SCOIL MHUIRE



Inclusion Policy

Supporting Students with Additional Educational Needs

June 2022

Mission Statement:

Scoil Mhuire Kanturk is a Catholic co-educational secondary school under the Trusteeship of CEIST. We are committed to educating our students to their full potential in a spirit of equality and inclusiveness, that welcomes and nurtures all of the diverse abilities and talents of the various communities we serve.

Introductory Statement:

Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk is a co-educational secondary school with a long and proud tradition of serving the educational needs of our community in the North Cork area. The holistic development of each student entrusted to our care is of the utmost importance. Scoil Mhuire operates under the trusteeship of Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). As such, our school's mission is underpinned by the CEIST core values and charter which aims to support and nurture an atmosphere of care, respect and joy, where students, staff and parents work together for the common good of all.

This policy document aims to outline the additional education supports available for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in our school, and the structures which underpin it. In accordance with The Education Act (1998), Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk aspires to 'provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs, and without prejudice, uses its available resources to ensure that the educational needs are identified and provided for'. Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk has an ongoing commitment to meet the specific needs of each individual student in the most appropriate manner possible.

Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk welcomes pupils with Special Education Needs. In line with the EPSEN Act 2004, we recognise the need to provide education to those students with additional educational needs in an inclusive environment.

In keeping with our school's ethos, the principal aim of the Special Educational Needs Team at Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with SEN and to enable each student in our care to realise their individual potential.

This policy document was drawn up in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal, subject teachers, the SEN Core Team, parents, students and the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk.

Rationale

This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional educational support for students with SEN. It also outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision. This policy reflects our current practice, it is a working document and will be reviewed every two years or if changes are made to the allocations model.

The rationale for this policy is based on the principles laid out in the EPSEN Act 2004 which states that "People with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers".

The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education and Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998, 2003 and 2018)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).

• The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

<u>Aims</u>

In providing for all students, and particularly for those students with special educational needs, Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk aims to:

- Promote the emotional, social, educational and physical wellbeing of students.
- Ensure that all relationships within the school are imbued with a spirit of care and
 respect where education takes place in an inclusive environment, in line with our
 school's ethos.
- Ensure that students with SEN are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner, whereby those with the greatest needs have access to the greatest level of support as outlined in DES circular 0014/2017.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the special educational needs of students.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision-making process in relation to their children.
- Cooperate with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special education needs using best practices.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs.
- Communicate information between the SEN Core Team, Principal, staff, parents/guardians and students.
- Track, monitor, evaluate and report the progress of students with additional needs.

Definition:

Students with special educational needs are those who are restricted from participating in and benefiting 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. (EPSEN Act 2004)

Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students.

To date, the school has provided for the following categories of students with Special Educational Needs:

- Mild/ Moderate General Learning Disability
- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention
 Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Specific Learning Difficulties Dyslexia, Dyscalculia
- Physical disabilities Dyspraxia, Cystic Fibrosis and Muscular Dystrophy
- Specific Language Impairment
- Mild speech and language disorders
- Sensory difficulties (Hearing and visual impairments)
- EAL (English as an Additional Language)
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Exceptionally able students

In addition to these categories, we understand that under circular 08/02 (Appendix 3) the following categories of SEN also exist:

- Down Syndrome
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability

Change in allocating Special Education Teaching supports

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Report *Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs* (NCSE 2014) highlighted several shortcomings associated with the system for allocating special education teaching resources to all schools.

On this basis, the Department introduced a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools with effect from September 2017. Special Education Circular 0013/2017 provides full details on the revised Special Education Teaching Allocation.

The main features of the revised model for allocating Special Education Teaching supports

Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on educational profiling.

A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all students, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools.

In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with special educational needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The Board of Management will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special educational needs.

Board members will be knowledgeable about the school's special educational needs provision – funding, equipment and personnel and will ensure the provision of adequate supports within the limits of school resources and staffing allocation.

The School Principal:

 The Principal shall have overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met.

- The Principal takes general responsibility for establishing and promoting school-wide policies and procedures which support the learning of all students, including those with special and additional educational needs.
- The Principal shall identify the members of the SEN Core Team / Coordinator and
 offer guidance and support in discharging their duties, thus ensuring the goals for
 SEN education in Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk are achieved.

Subject Teachers:

The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs.

