St. Michael's College

Subject Department Plan

Special Education Department

2021/2022

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1.Mission Statement

We aim to support all of the students with additional needs who attend St. Michael's College, by ensuring that the teaching and learning in the college reflects the best and most diverse inclusive differentiated teaching strategies. We believe that the wellbeing of these students will be enhanced by the teaching of core skills that will help raise their levels of academic attainment and boost their self-esteem. We believe that all students can experience success. We endorse the school Mission of Believe, Belong, Become in our daily work, as well as taking cognisance of and implementing the NEPS Guidelines that base student attainment on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs aiming for the self-actualisation of all our students.

As a department, we aim to embody the following characteristics:

- A collaborative approach for the planning for students with additional needs among the staff teaching SEN classes.
- Ensure fostering of good relationships with other departments to support differentiated learning and the dissemination of SEN focused resources and teaching methodologies.
- Support for team-teaching across literacy and numeracy classes in the Junior Cycle.
- The sharing of resources and of expertise, particularly in teaching strategies
- The facilitation and promotion of good practice by an active co-ordinator.
- Regular meetings, both formally scheduled and as issues arise, with agendas and records of decisions taken.
- Effective systems of communication within the department, with learning-support teachers, and with the management
- The distribution work associated with curricular planning, parent consultation, Learning Plans and provision of teaching materials across the team.
- Promote Continuing Professional Development with staff. SEN staff regularly upskilled by attending CPD from SESS and NCSE.
- An innovative approach to ICT and an ability to cater for the varied learning styles of all students

2.Role of the Coordinator : Co-ordinators for 2021/2022**:**

1st to 2nd Year: Jane Delaney

3rd to 6th Year: Rory O'Connor

The co-ordinators are responsible for the following duties:

- Working with the management of the school to devise the SEN timetable
- Coordinating Department meetings, coordinating with SEN teachers
- Coordinating the Transition programme for new 1st year students with SEN
- Devising learning plans (IEP's) for incoming students
- Meeting parents and supporting ongoing learning plans
- Reasonable Accommodation for State Examinations
- Member of school care team
- Member of critical incident team
- Providing materials, resources & CPD to staff regarding SEN
- Communication with subject departments regarding students with SEN
- Parent conferences regarding RACE & DARE
- Liaison with outside agencies, NEPS, SENO and NCSE
- Liaising with the SNA's in terms of student care
- Writing the SEN department plan

3.SEN Staff

In addition to the co-ordinators, the SEN staff are Aoife Waters (SNA), Dave Cunningham (SNA), Samantha Stephens, Darragh Burke, Lisa Fleming & other teachers in the school participate by teaching students in a small group or one-to-one capacity as subject specialists. * See the 2021/22 SEN Timetable attached as an appendix to the hard copy of this document. For all information see the shared Google Drive space for SEN set up by the Coordinator.

4. Time Allocation for Learning Support Classes

*2 classes on Literacy & 2 on Numeracy where possible

1st Year	4 classes/week
2nd Year	4 classes/week
3rd Year	4 classes/week
4th Year	4 classes/week
5th Year	5 classes/week
6th Year	5 classes/week

5. Resource Hours Timetable

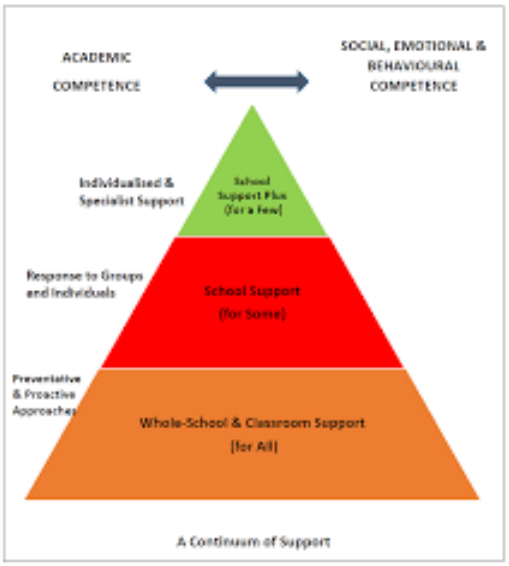
A full resource timetable is devised for all students with complex needs. This is attached as an appendix. The timetable is based on the students' Learning Plans and tailored for their specific needs. The time is allocated based on discussion with parents/students/pastoral and subject teachers.

