



Coláiste Nano Nagle  
Special Educational Needs Policy  
2026

## **1. Mission Statement**

Our School is a Christian community which welcomes students in the tradition of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Order. A primary aim of our school is the pursuit of academic excellence. We seek to develop the full potential of each person; intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, physical and creative. To achieve this the school strives to provide an educational environment suited to the needs of each individual, within the demands of a changing world.

## **2. Purpose and Scope of the Policy**

This policy outlines Coláiste Nano Nagle's whole school approach to supporting students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), in line with current Department of Education, NCSE and NEPS guidance. It applies to all students, staff, parents/guardians and relevant external agencies and reflects the school's commitment to inclusion, wellbeing and high quality teaching and learning for all.

The aims of this SEN Policy are to:

- promote an inclusive, respectful and supportive school culture where diversity is valued and all students experience belonging, participation and achievement
- ensure that students with SEN are identified early and supported through a structured, evidence informed and needs based approach
- support students to access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum in line with their strengths, needs and interests
- guide the effective use of the Continuum of Support framework to plan, implement and review supports for students at the levels of Support for All, Support for Some and Support for Few
- ensure that teaching, learning and assessment practices are inclusive, differentiated and responsive to individual student needs
- promote collaboration between students, parents/guardians, teachers, SNAs, school leadership and external professionals
- support the wellbeing, independence, self management and life skills development of students with SEN
- ensure that the deployment of special education teaching and SNA supports is transparent, accountable and in line with Department of Education and NCSE guidance
- provide a clear framework for supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including those enrolled in ASD special classes, in a manner that is inclusive, person centred and strengths based

- support smooth transitions for students with SEN, including transitions into post primary school, between levels of support, and beyond school
- contribute to ongoing school self evaluation, continuous improvement and compliance with statutory and policy requirements.

### **3. School Ethos and Inclusive Education**

Coláiste Nano Nagle is a CEIST voluntary secondary school in the Presentation tradition. We are committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and supportive learning environment where diversity is valued and where all students experience belonging, participation and achievement. Inclusion is understood as a whole school responsibility and SEN provision is embedded within mainstream teaching and learning wherever possible.

### **4. Legislative and Policy Context**

This policy is informed by, and aligned with, the following:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)
- Disability Act (2005)
- Special Education Teaching (SET) Allocation Model
- Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with SEN in Mainstream Classes
- Indicators of Effective Practice: Student Support Files
- Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools
- NCSE Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes (2024)
- Relevant Department of Education circulars, including those relating to Assessment of Need (AON) and review of enrolment in special classes

### **5. Definition of Special Educational Needs**

A student is considered to have special educational needs where they experience barriers to learning, participation or wellbeing that require additional or different support from that generally provided in mainstream classes. SEN may be short term or long term and may arise from learning, communication, social, emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical or medical needs.

There are a number of categories of special needs including:

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment / Deafness

- Visual Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance / Behavioural Needs
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Mild / Borderline Mild General Learning Disability
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (Autism)
- Specific Learning Disability
- Special Educational Needs Arising from an Assessed Syndrome
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder
- Multiple Disabilities

## **6. Continuum of Support**

The school uses the Continuum of Support framework to identify and respond to student needs in a graduated, needs based manner.

### **Support for All**

Universal, preventative and proactive approaches that support all learners, including high quality differentiated teaching, assessment for learning, wellbeing programmes, literacy and numeracy initiatives, guidance supports and positive behaviour strategies.

### **Support for Some**

Targeted interventions for students who require additional support beyond whole school approaches. This may include small group or individual support, team teaching, EAL support, short term interventions and the development of a Student Support Plan.

### **Support for Few**

Intensive, individualised supports for students with complex and/or enduring needs. This includes coordinated planning through Student Support Files, involvement of external professionals where appropriate, special education teaching, SNA support and, where applicable, placement in a special class.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities Team Based Approach**

### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory obligations in relation to the education of students with special educational needs. The Board ensures compliance with relevant legislation and Department of Education circulars, oversees the appropriate and transparent use of special education teaching

resources, and supports the development, implementation and review of inclusive school policies and practices. The Board is informed annually by school leadership on the deployment of SEN resources and provision across the Continuum of Support.