- The subject teacher shall be aware of the school's policy and procedures (as outlined in this policy) for dealing with students with SEN, and work to ensure all students' needs are met.
- To seek advice from the SEN Core Team regarding students with SEN.
- To participate in CPD in the area of SEN.
- To devise a plan, in consultation with the Special Educational Teacher or SEN Coordinator, on the most effective use of SNAs in their classroom.
- To support and encourage independent learning skills in their students.
- To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students.
- To create a positive classroom environment for all students.
- To create opportunities for success
- To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.
- To assess, monitor and report on student progress.
- To consider the needs of students with SEN in all aspects of classroom planning.
- To identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour, or interaction with other students) and report these concerns appropriately.
- To complete referral forms (SEN Core Team / Year Head / Student Support Team) as required, in order to contribute to group or individual planning, support and review
- Implement agreed strategies
- Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies as appropriate

- Direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom
- Inform parents of the progress of students through the parent-teacher meeting and school reports.

Year Managers

- Will support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and collaborate with the SEN Core Team, where appropriate.
- Will support the inclusion of individual students with SEN by monitoring their progress within the year group
- Will encourage an awareness and acceptance of diversity, including respect for students with SEN

The Special Education Needs Core Team:

This team is delegated to manage the provision of special educational needs in the school. It includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the Guidance Counsellor and two Special Educational Teachers.

SEN Coordinator(s):

The SEN Coordinator(s) (SENCO) will:

- Facilitate and coordinate CPD for staff in SEN
- Communicate with the Principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Manage the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- Coordinate provision for students with special educational needs
- Consult with the class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment
- Undertake the testing and screening of students when a referral or concern is raised.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for students with additional needs
- Liaise with NEPS Psychologists, the SEN Core Team and class teachers to prioritise students for psychological assessments (NEPS).

- Schedule and lead regular SEN Core Team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for students with additional needs.
- Collaborate with senior management and the SEN Core Team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents, where necessary, regarding any concerns about their child, advise
 parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them
 regarding their progress.
- Order sufficient stock of assessments
- Maintain lists of students who are receiving additional support
- Maintain an updated summary of the special educational needs of students on the school MIS, VSware
- Organise and purchase resources on behalf of the SEN Core Team
- Develop a Student Support Plan for each pupil who requires one, in consultation with the class teachers, Special Education Teacher, SEN Core Team and parents
- Process applications for Reasonable Accommodations for the Certificate examinations.
- Process Irish Exemptions in collaboration with Senior Management
- Advise on Reasonable Accommodations for in-house exams
- Advise SNAs around the care needs of relevant students
- Make applications for Assistive Technology to the DES
- Participate in the Student Support Team
- Make regular presentations and updates at staff meetings.

Special Education Teachers with Resource Hours / Learning Support

Special Education Teachers will:

- Be familiar with the current and future needs of SEN students, support these students by addressing these needs.
- Formulate programmes for individual progression that provides support to the SEN student.
- Work in close collaboration and consultation with the SEN Core Team and subject teacher in the creation of relevant and resourced programmes of study.
- Each student with SEN will be allocated a Lead SET.

The Lead Special Education Teacher will:

- Establish and maintain a support plan for students in their group, in consultation with the SEN Core Team, SEN Coordinator, class teacher and parents where appropriate.
- Share support plan targets with the SET and class teachers.
- Have responsibility for monitoring support plan targets, student progress and collating information for reporting by the SENCO.

Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor has an important role in assisting all students, including those with special educational needs at the different stages of schooling.

- Assisting the SEN Team in identifying SEN students.
- Counselling all students, including those with SEN, on personal, educational and career development
- Assist in the coordination of various psychometric and attainments tests, such as CAT4, NGRT at different stages of student development - for example First Year and TY
- Advising students and parents on subject choice and subject load
- Making referrals to other professionals and agencies, as appropriate
- Liaising with students, parents and SEN Core Team in relation to DARE and other relevant applications

As with all students the level of input the Guidance Counsellor has with SEN students will vary from individual to individual depending on their level of need.

The whole school guidance programme aims to meet the needs of students along a varied range, from a whole school approach to group and individualised approaches. The continuum model of Guidance for All, Some and Few is applied.

Special Needs Assistants:

Special Needs Assistants make a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with special educational needs. SNA duties are assigned by the Principal in accordance with Circular 0030/2014

The SNAs role will be:

- To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs.
- To be available on the school premises at the time agreed and specified by school management.
- Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as a bus escort during school hours
- Assisting children with difficulties e.g., helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of non-teaching nature
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate and so-operation with any such changes to policy and practices arising from the school development process
- Engagement with parents of special needs pupils formal and informal as required and directed by the SENCO and school management
- To liaise with the SENCO on all matters relating to children with an SNA's care
- Explore practical ways of relating to children with special needs by engaging with CPD to address the care needs of children within the care of the SNA.

• Work within principles of good practice in e.g. confidentiality, respect, inclusion, independence, boundaries, etc.

