



Inclusion Special Educational Needs Policy

2022/2023

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1 Introduction

John the Baptist Community School (JTBCS) came into being in 1997 with the amalgamation of the Presentation De La Salle and Hospital Vocational School. The school's Christian ethos underpins the provision of Special Education Needs (SEN), in order to facilitate the personal growth and development of all students. The school endeavours to deliver a differentiated curriculum to meet the students' strengths and needs in a safe, caring, healthy and orderly environment, thus ensuring the inclusion of all students.

1.1 Mission statement

JTBCS is committed to the provision of a broadly based education in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, balancing vision with realism, which facilitates personal growth and development among students, staff and community within the context of a Christian ethos.

1.2 Inclusion

Students with SEN are welcomed and are provided for in an inclusive way in JTBCS, in line with the Education for Person's with Special Needs Act (2004), the Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines (2006), The Guidelines on the Provision of Special Education at Post Primary level (2007). More recently our mindset on inclusion has been heightened by the dimensions of Learning & Teaching and Leadership & Management as outlined in Looking at our Schools (2022). All students are encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of school life where reasonably practicable. John the Baptist recognises the importance of learning and teaching that is inclusive, student centred and supports young people to participate in and make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Our commitment to Special Educational Needs is emblematic of a school in which students are given space, voice, opportunity and influence in their own learning. This purposefully involves SEN students in partaking in focus groups and surveys that helped to shape SSE strategies that have been embedded across the school.

All students in John the Baptist should feel safe and accepted during their time with us. Bullying or exclusion of a student based on their SEN is not acceptable within the school and will be dealt in accordance with our Counter Bullying Policy.

A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity is promoted throughout the school community. A realistic inclusive curriculum is offered in consultation with students, parents, relevant outside agencies and staff. Inclusion of all students is enhanced through the delivery of various curriculums elements e.g. SPHE, Wellbeing, Religion etc. but also within the interactions and relationships built within the school on a daily basis. Central to this is the school's commitment to embedding restorative practices.

Inclusion underpins and drives the ethos and central mission of John the Baptist Community School. Other aspects of life at John the Baptist Community School that help to build an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance include;

- Building core principles of restorative practice in daily life, policies and practices.
- Involvement in whole school initiatives such as health and wellbeing week, Arts and Culture Week, Santa's grotto.
- Weekly announcements celebrating student achievements in and outside school, both academic and otherwise.
- Building of supportive, trusting mentorships through our links Programme, in which TY's support our First Year students during their transition to Post Primary, various activities such as Lunch games and induction program.
- Shoes Box and Food Appeals prior to Christmas help to build a sense of community and care for others.
- One Good School
- Celebration of Special Events such as Languages weeks build acceptance and awareness of other cultures within the school community.

1.3 Allocation

Allocation will be provided in line with the new model of allocation as outlined in Special Education Teaching Allocation. Please see Circular no 0014/2017:

<https://assets.gov.ie/12734/fa931838eef742f095d1c2c7b0aa6bcf.pdf>.

The new Special Education Teaching allocation will provide a single unified allocation for special educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. The new model will replace the following.

- The Learning Support and English as Additional Language Support (LS/EAL) scheme.
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) allocation process which provided additional SE teaching supports to schools, to support students who had been assessed as having low incidence disabilities in accordance with DES circular 70/2014.
- The allocation process for post primary schools to support students with high incidence special educational needs as set out in DES circular 0010/2012

SEN staff in JTBCS will reference this circular (0014/2017) and The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Toolkit – Building on Ability to Support the Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model (September 2017) and Exemption from the Study of Irish circular 0055/2022 in allocating resources to students with SEN using the Continuum of Support Process.

1.4 Child Welfare

In accordance with circular 0081/2017 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post Primary School 2017' all staff in JTBCS are required to be Garda vetted. Following this all staff are also required to

complete the following courses, TULSA's 'Children First E-learning' course and the PDST Child Protection E-Learning Programme and submit completion certs to management.

Due to the close working relationships and duties that are intrinsic to the provision of support to the students with special education needs, child protection procedures are to the forefront of all interactions between staff and students. All staff including those in the SEN department follow all procedures and practices regarding child welfare as stated in the schools Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment 2022.

