, the term “special needs” should be understood to include the terms “learning difficulties” and “special educational needs” unless otherwise stated.

**Key Objectives of Special Educational Needs Policy**

The general educational objectives for students with special educational needs are the same as for all students. The main aims are:

- To help each pupil reach her full potential according to her capabilities.
- To establish lines for clear communication and feedback between all parties involved.
- To work on a team approach to learning support
- To further develop skills among teachers for mixed ability teaching
- To support the wellbeing of each student

**Admission to the school**

More detail on admission to the school may be found in the school’s Admissions Policy.

**Career guidance**

Students meet with the career guidance counsellor regularly. DATS tests are carried out at senior cycle and these highlight any existing special educational needs. Students are referred for further assessment if necessary. CATS are carried out in Junior Cycle, usually early in first year.

**Coaching**

At Rosemont there is an emphasis on the individual. Each student is assigned a personal coach. The student can meet with her coach every three weeks, or when necessary. Coaches encourage students to set targets and goals for themselves. Our coaching system is especially effective because it focuses on the needs of each individual and their wellbeing.

Coaches promote learning at every level of the person; academic, spiritual, human, social, personal, interpersonal. Students with special educational needs benefit greatly from the coaching system. It ensures they are able to set themselves targets which are within their individual reach. Any problems encountered with particular subjects can be discussed with the coach who can then liaise directly with the subject teacher.

**Coaching with parents:**

Communication between teachers and parents has traditionally been excellent in Rosemont School. The school believes parents play a positive and guiding supportive Rosemont School Policy on Special Educational Needs October 2017

role in student education. Rosemont's coaching system allows parents of all students to have a fully supportive role in their daughter's education.

Parents can see coaches once per term to ensure their involvement in their daughter's education.

Coaches also make personal contact with parents if necessary by telephone /letter/email.

Coaches meet regularly for meetings with the Head of Coaching.

### **Student Support Team-Class Teachers**

Each class has a class teacher assigned to them. The class teacher is a member of the teaching staff with a special pastoral care role including each student's wellbeing. As well as having specific administrative duties, the class teacher monitors class progress and is therefore a valuable point of contact for all parents.

### **Subject Teachers**

Subject teachers also have an important role to play in helping any students who may have special educational needs. They provide personal oral feedback and encouragement both in the class and outside to students of all abilities.

Subject teachers also closely monitor class atmosphere and the demeanour of individuals, taking account of each child's wellbeing and discuss with class teacher if concerned about a particular child or the class as a whole. They actively encourage the development of values such as empathy, kindness, generosity, sincerity and integrity etc., within the context of the classroom, and place particular value on the appreciation of differing talents and skills within the class.

There is open communication between Class teachers, Coaches and Subject teachers to collaborate to achieve specific, student-centred goals and to ensure an awareness of the specific needs of any pupil at a certain time.

### **Planning**

Subject plans are based on the school's mixed ability policy. In the majority of cases the policy means creating activities within and outside of the classroom which allow a positive and meaningful learning experience for the full ability range. Subject plans all include a range of teaching methodologies and resources which cater for all the students' needs. Staff planning sessions incorporate planning for students with special educational needs.

### **The Curriculum**

It is school policy that all students, including students with special needs, should have access to the broad and balanced curriculum provided in the school. Students with special needs require more flexibility of choice. Special care is taken with option subjects chosen.

### **Methodologies**

Teachers employ a wide range of techniques and methodologies to reach out to the different learning styles of students. Teachers receive regular training to ensure that they are up to date with the latest developments in methodologies, which allows them to reach out to students of all abilities. Examples are modules staff have taken in co-operative learning, and active/discovery learning.

### **The transition from primary school to secondary school.**

At Rosemont School we are aware of possible difficulties encountered by students of all abilities, which can be caused by the move from primary to secondary school. Sample Afternoons, (usually 3 per academic year) are organised for incoming students prior to entry. This allows students to get to know the other members of their class. Again activities are based on our mixed ability policy to allow all students to become involved.

### **Reasonable Accommodations in state examinations**

The school management applies for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations for students with learning difficulties or special educational needs each year in consultation with the parents, the child and the schools designated NEPS psychologist.

### **Gifted Students**

The term 'special educational needs' also applies to those students who may be especially gifted in one or more areas. Diverse methodologies employed by teachers allow students of all levels to be challenged in class. School planning also incorporates planning for gifted students. Rosemont's emphasis on the use of technology provides scope for students to work at a pace appropriate to their abilities.

### **Technology/Laptop Usage**

Students who may have language difficulties are provided for by use of laptops for written assignments, in keeping with the Department of Education policy. Such students may be allowed to use laptops for completion of state examinations.

### **Transition Year**

Rosemont's policy of inclusion is maintained throughout transition year. The TY programme aims to challenge and affirm the full spectrum of abilities of participating students. In some cases this means specific activities targeted at students with particular learning abilities or particular learning needs. Individual cases which have been identified as requiring special learning support continue to be monitored to ensure ongoing progress for the given situation. Over the years we have been happy to note how many of the modules that students experience in Transition Year prove to be particularly constructive in building self confidence among those with special needs. In particular, it has been found that the teamwork involved in social work, adventure sports, the mini company, to mention a few, have affirmed students who have special needs due to academic, personal or family challenges

### **Students**

Results of this policy of inclusion have been positive to this point. Feedback from students and parents has been very encouraging and affirming of our approach in facilitating students with special educational needs. Our policy approaches true inclusion as the specific coaching of each individual gives to each student complete equality in the school environment.

### **Bibliography**

"Exceptionally able students" National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2006)  
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“Inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs-Post-Primary Guidelines”  
Department of Education and Science (2007)  
“Chief Inspector’s report” DES Inspectorate (2005)  
The Education Act (1998)