### **Principal and Deputy Principal**

The Principal, supported by the Deputy Principal, provides strategic leadership for inclusive education within the school. School leadership is responsible for establishing and sustaining whole school systems and structures that support students with SEN, including the effective deployment of resources. The Principal establishes and oversees the Core Special Education Teaching Team, ensures collaboration between staff, facilitates professional learning, and ensures that students with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support. The Deputy Principal, in consultation with the Principal, plans and monitors the deployment of special education teaching supports in line with the annual SEN and Special Class school allocation. Specific responsibilities are delegated to members of the team while maintaining overall oversight and accountability.

### **Core Special Education Teaching Team**

The Core Special Education Teaching Team is a designated team of teachers with responsibility for the organisation, planning, coordination and review of special education provision across the school. Working with the Principal and Deputy Principal, the team supports a consistent, whole school approach to SEN provision.

The team collaboratively:

- coordinates identification of needs using the Continuum of Support and problem solving process
- supports the development, implementation and review of Student Support Files and Student Support Plans
- contributes to timetabling, transition planning and whole school inclusive practices
- liaises with subject teachers, SNAs, Student Support Teams and external agencies as appropriate
- Responsibility is distributed within the team to ensure sustainable practice and shared ownership of SEN provision.

### **SEN Coordinator**

The SEN Coordinator, as a member of the Core Special Education Teaching Team, supports the coordination and day to day management of Special Educational Needs provision across the school. Working in collaboration with school leadership, the SEN Coordinator contributes to the development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the whole school SEN Policy and supports consistent, inclusive practice. The role includes maintaining oversight of Student

Support Files and the SEN register in consultation with senior management and the core special education teaching team, coordinating planning and review processes, and facilitating effective communication between staff. The SEN Coordinator supports the SEN team in the use of diagnostic and school based assessments to identify students' strengths and needs, ensures findings are recorded appropriately, and coordinates applications for reasonable accommodations in state examinations (RACE) in line with Department of Education guidelines. The SEN Coordinator liaises regularly with parents/guardians to support collaborative planning and review, works with external agencies such as the NCSE and NEPS to support assessment and provision, and coordinates applications for assistive technology and ICT supports where recommended by relevant professionals.

### **ASD Coordinator**

The ASD Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and reviewing provision for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the school. Working under the direction of the Principal and as part of the Core Special Education Teaching Team, the ASD Coordinator supports an inclusive, neuro affirmative approach to ASD provision. The role includes overseeing ASD special class provision where applicable, supporting planning and review of Student Support Files and Plans, working collaboratively with teachers and SNAs to promote inclusive practice, and liaising with parents/guardians and external agencies. The ASD Coordinator also supports transition planning, staff professional learning and the ongoing development of autism inclusive culture and practice across the school.

### **Subject Teachers**

Subject teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching, learning and assessment of all students in their classes, including those with special educational needs. They provide inclusive and supportive classroom environments, implement agreed supports, accommodations and strategies, and engage in ongoing collaboration with the Core Special Education Teaching Team. Subject teachers are expected to review relevant Student Support Files and Student Support Plans to inform their planning and practice, and to contribute to the monitoring and review of student progress through feedback, assessment evidence and participation in review processes.

### **Special Education Teachers (SETs)**

Special Education Teachers provide targeted, evidence informed teaching and learning support to students identified at School Support For Some and School Support For Few levels. Working collaboratively with subject teachers, students, parents/guardians and the Core Special Education Teaching Team, Special Education Teachers contribute to the development and ongoing review of Student Support Plans, including the identification of priority learning needs and the creation of clear, measurable and time bound (SMART) targets. They

implement and review agreed interventions, monitor students' response to support, update Student Support Plans as required, and contribute assessment and progress information to inform decision making and future planning.