1.5 Wellbeing

Every student has the right to feel cared for in the school environment as per JTBCS' Code of Behaviour. Student's interactions with peers and staff can impact on their wellbeing on a daily basis. Mutual respect is central to the learning environment while providing the student with the opportunity to develop their own unique potential. All students in Junior Cycle experience wellbeing embedded across the curriculum. Those students starting First Year in September 2022 will receive over 400 hours of Wellbeing classes over their Junior Cycle three-year programme. Students are undertaking the short courses in SPHE, CSPE and PE, which all are under the banner of wellbeing in Junior Cycle. All SEN students are encouraged to attend, which will enable them to reflect on and develop the key indicators pertaining to wellbeing. The key indicators of wellbeing at Junior Cycle include; active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected and aware, which will also be embedded into SE staffs' teaching and interactions with SEN students.

Fig. 1.1



“Looking at Our Schools 2022” sees students’ wellbeing as intrinsic to this holistic view of learning, both as an enabler of learning and as an outcome of learning. It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students’ wellbeing through their practices in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies, and partnerships.

Children with special educational needs in particular may experience a range of social, emotional and mental health problems, which can create a barrier to learning. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, uncertainty, the unknown and school closures have posed particular challenges for students with special educational needs (SEN) and their families. While teachers have responded creatively to closures by adapting their practice and endeavouring to provide opportunities for remote learning, some students with SEN found it very challenging to engage meaningfully with this. Families have experienced stress in trying to meet their child’s learning needs within the home. Many students with SEN have found it difficult to understand the loss of routines and opportunities to interact with school staff and peers. In this context, a greater emphasis on wellbeing, especially in the arena of social emotional learning is key. This includes strategies within the classroom, specific class topics and other structures and opportunities put in place by the school such as the lunch club in First and Second Year, movement breaks, sensory room breaks, wellbeing walks, Liskennett visits and Guidance department support.

The school's involvement in Jigsaws ‘One Good School’ Initiative demonstrates its commitment to addressing the challenges of mental health and the barriers it can pose to learning. This involves all members of our school community, staff, students and parents.

1.6 Rationale

The aim of this policy is to show the manner in which students with SEN are catered for in JTBCS. It is written with reference to parts of the Education Act 1998, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN) and Looking at Our Schools 2022. The policy is a working document and is reviewed annually in light of the new developments both internally and nationally.

At John the Baptist we aim to make inclusion a lived experience where all students feel cared for and accepted.

2 Categories of SEN and SEN Team

2.1 Categories of Special Education Needs (SEN)

JTBCS to date has provided for the following categories of SEN

- Borderline/Mild General Learning Disability
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability

- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties –ADD/ ADHD
- Specific Learning Difficulty – Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, Spelling difficulty
- Physical Disability – LAMBS, Phocomelia, Juvenile Arthritis, Muscular dystrophy, Scoliosis
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties – hearing and visual impairments
- Additional Education Needs (AEN) – English as a foreign language
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – currently three ASD units
- Down Syndrome
- Di-George Syndrome
- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Cystic Fibrosis (CF)
- Gifted and Talented students (see Appendix 5)
- English as Additional Language -EAL

2.2 Roles within Special Education (SE)

As per circular 0014/17 Circular to the Management Authorities of all Post Primary Schools: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards.

2.2.1 The Special Education (SE) Teacher

The role of the SE teacher is to:

- Assess and record student's needs and progress, setting specific targets, targeting appropriate support, withdrawing students, co-teaching, team-teaching and assisting teachers in adopting the curriculum.
- Provide specific support for students with SEN that require social skills and life skills.
- Administering formal and informal assessment of students, including standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Oversee the completion of Student Support Files, Individual Education Plans and Pupil Personal Plans.
- Application for Special Needs Assistants (SNA) and review of the need for SNAs.
- Application for assistive technology.
- Applications for special transport.
- Monitor, evaluate and review progress of students as per NEPS and continuum of support.
- Attendance at weekly SEN meeting.
- Communicating with staff via whole staff meetings and the provision plans on students' needs within the school.
- Provide effective support to mainstream teachers, including advice on teaching and learning strategies and differentiation.

