# Special Educational Needs Policy

The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (EPSEN) Act of 2004 identifies SEN as ‘a restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.’ (Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1).

Every Youthreach centre has a Mission Statement and inclusion and integration of all students with Special Education Needs (SEN) is implicit in the statements. Every centre provides a supportive and nurturing learning environment with relevant resources within a limited budget for all students including those with SEN.

Teaching in different ways and at different levels is a major ethos of every Youthreach centre. Youthreach endeavours to give children with disabilities/special educational needs access to ordinary centre classes under reasonable accommodation.

## Scope

Ensuring an inclusive and nurturing environment, this policy applies to DDLETB teachers and students, parents/guardians, management and support staff. At times the policy will also apply to people external to DDLETB working in a professional capacity within a centre (outside agencies etc.).

## Aims

The centres hope to achieve the following by creating this policy:

• To include where possible the most recent best practice in SEN within the constraints of their budget.

• To outline the centre approach to teaching/ learning in relation to students with SEN.

• Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.

• Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.

• Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole centre.

• Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.

• Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home.

## Roles and responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

* Board of Management - To review and approve the policy on a periodic basis.
* Managers - To ensure that staff comply with the policy and are fully aware of all procedures and guideline related to SEN.
* DDLETB staff/students/external bodies – To adhere to policy statements in this document and be fully aware of all laws, procedures and guidelines related to SEN.
* Parents/guardians to ensure they are aware of centre policies and work in partnership with the centre.

## Legislation

The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)

The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)

The Education Act 1998

Equal Status Act 2000

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The Equal Status Act 2000

The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill 2003

The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (EPSEN) Act of 2004

The Equality Act 2004

This policy should be read in conjunction with all the centre’s policies and in particular

* The Anti-Bullying Policy
* The Child Protection Policy
* The Critical Incident Policy
* The Code of Positive Behaviour
* The Data Protection Policy
* The Substance Abuse Policy
* The Admissions Policy

## Policy

Each centre has a comprehensive induction programme for all incoming students which ensures a smooth and successful transition from post primary main stream education or other in to the Youthreach programme.

Parents/guardians are requested to attend interview with students who are under 18 years and will be asked for permission to have any psychological assessments to be forwarded to the centre and may be asked for permission for further PSS assessment. Information regarding previous assessments may be used to give special consideration to students with special needs on entrance tests and will guide future assessments.

An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and/or Individual Student Profile (ISP) is prepared for each of the students with SEN. These contain the educational provision that is additional to or different from that available to all students. This is the responsibility of the Coordinator, but will often be written by Resource staff in conjunction with teachers and always in consultation with students, parents, guardians, carers and may involve consultation with external agencies.

The I.E.P process involves:

* Gathering Information: Personal/ background details.
* Educational details (secondary school details/assessment and learning support details).
* Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents).
* General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
* SEN provision.
* Relevant documentation.
* Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year. However, it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances.

The IEP/ISP will set targets for the student and will detail in addition to other general information on the student the following:

* Identify the strategies and resources required.
* The teaching strategies to be used.
* Setting targets for each priority learning need.
* The provisions to be put into place.
* Student’s strengths and weaknesses.
* Short term goals set for or by the student.

Each student with SEN will have a profile outlining his/her learning strengths, styles and specific needs. There will also be an overall SEN register outlining the relevant details of all students in the centre with SEN. These will be available to all teachers in the centre to enable them to work to the students’ strengths. Both the profiles and register will be living documents, i.e. they will be constantly updated with assistance from outside professionals, parents, teachers and the students themselves. Specific times will be allocated out of class contact time for all one to one teaching and support for a SEN student be that in literacy, numeracy, language or psychological intervention. Software is available in each centre for literacy and numeracy support. Every centre does not currently have facilities specially adapted for students with physical disability, although each centre is fully committed to the provision of these, should any student need same, and subject to funding by the DES.