### **Guidance Counsellors**

Guidance Counsellors support students' personal, social, educational and career development and play a key role in promoting wellbeing and inclusion within the school. Working collaboratively with the SEN Team, Year Heads and school leadership, they support students who may experience learning, emotional, behavioural or wellbeing related barriers to engagement. Guidance Counsellors provide individual and group guidance and counselling, support transition planning, subject choice and progression pathways, and liaise with parents/guardians and external agencies where appropriate. They support students with special educational needs in making informed decisions about appropriate programme pathways, including Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), ensuring placements align with students' abilities, needs and aspirations. Guidance Counsellors also support students and families in planning for post school pathways, including advising on and supporting DARE applications, and, where appropriate, facilitating referrals and transitions to adult day services and further education or training providers.

### **Behaviour for Learning Teacher**

The Behaviour for Learning Teacher supports students who experience behavioural, emotional or self regulation difficulties that impact on learning and participation. Working as part of the Student Support Team, the Behaviour for Learning Teacher contributes to the identification of need, development of Student Support Plans and implementation of targeted interventions. The role includes supporting positive behaviour strategies, promoting emotional regulation and social skills, working collaboratively with teachers and SNAs to support inclusive classroom practice, and liaising with parents/guardians and external agencies where appropriate. The Behaviour for Learning Teacher plays a key role in promoting student wellbeing, engagement and positive relationships across the school.

### **Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**

Special Needs Assistants support students' care, access, safety and regulation needs, in line with approved allocations and guidance. SNAs work as part of a team under the direction of the Principal and Deputy Principal and in collaboration with teachers, contributing to students' inclusion, independence and participation in school life.

### **Parents/Guardians and Students**

Parents/guardians and students are valued partners in the planning, implementation and review of SEN supports. Students' voices, views and experiences are central to decision

making. Parents/guardians are consulted and involved throughout the support process to ensure a shared understanding of strengths, needs and agreed supports.

## **8. Identification, Planning and Review**

The school follows a structured problem solving process:

- Identification of strengths and needs
- Information gathering from a range of sources
- Planning and implementation of targeted supports
- Ongoing monitoring and review of progress

Student Support Plans and Student Support Files are developed collaboratively with students, parents/guardians and relevant staff, and are reviewed regularly to ensure supports remain responsive and effective.

### **Procedures for Identifying Students requiring additional support**

#### **Transfer from Primary to Post Primary School**

The school adopts a structured, collaborative and student centred approach to supporting the transition of students from primary to post primary education, in line with the Continuum of Support and current Department of Education and NCSE guidance.

At registration and enrolment stages, parents/guardians are provided with information regarding the school's inclusive approach to teaching and learning and the provision of special education teaching supports. Parents/guardians are encouraged to share relevant information regarding their child's learning needs, including details of any additional supports received in primary school.

As part of the transition process, the school engages proactively with feeder primary schools. During the spring term, the SEN Coordinator liaises with primary schools to gather relevant information on students with additional educational needs, including the Primary School Student Passport / Post Primary Transfer Review, professional reports where available, and school based information that supports continuity of learning and wellbeing.

Whole school intake screening and assessment are used to support planning and early identification of strengths and needs. Standardised assessments may include literacy and numeracy screening, ability testing (including CAT4 for incoming first year students and newly enrolled students where appropriate), and other school based assessments. Assessment information is used alongside professional judgement and existing documentation to inform class formation and the planning of appropriate supports. No single assessment is used in isolation to determine provision.

Incoming first year students are invited to participate in a pre induction visit during the summer term to familiarise themselves with the school environment, routines and key staff. This is followed by a structured induction programme at the beginning of the school year. The induction process is supported through a collaborative approach involving Year Heads, subject teachers, the Special Education Teaching Team, the Student Support Team, Guidance, HSCL and other relevant staff, with a focus on wellbeing, belonging and engagement.

Where students are identified as requiring support at School Support Some or School Support Plus Few, Student Support Files are initiated in line with the problem solving process. Supports are reviewed regularly to ensure that students with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support, and that provision remains responsive during this key transition period.

### **Transfer from another Post Primary School**

The school adopts a structured, collaborative and student centred approach to identifying and supporting students who transfer into the school during 2nd to 6th Year, in line with the Continuum of Support and current Department of Education and NCSE guidance.

