Fortiter et Humaniter

Section 1: General Information

Introduction

Portadown College seeks to promote an inclusive ethos. All students are offered access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Every student has an entitlement to develop their full potential while being educated alongside their peers. The College seeks to provide educational experiences which celebrate all achievements and recognise individuality and will work towards minimising barriers to learning.

Objectives:

We the College, with the students and parents/carers will:

- ensure that no student who may have a disability/SEN is treated less favourably or disadvantaged in any way in comparison to those who have no disability/SEN;

- ensure that high expectations are maintained for all students;

- encourage inclusive practices among the teaching staff;

- strive to ensure that the views of students are given high importance in terms of planning to meet needs, including establishing and reviewing Education Plans and Annual Reviews;

- promote a sense of belonging and community;

- strive to ensure that students with SEN/disability will have a positive self-image;

- provide early identification of need through a variety of means;

- take reasonable steps to ensure that a student's inclusion is compatible with the effective educational experience and outcomes of other students;

- promote the involvement of parents/carers as partners in the planning and delivery of learning;

- where appropriate, work with outside agencies to meet the needs of the student;

- encourage teachers to differentiate in the classroom and be aware of and use different teaching strategies;

- provide development of the student's full potential: socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually, to ensure the needs of the whole student are addressed;

- provide a range of SEN provisions to match the range of SEN/disability, evaluating the provision provided and amending as appropriate;

- develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of students to ensure progress, thereby promoting success and developing self-confidence through increased independence;

- enable students to be active partners in their learning;

- develop and make use of all resources e.g. Classroom/Domestic Assistants and Exam Concessions in support of students with SEN/disability.

Definition of SEN

"A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her."

(The Education (NI) Order 1996 definition of Special Educational Needs)

"A child has a learning difficulty if he has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age and/or has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities generally provided for children of his age in ordinary schools"

(The Code of Practice Par. 1.4)

Definition of Disability

"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

(Part 1 of Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

Summary: A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

(a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.

(b) Has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools.

(c) Is under compulsory school age and is likely to fall within category (a) or (b) above.

Management of SEN within the Policy

Roles and responsibilities:

(i) Board of Governors

(Adapted from the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998, para 2.3-2.6 and SEN Resource File (DENI 2011)

The Board of Governors should, in co-operation with the Principal, determine the College's general policy and approach, establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and maintain general oversight of the College's work:

1. Take account of the provisions of the DE Code of practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs.

2. Use their best endeavours to provide for students identified with SEN and ensure that parents/carers are notified of their child's special needs.

3. Maintain and operate a policy on SEN.

4. Ensure that where a registered student has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them.

5. Ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered students with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching.

6. Allocate funding for special educational needs and disability.

(ii) Principal

(Adapted from the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998, Page 7 and SEN Resource File (DENI 2011))

The Principal has responsibility for SEN/disability provision, informing governors and liaising with SEN co-coordinator.

The Principal should:

- ensure that all students have their needs identified and met in an inclusive learning environment;
- ensure the College is committed to 'capacity building' to make sure that all teaching staff take responsibility for meeting the needs of all students;
- see that all staff are committed to inclusion and to removing barriers to learning, to ensure all staff are responsible for meeting the needs of all students;
- ensure that the SENCO is provided with adequate time, outside of normal classroom duties, to ensure that s/he can fulfil their SENCO duties and evaluate their work;
- provide continuous professional SEN development for all staff and ensure that a record is kept of staff training (please refer to SEN File of Appendices for details);
- ensure that effective management is in place for students transitioning from contributory schools at 14 and 16;
- ensure the parent/carer's role is valued and the College works with them to better understand the barriers that may be present.

(iii) SENCO

(Adapted from the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998 Page 7, and SEN Resource File (DENI 2011))

The SENCO should:

- have responsibility for the day to day operation of the College's SEN policy;
- co-ordinate SEN/disability provision, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), appropriate liaison with SLT and the various teachers who will teach any given student with special educational needs;
- maintain the SEN/disability register, with records on students with special educational needs/disability;
- liaise with parents/carers of students with special educational needs/disability:
- co-ordinate the use of assistants;
- respond to requests for advice from other teachers;
- liaise with external agencies;
- liaise with contributory schools for the transfer of SEN information;
- establish the SEN in-service requirements of the staff, and contribute as appropriate to their training;
- co-ordinate testing of students as appropriate;
- co-ordinate EOTAS (Education Other than at School) provision;
- assist with the process of Access Arrangements and liaise with the Examinations Officer during exams.