- Accept applications and process of same for Irish exemptions.
- Responsibility for Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)
- Liaise with parents and advice on best practice for their children.
- Participate in co-operative teaching and team teaching in curriculum subjects where students with SEN may be experiencing difficulties.
- Communicating and Liaising with relevant outside agencies
- Gather information pertaining to a student in order to meet their individual needs.

2.2.2 Role of Mainstream Teacher with Special Education (SE) Hours

The role of the subject teacher who has SE hours is to support and contribute to the individual learning needs of students with SE Hours. At the beginning of the school year these teachers attend an initial meeting with the SEN department where the additional needs of the students concerned are outlined. The subject teacher contributes to meeting these additional needs by developing teaching plans, including SSFs, for students on his/her caseload. These plans include target setting and record keeping. Informal meetings between these subject teachers and the SEN department are essential for support and for on-going evaluation. SE teachers also liaise with the student's subject teacher to assist planning for their classes.

2.3 Roles of partners in the SEN team

2.3.1 The Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal/Deputy Principal assumes overall responsibility for ensuring that the needs of students with SEN are met. The Principal/Deputy Principal has the general responsibility for establishing and promoting whole school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students including those with SEN.

The Principal/Deputy Principal works with the BOM, teachers and parents in the development, implication and review of whole school policies that promote the inclusion of students with SEN. The Principal/Deputy Principal and teachers nominated consult and liaise with external bodies and agencies such as the DES, NEPS, NCSE, and HSE.

The Deputy Principal, Elaine O Donnell is the primary contact for SEN staff and parents with any SEN issues. The Deputy Principal also applies for and liaises with the SENO for necessary resources from the DES to meet the needs of these students. Also, she ensures that SE teachers are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities.

The Deputy Principal, Ita Browne, takes responsibility for the development of procedures for a seamless transfer from primary schools to JTBCS, by identifying the students with existing SEN prior to entry to JTBCS. The Deputy Principal meets with Teachers and Parents of incoming First Years where parents are

invited to share information pertaining to their child's SEN in a safe environment. Incoming students with SEN are invited to visit the school prior to entry in August. T. O'Dwyer and C. Faust are also available for one-to-one meetings to answer initial questions and the examination of paperwork on the open night and have spoken further at past Registration nights. This helps to raise awareness of SEN as a key feature of educational provision at John the Baptist Community School and to ease the process of moving from Primary to Post Primary.

2.3.2 The Mainstream Teacher

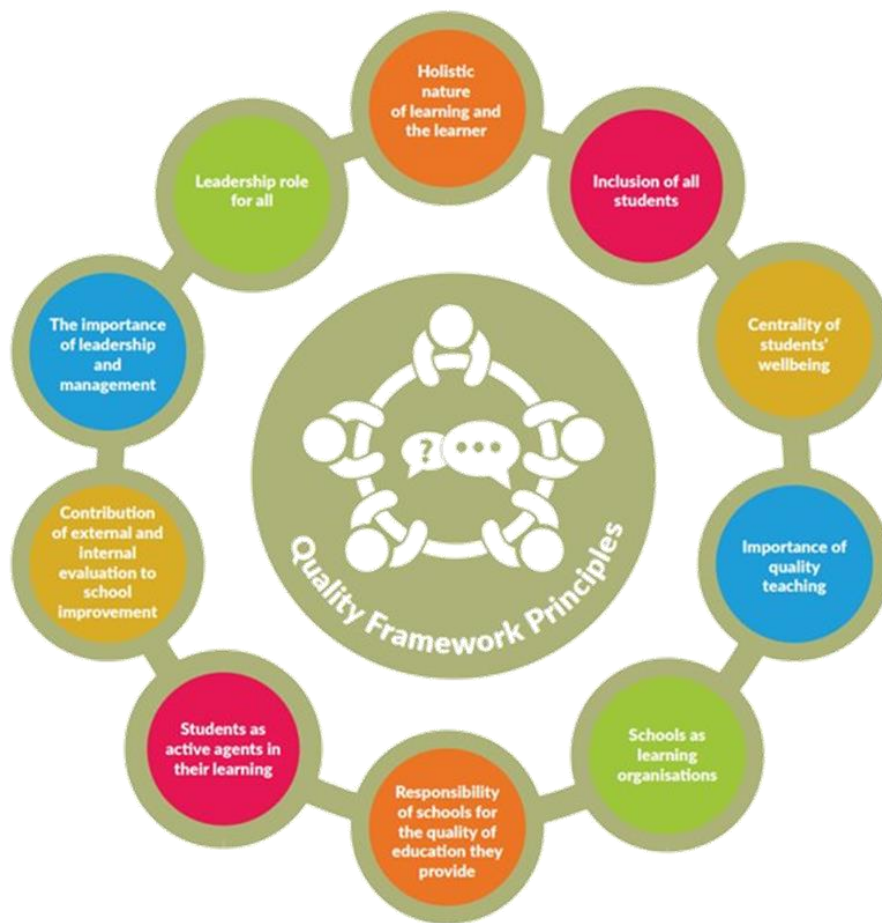
In accordance with the Education Act 1998, the Mainstream Teacher class teacher is the first line of responsibility for the learning progress of all students in his/her class. Therefore, it is imperative that the Mainstream Teacher plays a leading role in the day-to-day education of students with SEN and provides these and all students with a stimulating and supportive classroom environment. This is reinforced in Circular 0014/2017 on page 16/17.