At the point of application and enrolment, parents/guardians and students are informed of the school's inclusive approach to teaching and learning and the range of supports available for students with special educational needs. Parents/guardians are encouraged to share relevant information regarding the student's learning, social, emotional or wellbeing needs, including details of any additional supports received in the student's previous post primary school.

Where a student transfers from another post primary school, the SEN Coordinator liaises with the student's previous school, with parental consent, to gather relevant information to support continuity of learning and wellbeing. This may include Student Support Files or Plans, recent assessment information, professional reports where available, and relevant school based information relating to teaching approaches, accommodations and supports that have been effective.

Following enrolment, the school may use appropriate school based screening and assessment to support planning and early identification of strengths and needs. Where previous standardised assessment data is unavailable or outdated, the school may administer its own assessments, including CAT4 and WJIII assessments for literacy and numeracy, as appropriate. Assessment information is considered alongside professional judgement, teacher observation and existing documentation. No single assessment is used in isolation to determine the level or type of support required.

## **9.0 Timetabling of Special Education Provision**

The timetabling of special education provision is planned and reviewed annually to ensure that supports are allocated in a fair, transparent and needs based manner, in line with the Continuum of Support and the principle that students with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support. Timetabling decisions are informed by student need, evidence of response to intervention, professional judgement and whole school priorities, and are reviewed regularly to ensure flexibility and responsiveness.

### **9.1 Team Teaching/ Co Teaching and In Class Support**

Team teaching and in class support are actively promoted as inclusive approaches to special education provision. This model supports students to remain meaningfully engaged in mainstream classes while benefiting from additional teaching support. Team teaching facilitates differentiation, scaffolding and shared responsibility for student learning and is used where it best meets student need. The effectiveness of team teaching arrangements is reviewed regularly as part of the school's planning and review processes.

### **9.2 Withdrawal for Targeted Support**

Where appropriate, students may receive targeted special education teaching support through planned withdrawal from subject classes. Withdrawal is considered carefully and used only where it is deemed necessary to address identified priority needs that cannot be met through inclusive classroom practice alone. Decisions regarding withdrawal are made collaboratively by the Core Special Education Teaching Team, in consultation with subject teachers and parents/guardians, and are reviewed regularly. During these timetabled periods, students may receive support from a Special Education Teacher or Behaviour for Learning Teacher, either on an individual or small group basis, depending on identified needs and agreed targets.

### **9.3 Small Group Support**

Where students present with similar learning or developmental needs, small group support may be provided to maximise the effective use of available special education teaching hours. Small group provision focuses on clearly identified priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, behaviour for learning, social skills, emotional regulation or organisational skills. Groupings are flexible and responsive, based on ongoing assessment and review, and are adjusted as students' needs change.

## **10. Assessment of Need (AON)**

Where requested by the NCSE, the school cooperates with the HSE Assessment of Need process. Teachers may contribute professional information on students' educational needs in line with statutory requirements, using existing school based information and professional judgement.

## **11. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Provision**

### **11.1 Whole School Approach to ASD**

Coláiste Nano Nagle adopts a neuro affirmative, strengths based approach to supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Autism is understood as a form of neurodiversity, and provision is guided by the Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools. Whole school practices promote understanding, acceptance and inclusion, with a strong focus on wellbeing, communication, sensory regulation and participation.

### **11.2 Professional Learning and Awareness**

Ongoing professional learning is provided to build staff capacity in understanding autism, including awareness of how autism may present differently in girls. Staff are supported to use evidence informed strategies and to share good practice across the school.

### **11.3 Classroom and Environmental Supports**

Supports for students with ASD may include:

- Predictable routines and clear expectations
- Visual supports and structured tasks
- Sensory informed classroom environments
- Differentiated instruction and assessment
- Explicit teaching of social, organisational and self regulation skills

### **11.4 Special Classes for Students with ASD**

The school operates two NCSE sanctioned special classes for students with ASD and complex needs. Special classes provide a supportive, structured learning environment within the mainstream school setting. Placement in a special class is based on professional recommendations, NCSE eligibility and parental consent.

Enrolment in a special class is reviewed at least annually, or more frequently where appropriate, to ensure that it continues to meet the student's needs. Reviews consider

progress, wellbeing, response to intervention and opportunities for increased inclusion in mainstream classes and wider school life.