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team will be established Senior Management at the start of each school year as part of the student support system of our school. The composition of the team will be identified by Senior Management and will include the SENCO as a member. That system encompasses a range of supports that cater for the learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs of students. The Student Support Team is a student-focused mechanism put in place by our school in order to coordinate the supports available to all students in Scoil Mhuire. It also aims to:

- Enable students with support needs to continue to access a full education
- Facilitate links to the community and other non-school support services
- Assist staff in effectively managing students with higher care needs by communicating student support concerns
- Advise school management on the development and review of effective student support structures
- Support and complement the existing Pastoral Care and Behavioural Management systems in Scoil Mhuire.
- By utilising the continuum of support the SST can provide student support to meet the needs of all, some and a few.

Parents/Guardians:

Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education.

The quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents can provide valuable support to a child with SEN during the transition process.

The parents of a child with SEN can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child's learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning preferences.

Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties they observe in their child's learning as they progress through post primary school. This should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school.

The SEN Core Team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN upon acceptance of a place in our school. Parents are requested to:

- Share any relevant information such as existing or pending reports from health professionals.
- Share concerns regarding their child's development.
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in the suggested home-based activities
- Provide feedback on progress to achieve targets.

Students:

In Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk, we believe that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning. Students who are in receipt of Special Education teaching should, as appropriate:

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of their medium and short-term learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets that have been agreed.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught in their Special
 Education class and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

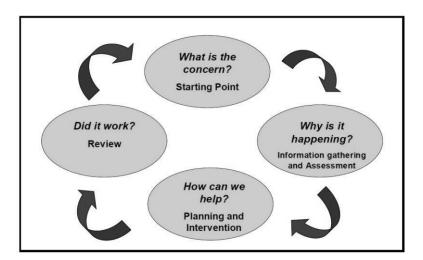
Model of Organisation

The Special Educational Needs system will be based on aiding the holistic development of the student, focusing on natural talents and abilities to overcome areas of weakness. Early intervention is seen as a key priority to the success of the new allocation model. Resources, activities, content, and methodologies will be chosen bearing in mind the need to ensure that Special Educational Needs is a positive experience whereby students enjoy participating in their education. Special Educational Needs classes will be organised in such a manner that it creates the least possible disruption to mainstream classes and the progress of Special Educational Needs students in those classes, to avoid inadvertently increasing the difficulties these students experience.

Continuum of Support

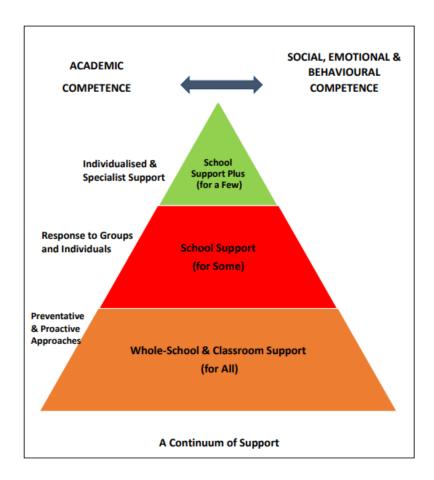
The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk is underpinned by recognition that special educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. This framework ensures that interventions are incremental and may shift from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify students' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way while engaging with external agencies as required.





Whole School & Classroom Support:

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for students who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are additional to or different from those required by other students in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual student. The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students

in the class. The teacher may discuss the nature of the problem with parents and consider strategies that may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by subject based teachers to support emerging needs.

School Support:

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet students' special educational needs. Therefore, School Support may be required. The subject teachers are responsible for collaborating with the Special Educational Needs Team (SEN Team) in the identification and problem-solving process, as it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan. Support at this level can take many forms, for example: team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, peer mentoring, inclusion in social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems. A Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support Plus:

If a student's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan. Individualised supports will be targeted to meet identified needs, e.g. numeracy. Such support will be offered dependent on available resources.

Identification Procedures:

School Based identification:

A combination of both formal and informal in-house assessments may be undertaken to support the identification of students with additional needs.

Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:

- Observations from mainstream teachers and SNAs
- Consultation with subject teachers, parents and students
- Student Journal
- Meeting with student

Formal assessment may involve the following:

- Review of Primary Passport, Report Card and SSF
- Review of in-house exams and reports
- Behavioural Record, if appropriate
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellor
- Administering and interpreting diagnostic tests

Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk uses the following procedures for identifying a student with SEN:

- Parents may indicate on the student information section of the enrolment form of special needs that were identified in primary school and are requested to supply the school with any relevant information including Student Support Files (SSF) from primary school.
- The transfer of all students with their primary passport and report cards in 6th class enables the SEN Core Team to identify students with low Test Scores.
- Standardised tests (CAT 4, NGRT and Maths Competency Test) are administered to
 all incoming First Years. These tests, in conjunction with contextualised information
 supplied by parents and primary schools, assist in the identification of students who
 may have additional needs or require additional support. Students performing below
 the 10% percentile on standardised tests will be prioritised for support.
- Additional individual testing such as WIAT III, Dyslexia Screener or Dyscalculia screeners may also be used, as appropriate, to gather further information relating to student needs.
- A class teacher, SNA, parent/guardian or Year Manager can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN Core Team.