In JTBCS, at the beginning of each year the Mainstream Teacher class teacher has access to the SEN register/Provision Plan for a limited period of time. It is the responsibility of the Mainstream Teacher class teacher to liaise with SEN department to access additional information from the students file to ensure that the students' needs are met in the classroom. Within the classroom, in line with the Continuum of Support Guidelines and the Teaching and Learning dimension of the "Looking at our School" framework, the class teacher may gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions.

Through the collaboration, support and advice of the SEN department, the mainstream teacher will understand the varying needs of students with SEN and will provide a differentiated curriculum to meet these needs. The mainstream teacher will also be crucial in the early identification and referral of students, who may not yet have been formally assessed but show signs of need. The class teacher plays an important role in identifying students with SEN (see identification 3.2.1). Once identified the teacher makes their concerns known to the SEN department. Intervention at this stage may be differentiation or some SE support targeting the need directly. As per circular 0055/2022 the Mainstream teacher will be required to provide evidence of differentiation to the SEN department prior to the SEN department issuing an Irish exemption to students.

The mainstream teacher will also have responsibility in assessing, recording and reporting on students with SEN in their subject area, remembering to show sensitivity to the needs of the student where appropriate.

Fig 1.2



As outlined as a key standard in Teaching and Learning in the “Looking at our Schools” 2022 framework successful intervention is paramount to the ongoing cooperation between the class teacher and the SEN teaching team. Inclusion of all students is one of the ten key principles underpinning the document.