(iv) Classroom/General Assistants Classroom/Domestic Assistants should:

- work in partnership with the teacher to develop the independence of the student;
- be included as part of whole school professional development activities;
- develop specialised expertise to meet the individual needs of the students with whom they work;
- contribute to the planning, preparation and, where appropriate, the facilitation of learning;
- be fully involved in student provision, monitoring and reviews under direction of the teacher regarding IEPs;
- be included in establishing specific targets;
- contribute to the promotion of the inclusive ethos of the College;
- promote the self-esteem and well-being of the student;
- understand the significance of their role and contribute to the overall social, emotional, learning and pastoral development of the children within the College;
- work alongside others in the College with outside agencies.

(v) Teachers

All staff share the responsibility for students with SEN/disability.

It is the duty of all teachers to work closely with the SENCO to ensure the early identification of students with SEN/disability.

Teachers should:

- meet the needs of all students in their class and identify barriers to learning;
- demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to inclusion and be student focussed;
- provide learning and teaching which carefully differentiates and presents materials appropriate to student's age, maturity, learning need/disability;
- work in partnership with the classroom/domestic assistant and establish a clear understanding of individual roles and responsibilities;
- liaise with SENCO/other support services;
- involve parents/carers and students in feedback about learning;
- collaborate effectively with the SENCO in establishing, monitoring and reviewing the IEP and future planning;
- work together with classroom/domestic assistants to deliver, monitor and evaluate provision including the student's individualised education plan;
- ensure planning for learning takes into account students with SEN and disability, including a consideration of the objectives in the Educational Psychology Report or statement as advised by SENCO;
- collaborate with SENCO and Assistant to ensure that they have sufficient professional knowledge to meet the needs of students in his/her class;
- have detailed records and knowledge of the student for meaningful parent-teacher consultation;
- accept equal responsibility for their professional development in SEN;
- ensure that the voice of the student is valued and taken on board.

(vi) Heads of Department should:

- regularly review SEN student progress at department meetings and liaise with SENCO as appropriate;
- help teachers to use the classroom/general assistants effectively.

(vii) Year Heads should:

- fulfil their pastoral role for SEN students;
- refer students to SENCO as appropriate after evaluation of relevant information e.g. reports and target setting.

(viii) The College IT Technician should:

- stop internet access on relevant examination days for students using laptops, as guided by the SENCO;
- ensure laptops for use during examination are in good working order for each examination season.

(ix) Students

Students are at the centre of SEN provision. They are encouraged to use all support provided and to identify any further ways SENCO can help them achieve their goals.

Students should:

- be involved in learning;
- experience success;
- take responsibility for learning;
- seek to develop independence.

(x) Parents/Carers

Parental/carer involvement is a crucial part of SEN. Parents/Carers are informed and encouraged to be fully involved in supporting their child's learning, working in partnership with the College. Good relationships are sought and fostered.

Admissions

Students with statements of special educational needs are placed in schools at the request of the Education Authority. When seeking to place a student with a statement, the Education Authority will take into account the wishes of the student's parents/carers and the provision of efficient education for other students in the class or school and the efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement. This is in line with SENDO legislation.

Special facilities/resources

- Wheelchair access
- Disabled toilet
- Adaptations for visually impaired students

Reasonable adjustments will be made where practically feasible.

Complaints Procedures relating to SEN procedures

- The mechanism is the College Complaints procedure.

Section 2: Professional Development and Partnerships

Qualification/Experience of staff

- SENCO completed Certificate of Competence in Educational testing from the British Psychological Society.

- Dyslexia, Autism/Aspergers, Visual and Hearing Impairment Training for all staff and assistants as required.

External Partnerships

Education Authority specialist and medical professionals' partnerships.

Section 3: Identification, provision, monitoring and evaluation of SEN procedures

Identification

All staff are responsible for early identification of students with SEN through testing, information gleaned from parents/carers, contributory schools, external agencies and professional judgement; for example:

- Results of screening tests are collated for Year 11 students and these are used to identify difficulties and determine any support required. This is completed by the SENCO.

- Through weekly tests, end of module tests, observations, and parental/carer concerns raised, Year Heads and Teachers complete an Area of Concern Form.

- Diagnostic tests carried out by SENCO.

Students may be placed on the register after thorough analysis and consultation with parents/carers and student.

Structure of Special Educational Needs/Disability Provision

The College adheres to the five stage approach as outlined in the Code of Practice (pending changes to the SEN system by DENI):

Stage 1: Teachers/SENCO identifies a student's special educational needs/disability and places the student on the SEN register following consultation with parents/carers.

Stage 2: The SEN co-ordinator takes lead responsibility for co-ordinating the student's special educational/disability provision, working with the student's teachers.