SET Resources Deployment

The deployment of special education teaching resources and supports in Scoil Mhuire is guided by Circular 0013/2017 being deployed in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with special educational needs.

This is provided in a variety of ways.

- The range of teaching supports include team-teaching, small group teaching and, where possible, individualised teaching for periods of time to address specific learning needs.
- A Special Education Teacher (SET) may work in the classroom with the class teacher.
- A SET may withdraw students in small groups and/or individually for a period of time (depending upon the nature of students' needs and resources available to the school) for targeted teaching of key skills.
- Individualised learning needs are addressed through the above and are not solely equated with withdrawal from class for one-to-one or group tuition.
- Team-teaching provides an appropriate model for engaging with individual needs in the collective setting of the classroom.
- Through a combined deployment of SET resources in both; small groups of students, and in classroom support teaching as opposed to primarily one to one teaching, students often receive more support than they otherwise would have done.

Model of SEN Provision

Some students will be placed in School Support on entry because their needs are known and documented prior to transitioning to Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk. For other students, needs will emerge over time.

Depending on individual needs of the student the following approached to support will be considered:

- Team Teaching
- Support Teaching
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal

Curricular reduction

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need.

Student Support Files

The Student Support File allows a school to track the student pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to students, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored on the SEN drive on the school internal network.

A Student Support File will be opened by a member of the SEN Core Team and maintained by the assigned Lead SET while supports for that student are in place.

Student Support Plans

A Student Support Plan is devised for students for whom support is recommended.

The process involves:

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information obtained 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
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review

Interventions will be planned to meet individual needs. A review of the interventions will be carried out by the SET Lead Teacher assigned to the individual/group.

Timetabling of Resource Provision

Irish Exemptions

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents (or by the student themselves if they have reached the age of 18) and supported by an Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the DES will be strictly adhered to (Circular 0052/2019). There is a strict protocol for the processing of requests for consideration for an Irish Exemption and exemptions will only be granted where a student meets the relevant criteria following an evidence-based intervention.
- Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support/Resource is arranged for students with SEN, who do not study Irish, during Irish time. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability

Withdrawals

The SEN Core Team may withdraw students from other subject areas in consultation with the respective subject department and with parental permission.

Record Keeping Procedures and Sharing of Information

Psychological reports / other relevant reports

A full record of psychological reports, along with all other relevant reports (such as medical reports, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language reports etc.) pertaining to students with SEN are securely stored in individual students file in the main office.

A digital copy of these reports is also securely stored on the SEN drive.

Access to both hardcopy and digital reports is granted and monitored upon request to the SENCO.

Vsware Summary Reports

A brief summary of the special educational needs of each student is available to classroom and SET teachers via the school MIS (VSware) through the SEN tab.

Student Support Files

- Student Support Files are securely stored on the SEN drive.
- They are developed to enable the SEN Core Team to plan interventions and to track a student's pathway through the Continuum of Support.
- Reporting by SET and classroom teachers documents a student's progress over time
 and assists the SEN Core Team in providing an appropriate level of support to
 students, in line with their level of need.
- These SSF's are securely shared with the SEN Core Team and the designated Lead SET.

Student Support Plans

- The Student Support Plan identifies concerns, sets targets to be reviewed and is updated to address the students current needs.
- The designated Lead SET sets and reviews targets within the SSP.
- SSP's are dynamic working documents which are routinely updated and shared with classroom teachers via a link on the MIS SEN tab to support their classroom practice in addressing the needs of a student.

Learner Progress Report (LPR)

- Ongoing reporting and communication with parents/ guardians of student progress is a vital component of the continuum of support.
- A Learner Progress Report is compiled by the Lead SET and overseen by the SENCO this is issued with the usual school assessment and reporting windows.
- All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. Student records are destroyed after seven years.

Procedures for application for Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)

The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for processing the applications for Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations. Guidelines are set out by the DES. Parents and students will be informed of the outcome of their application.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk on the
_____ and is available for view on the school website or on request from the school.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed in February 2024 and every two years thereafter. The Board of Management and the Principal will ensure that provision for special educational needs remains an integral feature of our school's improvement planning.