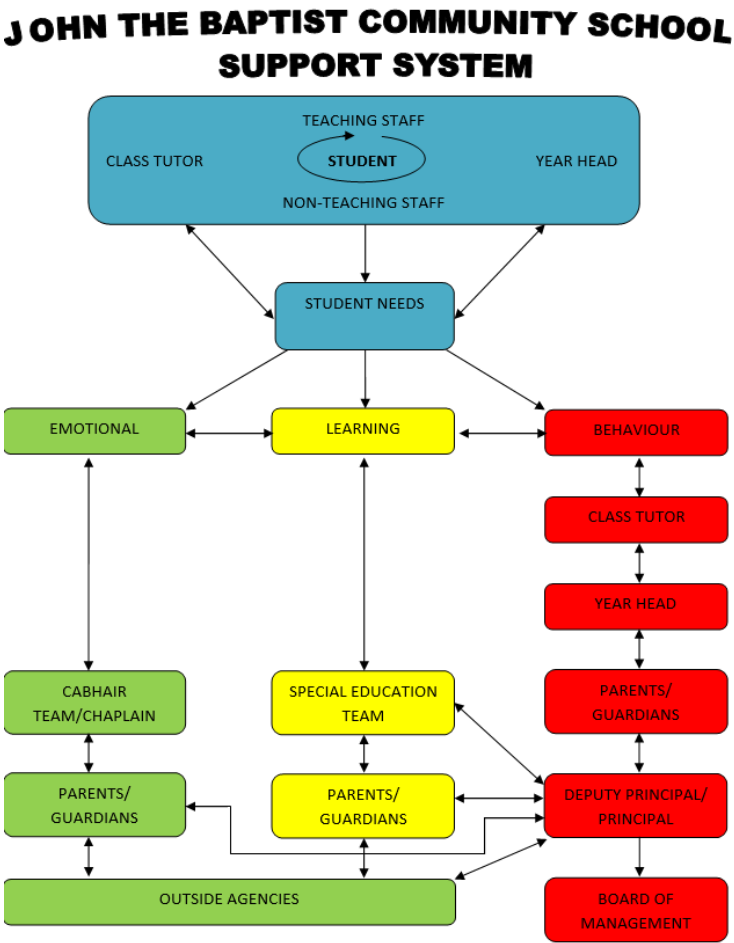
The quality framework emphasises the need for all students to be meaningfully included in their school community. It recognises the importance of high-quality learning and teaching that is inclusive, student-centred, informed and evidence based, and that supports young people to participate in and make progress in all areas of their learning and development. It also recognises the need for high expectations to ensure that all young people are provided with opportunities to meet their full potential in accordance with their abilities, strengths, stages of development, and identified learning needs. It also acknowledges the agency of teachers in making informed and reflective decisions in response to the abilities and needs of all young people in a variety of contexts.

2.3.3 The Cabhair Team

At JTBCS the Student Support team is called the Cabhair team, which is a key component of the school's support system (please see Fig. 1.3 The JTBCS support system). Members of this team meet once a week and include the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, subject teachers and members of the

staff who are trained in Pastoral Care. The purpose of this team is to provide an organised structure for identifying and meeting the diverse educational and emotional needs of individual students. Each staff member has the facility to refer a Student to Cabhair via the Year Head who completes a Cabhair referral form. Students who are identified with personal difficulties or challenges are supported and guided through a process of ongoing meetings with a member of the Cabhair team. Each referral is dealt with and monitored on a weekly basis. Where necessary appropriate and supportive interventions are identified and applied. All information with regard to students is dealt with respectfully and sensitively. Strict protocols are followed in how information is received, shared, stored and accessed. Parents/Guardians will be consulted and informed throughout the process with the student choice to be involved central to the support. This group has been meeting since 2002, with members of this group liaise closely with mainstream teachers, to ensure an inclusive education is being provided for students with SEN. In addition, as needed, the Cabhair Team collaborates with a range of individuals and groups within the school including Tutors and Year Heads, the Critical Incident Team, the DLP (Rachel Hayes) and the DDLP (Ita Browne). A member of the SEN Team, G. Carey is an active member of the Cabhair team and regularly reports to the SEN Team. This helps to provide a wide lens and allow greater input to address emerging issues, especially among our most vulnerable students. Please see the Guidance Plan/Policy for more information.

Fig 1.3



2.3.4 Board of Management (BOM)

The Board of management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on SEN provision. The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review on an annual basis of school policy on SEN.

SEN is a standing agenda item on every Board of Management Agenda each month, with a report provided regarding activities, initiatives and approaches. This regular feedback allows the Board to fully understand the work of our SEN team, to offer feedback and input but also to be best placed to address needs as they arise.

The Board of Management, as the school's primary regulatory body, strives:

- To ensure that the school has an up-to-date SEN policy in place and monitor the implementation of that policy.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society.
- To ensure the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies, and to ensure that parents are informed of their child's SEN and how these needs are being met within the school
- To ensure that parents are consulted with in regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education.
- To develop a whole school approach to inclusion

2.3.5 The Guidance Department

Given their training and expertise, our Guidance Team can play a central role in assisting the management and student- support teams when dealing with such areas as inclusion, access and equity in the development of school policies, and curricular planning.

The Guidance Counsellors' role within the SEN team can consist of the following:

1. Assisting the Cabhair team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school.
2. Ensure that support and guidance for students with SEN are in accordance with their individual needs.
3. Assist students with SEN at different stages of schooling in making career decisions.
4. Collaborate in assessment/application processes with other Cabhair team members and SEN department.
5. Assist in making other teachers aware of relevant information about students with SEN and advise on how these students can be helped in school. Sensitive information must be treated confidentially and must not serve to disadvantage the student.
6. Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) advice.