### **11.5 Inclusion and Integration**

Students enrolled in ASD special classes are included in mainstream lessons and school activities where appropriate, based on individual strengths and needs. Integration is planned, gradual and supported, with the aim of maximising participation and belonging across the school community.

### **11.6 Collaboration and Student Voice**

Planning for students with ASD is collaborative and person centred. Students' views, preferences and aspirations are central to decision making. The school works closely with parents/guardians, SNAs, SETs, external professionals and the NCSE to ensure coherent and responsive supports.

### **12.0 Exemptions from the Study of Irish**

In line with the most recent Department of Education guidance, Irish is a core subject at post primary level and exemptions from the study of Irish are granted only in exceptional circumstances. Applications for exemption are considered by the Principal following a formal written request from parents/guardians or from the student where they are aged 18 or over. Decisions are informed by a review of relevant evidence, which may include the student's educational history, Student Support Files, documentation of sustained and targeted interventions, and professional judgement. At post primary level in Ireland, an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, where one of the following three criteria is met:

#### **1. Education outside the State**

The student received their primary education outside Ireland and did not have the opportunity to study Irish during their primary schooling.

#### **2. Significant period of absence from Irish schooling**

The student was enrolled in an Irish primary school but subsequently spent a significant period of time outside the State, resulting in a lack of opportunity to engage meaningfully with the study of Irish.

#### **3. Significant and persistent special educational needs**

The student has significant, multiple and persistent educational needs that act as a substantial barrier to participation in Irish, despite targeted, evidence based interventions having been implemented over time and documented through school based supports (e.g. Student Support Files).

The school ensures that exemption decisions are applied consistently, recorded appropriately and communicated clearly, and that students who are exempt continue to be supported to engage meaningfully in school life in line with their strengths, needs and abilities.

### **13. Agencies Involved in SEN Provision**

#### **13.1 Liaison with External Professionals**

Coláiste Nano Nagle recognises the importance of effective inter agency collaboration in supporting students with special educational needs. Liaison with external professionals and agencies forms an integral part of the school's SEN provision and supports a coordinated, child centred approach. The SEN Coordinator and members of the Core Special Education Teaching Team, in consultation with school leadership, engage with relevant agencies as appropriate to support assessment, planning, intervention and review.

#### **13.2 National Council for Special Education (NCSE)**

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is the statutory body with responsibility for planning and coordinating special education provision at national and local level. The NCSE supports schools through policy guidance, research, professional learning and the allocation of resources. The Council works collaboratively with schools, parents/guardians, health services and other agencies to ensure that the educational needs of students with disabilities and additional needs are identified and supported appropriately.

#### **13.3 Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)**

The Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) acts as the local representative of the NCSE and supports schools and families in accessing special education resources and services. The SENO is a key point of contact for the school and parents/guardians and is responsible for coordinating applications and approvals for special education teaching resources, special classes and SNA support, where applicable. The SENO liaises with schools, the NCSE, the Department of Education, health services and other relevant agencies to support effective provision.

### **13.4 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The school is supported by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). NEPS provides consultation, advice and support to the school in relation to student learning, wellbeing and behaviour. This includes consultation regarding individual students, advice on classroom and whole school strategies, support for inclusive practice, guidance on SEN policy development, and consultation in relation to Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE). Access to psychological assessment is prioritised through a consultation and case discussion process, with assessment decisions informed by student need and professional judgement.

### **13.5 Health and Wellbeing Services**

The school liaises with relevant health and wellbeing services to support students where appropriate. This may include engagement with the Health Service Executive (HSE), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), JIGSAW (NEART), primary care services, social work services and therapeutic supports. Engagement with health services is undertaken with parental consent and in line with data protection requirements.

### **13.6 Other External Support Agencies and Services**

The school maintains links with a range of other external agencies and support services, as appropriate, including:

- School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Tusla Child and Family Agency
- Visiting Teachers for students with sensory impairments
- Specialist organisations and advocacy groups where relevant

## **14. Review and Evaluation**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

**Date:** 11/02/2026

**Signed:** *Eddie Bourke*

Chairperson, Board of Management