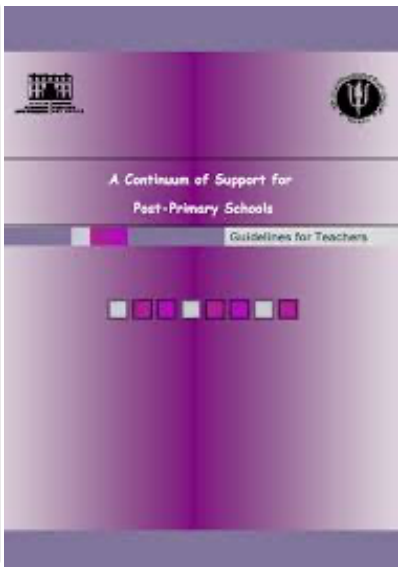
6. Structure of Classes

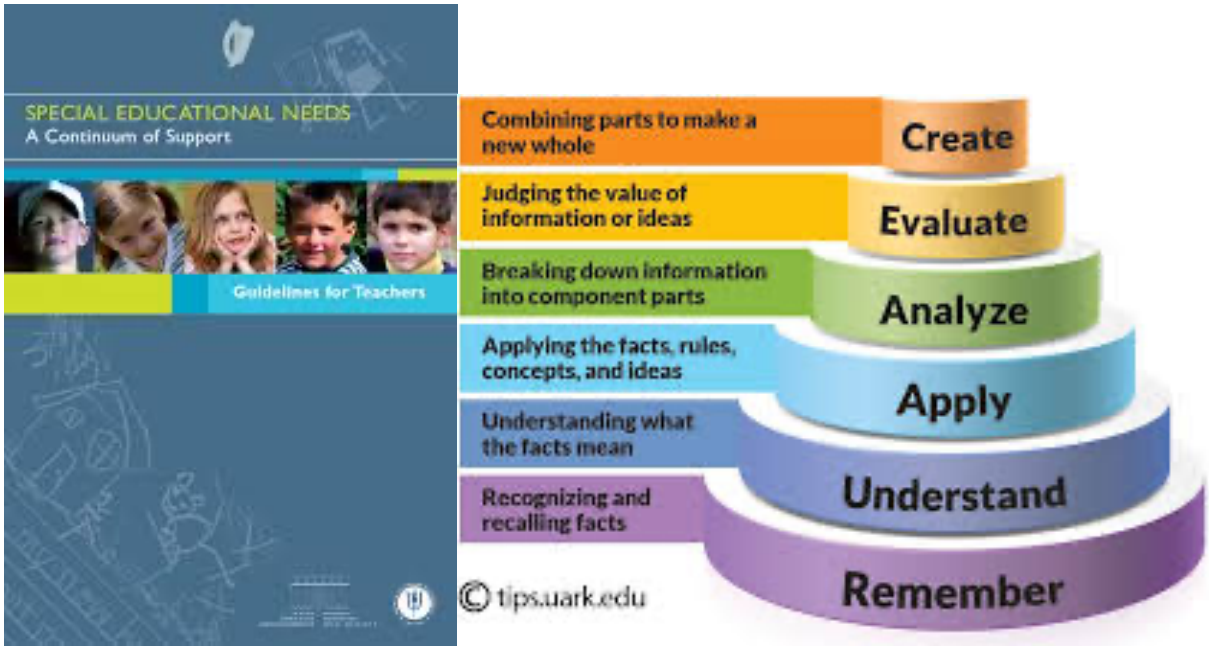
Special Education is delivered via the following means in the college:

- Small classes provided in Learning Support for students with an Irish Exemption focused on literacy and numeracy.
- Resource classes (individual & small groups) for students withdrawn for support with complex needs – literacy, numeracy, study skills & Social Skills.
- Team-Teaching in junior certificate classes based on student need, especially in Maths & English.
- Support for mainstream teachers by provision of differentiated resources and learning planning supports.

7. Rationale for Special Education Instruction in the College: Context and Methodology







The college bases its provision for students with additional needs on the **NEPS Guidelines and Continuum of Support** and draws upon these documents for best practice and resources. As per these guidelines we are aware of **Bloom's Taxonomy and Maslow's Hierarchy of Need** in our teaching and planning methodologies.