The Guidance Counsellor supports students (with the permission of the parents) who are having difficulties that impinge on school life. Referrals come via students themselves, staff, parents, other students and management and through the Cabhair team meeting. Support includes:

- Giving students a space where they can talk if they are having difficulties coping in school.
- Helping students with behavioural skills.
- Helping students with study skills
- Where necessary students may be referred to an outside agency if it is felt that school support is not sufficient to meet the needs of the student.
- The Guidance Counsellor liaises with, the School Chaplain, staff, management, parents and the Cabhair team, as appropriate.

2.3.6 Year Head/Class Tutor

As key figures within the school, Year Heads are a primary contact point for students and parents/guardians within the school. Their role is:

- To support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute significantly to the work of the SEN team. Year Heads often are heavily involved with progress reports
- To facilitate the inclusion of any individual student with SEN by monitoring the student's progress within the year group.
- To encourage an awareness of special educational needs in the school community including a respect for students with SEN.
- To initiate a referral after communication from home, class tutors, mainstream teacher, analysis of student attainment, SNA and observation of behaviour.
- To communicate with the SEN Department regarding patterns of behaviour, work rate or changes in emotional state they may become aware of during their Year Head duties
- To make referrals to the Cabhair Team as needed to provide additional support
- To work closely with the SEN Department to observe, collect information on and monitor student progress.

Class Tutors work closely with Year Heads as part of the continuum of support within the school, helping to monitor and disseminate information regarding student attainment and needs.

2.3.7 Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians, through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. The participation of Parents/Guardians in a meaningful, consistent manner is key determiner of student success and positive outcomes. Parents and guardians have a more complete understanding of a child's physical, social, developmental, and family history. They can provide information on the child's strengths and weaknesses at home, background information on the

child's history and development, and information on any family factors that may affect the child's learning. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to actively communicate with the school at enrolment if they observe any learning or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted parents are consulted and their permission is sought. The SEN department advocates a partnership of collaboration and co-operation with the parents of students with SEN.

Parents are advocates for their child and should avail of the open-door policy in communicating with the SEN Department including;

- Strategies to support their child
- Target setting for IEPs, SSFs & PPPs
- Submitting updated reports/ Diagnosis
- Informing of changes in circumstances
- Raise a concern regarding emotional or academic needs.
- Application for Irish Exemptions
- Application for Assistive Technology
- Application for Special Transport
- Access to Special Class

Continued collaboration with the SEN Department fosters the best possible outcome for their child. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the SEN department on the emergent and transient needs of their child.

2.3.8 The Student

The involvement of students in the development, implementation and review of their own progress is an important principle that underpins effective SEN provision. Students are encouraged to develop and take ownership of the skills and strategies that are developed to meet their needs. All SEN students are encouraged to become active participants in all aspects of the school community such as focus groups, student council, information evenings and extra-curricular activities, and in their own learning through goal setting, planning and reviewing of their progress.

JTBCS are continually striving to promote and encourage students voice within the classroom to ensure the creation of an inclusive environment that will facilitate the learning of all students. The development and embedding of inclusive strategies such as the tweet board, reflective number line, formulation of success criteria are all means for SEN students to utilise their voice, enabling mainstream and SE teachers to gain feedback and insight into the students' thoughts, ideas and progress.

2.4 Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

2.4.1 Role in support to the students

SNAs are responsible for non-teaching services involving the care and well-being of students with disabilities or certain medical conditions. They provide support and assistance to the student in order to empower their independence and maximise their potential and educational development.

- To provide care need assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.
- 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 recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.

2.4.2 Role in support to the mainstream teacher

The SNA works closely with teachers to provide assistance in preparing materials, organising books and resources, assist in the feedback of observations, support in the classroom where agreed with the class teacher in order to contribute to the educational plan of student with SEN. In accordance with circular 30/2014 SNA's will assist students with access to SNA, with all primary and secondary care needs including Assistance with mobility & orientation, assistance with toileting and hygiene and supervision to name a few. All of which promote and support the inclusion of students with SEN within the entire school community.