Stage 3: Teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school.

Stage 4: Following an application from the College or parent/carer, the Education Authority considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.

Stage 5: The Education Authority considers the need for a statement of special educational needs/disability; if appropriate, it applies a statement and changes, monitors and reviews provision.

<u>Record keeping</u>

Records are kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

<u>Monitoring Progress of Students with SEN</u>

- IEP targets are monitored by teachers, assistants, students, parents/carers, Heads of Department (in departmental meetings) and SEN for progression and necessary changes.

- Evidence that the student's class work and/or social skills are progressing is monitored initially by individual teachers and assistants and discussed with SENCO.

- Reviews of IEPs and other relevant and purposeful measures that focus on educational outcomes (e.g. Sensory Support Reports) and inform future planning/movement either up or down through the stages of the Code of Practice.

<u>Evaluation of the School Procedures for SEN</u>

Evaluation is ongoing. IEPs form the basis but Common Assessment Units (CAUs), Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and pastoral information are all used and reviewed to evaluate procedures.

<u>Reference to other relevant policies</u>

This policy is in line with SENDO legislation and should also be read in conjunction with the following College policies:

- Admissions
- Assessment and Reporting
- Behaviour Management
- Code of Conduct
- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection

This policy will be reviewed biennially or in light of changes in legislation or practice. This will happen in consultation with all staff members.

Word Processor Policy

Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually after the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and *Instructions for conducting examinations.*

Candidates who require a word processor for their examinations will be provided with laptops which comply with JCQ regulations:

"Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to their needs"

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the College manages and administers the use of word processors in external examinations and assessments.

Reasons for using a Word Processor

- The use of word processors is allowed in order to remove barriers for candidates who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.
- The use of word processors is permitted only if the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification.

Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands on candidates, the use of a word processor can be considered on a subject-by-subject basis. The use of a word processor should be considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Candidates are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework, including non-examination assessments.

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as:
- in the classroom; or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- in internal school tests and mock examinations

The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

Particular types of candidates may benefit from using a word processor, for example, a candidate with:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- a medical condition.
- a physical disability.
- a sensory impairment.
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
- poor handwriting.

(This list is not exhaustive).

Candidates must show proficiency in the use of a word processor before using it for examinations, except in in the case of temporary injury or impairment at the time of the examination. Candidates will be assessed by the SENCO in order to ensure the candidate is not being disadvantaged by using the word processor.

<u>The use of a word processor in external exams</u>

Portadown College will:

- Provide a word processor in external exams with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.
- Only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to his/her needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).
- Provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
- Allow candidates to use a word processor in an external examination.
- Complete a word processor cover sheet (JCQ Form 4) with each candidate's typed script.

Examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

A word processor will not be granted to a candidate simply because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

Word processors

A word processor:

  • must be used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;

  • must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. Where required, the centre must provide a memory stick to the candidate, which is cleared of any previously stored data;

  • must be in good working order at the time of the examination;

  • must be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required;

  • must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;

  • must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused;

  • must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;

  • must not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication;

  • must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc;

  • must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;

  • must not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;

  • must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;

  • must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

At the end of the examination:

  • The Exams office may provide the Invigilator with a memory stick in order to transfer the work.

  • The candidate, together with the laptop and memory stick, is kept under supervision until all documents are printed.

  • Documents are printed, with the candidate present.

  • Word processor cover sheets (Form 4) are completed as required.

  • The candidate is allowed to leave and the laptop and memory stick are cleared of all work before the next use.

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Accommodating word processors in examinations

Candidates using laptops are usually accommodated in small rooms:
- Laptops are set up in advance in the examination room.
- Where necessary additional space/extra desk will be provided if required (e.g. candidate with broken arm or wrist; candidate with enlarged examination paper).

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

Reminding candidates to:
- Insert their details in a header or footer on each page – i.e. (Name, if appropriate), Candidate Number, Centre Number and the examination unit/component code.
- Appropriately number each page.
- Use a minimum 12-point font and double spacing.
- That they must not use the grammar and spellchecking functions unless they also have permission for a scribe.

In the unlikely event of a technical fault, invigilators will assist or summon help. A spare word processor will be provided in the exam room or nearby in case of emergency. Invigilators will need to record stop times for a laptop candidate in the case of a technical fault and to adjust the candidate's finish time in such instances; candidates should be clearly informed of the revised finish time.

This policy was approved at a meeting of the Board of Governors held on 29 April 2014.

Amendments to the policy were approved at a meeting of the Board of Governors held on 28 February 2019.