Our pedagogical framework is laid out in the school SEN policy in more detail. The SEN department classes are individually tailored to the needs of the individual or small group. Each teacher keeps their own professional records. However, to ensure that classes focus on the acquisition of core skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing in keeping with the 24 Statements of Learning in the new Junior Cycle, the SEN team have undertaken a review of the Learning Support Curriculum in 1st, 2nd & 3rd year.

The needs of the individual group will dictate the speed, width and depth of the content and materials used. The individual teacher should strive to use mixed methodologies in the class: The ultimate goal is that the student will have a greater understanding of themselves as learners and an appreciation of their own learning style.

8. Methodologies

- **ICT** – iPad and relevant websites as noted in the general scheme of work. The department is looking at replacing the interactive whiteboard with an apple tv and moving to using Explain Everything as a classroom teaching method. The school is not renewing its www.ixl.com group licence but will still use this with individual students. Various other websites that support active learning will be used in the S.O.W.
- **Active Classroom:** students to work in pairs/groups/individually as appropriate to the task. Peer Tutoring and Group Feedback to be used regularly
- Appropriate **Assessment For Learning** strategies to be used in classes – including exit cards, KWL and clear classroom objectives noted in the SEN Journal.
- **Standardised Testing** to be used to screen 1st Year groups and to confirm

accommodations for Reasonable Accommodation. 3rd/5th year.

- **Oral work** – in light of the new CBA's and to promote student wellbeing all schemes of work should have a focus on oral activities – presentations, drama, debate etc.
- **Written work** – students should develop their writing skills to support access to the Junior Cycle. This includes methodologies on how to plan and develop written work, how to edit and correct your own work, techniques to support better spelling and grammar, Vocabulary enrichment
- **Reading Comprehension:** This is a core cross-subject skill that will be the focus of the 1st Year curriculum. The students will learn a variety of reading comprehension and metacognitive methodologies, using templates from the NBSS, SESS and other reputable sources for SEN.
- **Team-Teaching in mainstream English and Maths classes in selected Junior Cycle groups.**
- **Demonstration** of techniques and methods, especially in the teaching of Social Skills
- Use of **Social Skills** programs like Carol Gray Social Stories and other recognised Social and Emotional Resources
- **Group Work/Paired** work and one-to-one instruction
- **Project Work**
- **Brainstorming/ Mind-Mapping/Brain-Game** puzzles/Quizzes
- **Group work**
- **Homework Support**
- **Use of Digital /ICT/Audio Technology**
- **PowerPoint/Keynote**
    - **Interactive Whiteboards (Resource)**
    - **iPads and appropriate apps**
    - **Student Laptops**

9. Range and Variety of Resources

- Teaching skills and experience
- Online Google Drive Bank of resources and materials compiled by SEN staff
- Textbooks & Resources recommended for working with students with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy explicit instruction
- Social Skills programmes like Social Stories, Talkabout & other recommended strategies
- Educational Games, Scrabble, Mind
- Online Learning Platform, resources from the NBSS, SESS and TES specifically designed for SEN instruction
- Laptops & other ICT resources

10. Junior Cycle -The Twenty-Four Statements of Learning:

The learning at the core of Junior Cycle is described in the twenty-four statements of learning which are set out in Table 1. The twenty-four statements, underpinned by the eight principles, are central to planning for, and the evaluation of, the students' experience of the school's junior cycle programme. The SEN department endeavours to build these statements into their schemes of work and planning. They aim to support students with curriculum, social, emotional and study needs and to scaffold the mainstream curriculum via Learning Support.

Table 1: Twenty-four Statements of Learning

The student:

1. communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1
2. listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2 and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability
3. creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
4. creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved
5. has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
6. appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
7. values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
8. values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change
9. understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
10. has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably
11. takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others
12. is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active
13. understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices
14. makes informed financial decisions and develops good consumer skills
15. recognizes the potential uses of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning
16. describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships
17. devises and evaluates strategies for investigating and solving problems using mathematical knowledge, reasoning and skills
18. observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid deductions and conclusions
19. values the role and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance
20. uses appropriate technologies in meeting a design challenge
21. applies practical skills as she/he develop models and products using a variety of materials and technologies
22. takes initiative, is innovative and develops entrepreneurial skills
23. brings an idea from conception to realisation
24. uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner 5 L1 is the language medium of the school (English in English-medium schools; Irish in Irish-medium schools). L2 is the second language (Irish in English-medium schools; English in Irish-medium schools).

11. Leaving Certificate Course:

The SEN department focuses its planning for senior cycle students around the curricula of each of the leaving certificate subjects. We also aim to reflect the NEPS Guidelines stated above. We aim to provide students with a focus on literacy and numeracy skills to equip them across the broader curriculum.

Our aim for the 2022 academic year is to build in the document

"Looking at our Schools – A quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools" into our planning for Senior Cycle. We are seeking to include Domain 1 – Learner Outcomes and Domain 2 – Learner Experience into our planning during 2022.

- Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners.
- Students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships.
- Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the

curriculum.

- Students attain the stated learning outcomes for each subject course and programme they have chosen.
- Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership and of and responsibility for their learning.
- Students experience opportunities to develop the skills an attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.
- Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive.
- Students engage purposefully and meaningfully in learning activities.
- Students have a mature and critical literacy to prepare them for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life in all contexts;
- -A strong awareness of their own learning styles
- -A good understanding of the variety of study and learning methodologies that can be employed to suit their own personal learning style.
- -The ability to set their own goals and meet targets.
- -Effective time-management and study goals
- -Managing Myself – linking to the wellbeing guidelines, the students should receive support in managing stress and emotional issues.
- -Support with RACE and DARE applications

12. SEN Department: Student Self-Evaluation

Students are encouraged to engage in reflection about their own learning through the use of metacognitive methodologies recommended by SEN best practice. Students encouraged to use SQ3R, KWL, Exit Cards during LS classes when time allows. They are encouraged to identify what kind of learning they are engaged in by using a tick-box of teaching methods. They are encouraged to use a variety of oral learning techniques like think-pair-share, group discussion, and individual feedback to reflect on their own learning.

As part of our commitment to the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle, the SEN department use the **NEPS recommended "My Thoughts about School**" checklist.

13. AFL – Assessment for Learning –

As part of the School's Self Evaluation, the SEN Department is committed to Assessment for Learning. This is assessed to support the students access to the mainstream curriculum and is at the heart of good SEN planning. The department make a commitment that all SEN classes will contain AFL methodologies.

Methodologies used are recognized methods of metacognition like KWL sheets, Exit Cards, identifying difficult vocabulary and assessing prior knowledge both in oral and written assessment. As such we also commit to using Pre-teaching strategies to assist students in a mainstream setting with concepts, graphics and language acquisition

The SEN department adhere to the *Two Stars and a Wish,* approach to student feedback adopted by the whole school as part of our AFL policy.

14. Subject Planning for Students with English as additional Language (EAL)

The department recognizes its role in helping students with English as an additional language to integrate fully into school life. The school supports the SEN department timetable these students for additional English instruction as necessary, through withdrawal in small groups or with in-class differentiation resources provided to staff. At times, staff with TEFL qualifications are timetabled to give explicit instruction to these students to support their access to the curriculum. The department uses the Trinity College Dublin Immigration Initiative website and resource materials to teach key words and concepts related to the curriculum for each Junior and Leaving Certificate subject area. Students can also use key word journals, dictionary pens and have access to resources used to teach the language curriculum in Junior Cycle English. SEN and English departments will liaise closely to manage resources and needs.

15. Use of ICT and Digital Technology

The use of ICT in the teaching of English has increased considerably in recent years.

All classrooms have access to the internet and are equipped with a data projector. These resources are used to access and display a range of learning resources such as skoool.ie, YouTube and TED presentations, exam papers and marking schemes.

Students have access to a bank of iMac computers in the school library as well as 24 PCs in the Computer Room. Teachers have access to these computers also, as well as 3 iMac computers and one PC in the staffroom. Many staff members use laptops in their teaching. Training is provided to staff in the use of PowerPoint, Excel and Word as well as in the use of the school's learning platform. The English Department has also been provided with iPads for teachers of the New Junior Cycle. All teachers of Junior Cycle English are now equipped for the physical recording of CBA1.

Material produced by teachers is shared with colleagues through the learning platform and a Google Docs English Dept account.

16. Provision for Legal Requirements

The Health and Safety policy of the school applies to the English classroom. This policy is available through the school website. The SEN department adheres to the stated school policies for Inclusion, Enrolment and Child Protection as dictated by the relevant legislation. The department adheres to best practice in the dissemination of learning plans and the storage of sensitive documents, medical assessments and educational assessments. The SEN department are aware of GDPR issues around confidentiality and privacy to protect the student. For more details related to this, please see the more

detailed Special Educational Needs Policy written by the Department. This plan is a working document, outlining our objectives as a department for the current year.

17. Teacher in-Service Development

- All teachers attend CPD relating to numeracy, literacy and the area of Additional Needs provided by NCSE and relevant agencies.
- All teachers are expected to be familiar with the relevant Acts, Circulars and publications pertaining to SEN, Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate relevant to their role in the Department.
- Staff regularly consult with the SENO and NEPS
- All teachers are encouraged to engage in peer review with their colleagues. A member of the department has requested participation in the Droichead program to formalise this work
- All teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective practice on an ongoing basis.

18. Planning & Recording Schemes of Work

Student Learning Plans: IEP/Personal Pupil Planning – As directed by the NEPS guidelines, the SEN team will create and update Learning Plans by working with colleagues, parents and students via meetings and email to ensure that the most appropriate learning is in place for each A.N. student. These Learning Plans are living documents that will be updated based on regular reviews with parents/students and teaching staff. They will be stored in a secure electronic location and posted on VSWare to advise staff of their learning objective the students with A.N. This will be done with parental permission and reference to GDPR advice. This will enable staff to individually plan for students with additional needs

Schemes of Work:

All teachers are required to produce a scheme of work for each class detailing the work to be carried out during the year. This can be kept electronically (on www.googleclassroom.com) or in their own Teacher Journals. The department will collectively create a general scheme of work in literacy and numeracy for each year group to support the variety of new staff who have to adapt to SEN teaching every year. This will allow continuity and ensure on the job training for new staff.

19. Minutes of Meetings: The coordinator will keep minutes of all meetings and conferences. Meetings will be held at a designated time every 2-3 weeks, with a weekly planning class agreed with Management.

20. Parent Consultations: All parent meetings should be recorded via an updated IEP or via an email confirming the main talking points at the meeting and the actions /outcomes agreed. Actions should be noted in writing and communicated to parents for agreement. Learning Plans will be kept for all students with complex needs.

21. SEN Department: Self Evaluation

The SEN department are currently finishing a pilot on a SEN Journal and will review this next year. We are also constantly reviewing our methodologies. Consequently, we are re-drafting all our schemes of work to fit in with the new Junior Cycle Statements of Learning. (January 2019) We have recently assessed our contribution to the Wellbeing curriculum and contributed to the wellbeing curricular group. We are currently looking at the following documents and hope to incorporate them into our updated planning for Senior and Junior Cycle.

- Looking at our Schools: A quality framework for Post-Primary Schools (2016)
- The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Indicators

As a Department, we are committed to continuously improving on our practices for the benefit of our students. We aim to reflect regularly on our methodologies and student outcomes. We aim to collaborate with our fellow colleagues so that we may share good practice. Our aim through self-evaluation is to improve the learning of our students.

We have engaged in SSE (Student Self Evaluation) by using the NEPS My thoughts about School checklist. We have used google forms to encourage SSE and reflection.

22. Transition Planning from Primary to Post-Primary

As outlined by NEPS, the school receives Student data and the SEN department liaises with all the feeder Primary Schools and parents to prepare students with a high level of need for entry to the College. Thus, transition meetings may be arranged between primary and post-primary schools in advance of transfer. The Post-Primary Transfer Review Form provides a useful template for collating assessment data relating to students' academic, attainment and personal development needs in order to inform intervention planning following transition. Student files are collated by the SEN coordinator in conjunction with the feeder schools and parents.

23. NCSE applications: The school uses the **New Model of Support** Guidelines to plan for students and liaises with the S.E.N.O. to ensure that all applications for Assistive Technology, SNA's and additional hours for students with complex needs are completed correctly and that the student is advocated for effectively by the school.

24. Wellbeing

The SEN department sees its role as central to the wellbeing curriculum in the school. As such, it ensures that relevant social skills programmes, wellbeing resources and communication skills are explicitly taught to students with emotional behavioural or social difficulties due to a special educational need.

The SENCo is an active member of the college Care Team and advises on the Wellbeing of students with a diagnosed emotional, social or behavioural need in that context. The SEN team also liaise with the Year Head to ensure that a team approach is taken regarding the pastoral needs of students with additional needs. They are also a part of the curricular development team for the new JC Wellbeing subject, contributing resources on social skills and emotional wellbeing. The table below shows how as a department we actively consider our role as teachers who often work with the students with the greatest academic and emotional needs in the school and as such, our commitment to wellbeing precedes the new curriculum and is drawn from the NEPS Continuum that looks at Maslow's Hierarchy and Bloom's Taxonomy

Wellbeing Indicators	In my role and in my relationships with students, how do I support their learning journey towards	**How do the STMC SEN dept promote this indicator in our own practice?** ***Strategies, Assessment, Methodologies, Supports or Resources***
Active	• being a confident and skilled participant in physical activity • being physically active	• Supporting students in their wellbeing by supporting Sli Na Slainte walks in our small groups & individual classes as appropriate, playing table-tennis, and taking classes outdoors on occasion.
Responsible	• being able to take action to protect and promote their wellbeing and that of others • making healthy eating choices • knowing when and where their safety is at risk and enabling them to make the right choices	• Supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties through our explicit teaching of social skills. • Supporting Year Heads with our input into positive behavioural planning. • Planning Learning via IEP's for students with Autism to support their care needs in the school. • Working with SNA team to support care needs of students.
Connected	• feeling connected to their school, their friends, community, and the wider world • understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts	• Promoting social groups via our small classes where pair and group activity boosts peer relationships and self-esteem. • Encouraging students with ASD to reflect on their social behaviour via counselling and social skills classes • Supporting at risk students as part of the Care Team
Resilient	• feeling confident in themselves and having the coping skills to deal with life's challenges • knowing where they can go for help • believing that with effort they can achieve	• Encouraging the use of metacognition and learning to learn strategies in our SEN students. • Supporting our students by advising them on the best assistive technology for use in their studies • Help students explore and develop their own learning styles and stragegies.
Respected	• showing care and respect for others • having positive relationships with friends, peers, and teachers • feeling listened to and valued	• Student with SEN should feel valued as an equal member of the school community and we help to foster an inclusive environment for A. N. Students. • Staff working in SEN provide students with 'one good adult' who can listen to them and we promote

		positive teacher-student relationships by supportive one-to-one and small group teaching
Aware	• being aware of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being able to make sense of them • being aware of their personal values and able to think through their decisions • being aware of themselves as learners and knowing how they can improve	• Support students with their application for Reasonable Accommodation • Allow them to reflect on their own learning and support the writing of their personal statements for DARE • Offer constructive feedback on their academic work and teach explicit cross-curricular skills to give students greater confidence in their own learning.

25. Planning for 2021/22

Our SEN team review and evaluate our work each year by consulting with students, parents, colleagues and management. We also have a duty to keep abreast of ongoing developments in this specialised field and as such commit to ongoing CPD and academic literature review in the field of special education. We also have a duty to ensure that the SEN department in the college is familiar with the following:

- Dept of Education Circulars relevant to SEN
- All Acts of Law that pertain to the field of special education
- Recommendations from the NCSE and SENO
- Guidelines and criteria for RACE set out by the SEC
- Recommendations from the Board of Management
- Guidelines from Enable Ireland, NEPS, Aspire, AsIAm and other agencies supporting young people with additional needs.

26. Aims for 2020-2022

- Prepare a timetable in case we have to resort to Online Learning, again!
- Apple TV was a good addition for the resource room
- Purchase Explain Everything and other apps that turn the iPad into interactive whiteboards.
- Continue to build up our bank of electronic resources shared on our Google Drive app.
- Continue with training for SEN team on Cat 4/WIAT III /DASH testing for screening of 1st and RACE 3rd /6th.
- Attend the Friends for Life programme training when next run by NCSE
- Take part in the Autism Schools Friendly Project

- Learn how to use and incorporate PPADE is the first Irish standardised literacy test for secondary school students, which will have the same utility as the WRAT 5 or WIAT III with a view to using it for RACE

- Currently reviewing student methods of reflection/self directed learning as part of SSE
- Change the name of the department to Additional Needs in line with current best practice.
- Use the My Thoughts about School checklist more widely
- Use Google Drive more often
- Conduct some JC RACE and LC RACE exploration in 2nd Year and 5th Year, respectively.