2.4.3 Additional SNA Roles

- Each SNA is required to keep detailed class notes on all students on their caseload. These notes will be submitted digitally to the SEN department at least once a term. Records of any incidence involving these students are documented and reported immediately to the year head and Deputy Principal.
- The SE staff along with the student, the parent, the deputy principal, the SNA and the NEPS physiologist will draw up and provide input into a Pupil Personal Plan for each student with access to a SNA. The SENO will review these Pupil Personal Plans during a review process to assess the on-going need for SNAs.
- Assisting with supervision at break and lunchtimes and escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping a student with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting and supporting with inhouse examinations where a care need is present.
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.

- Engagement with parents of students with SEN as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the students and the school.
- To ensure confidentiality at all times.
- SNA's, as SEN professionals, within the classroom offer invaluable insights into the care needs of students which are incorporated into the development of timetables, which are dynamic and flexible throughout the year.

3 SEN Model of Organisation

3.1 Whole school Context

In First Year, all classes at JTBCS are organised in a mixed ability setting in order that all students reach their full potential, mimicking their experience from Primary school. This helps to ease the transition to Post Primary. These groupings are maintained for Second Year and Third Year with some alterations taking place for Maths and Irish, where classes are banded into two pools. This facilitates all students getting the opportunity to reach their potential and maximise their chance of doing Higher Level where possible.

Post Junior Cert students self-select subjects and levels with majority of classes taught in a mixed ability setting. In Irish, English and Maths, students also self-select their level for Senior Cycle. While teachers and staff may offer advice, no restriction is placed on students choosing their level allowing flexibility and great student autonomy. Every student is given the opportunity to study at the Higher level in all subjects if they so wish.

3.2 Identification of SEN

The SEN department identifies and supports students with SEN as follows:

3.2.1 Feeder Schools Identification

The feeder school plays a very important part in identifying students entering JTBCS with SEN. Through direct communication with the teachers in the feeder primary schools prior to entry of students and consultation with parents the needs of the students are identified and resources are applied for the students with SEN through the SENO. The education passport is filled in for all students and submitted to Deputy Principal over 1st years.

3.2.2 School based Identification

The mainstream teacher/ class tutor highlights the student experiencing difficulties to the SEN department. The informal observations carried out by the mainstream teacher may highlight anyone of the following:

- Under performance in class tests.
- Absenteeism.
- Emotional, social or behavioural difficulties including anxiety
- Difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy.
- Language difficulties.

The SEN department complete incoming assessments, CAT4, WJIII calculations subtest and PPAD-E, on all first years. The results are utilised to highlight and identify any students who have low ability scores which may result in them having difficulties in class and also to highlight difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy. These results are also used to inform and develop the students IEP and SSFs.

3.2.3 School Support

In addition to the support given by the mainstream teacher there may be more formal involvement from the SE Teacher and Guidance Counsellor. A class teacher/tutor and/or Year Head can refer any student to members of the SEN department at any time. A decision is then made on the appropriate intervention. Parents are informed and consent received for students to undergo further diagnostic tests administered by the SE teacher.

3.2.4 Outside Agency Support

Students who are in need of further support are referred to NEPS, or another outside agency for further assessment depending on their needs.

- Youthreach
- Irish Learning Support Association
- Guidance organisation
- Family Resource Centre Hospital
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Visiting Teacher for the Blind
- TULSA
- East Limerick Services
- St. Gabriel's Services
- Tusla

3.2.5 Parental Identification

Parents can also inform the school that a student is over challenged by the school curriculum or that they wish to apply for an Irish exemption; with parental approval the student undergoes the preliminary screening process. Once it has been established that the student has an SEN which may include meeting the criteria for an Irish exemption, the parents are advised, and a plan is put in place to ensure that the student is given every opportunity to reach his/her potential with the provision of an inclusive education. Parents are encouraged to participate in the planning of their children's education at JTBCS.

3.3 Models of SEN delivery

In assessing which mode of support is most appropriate for each individual student, reference is made to circular 0014/2017 and The NCSE Toolkit which outlines the Continuum of Support as follows:

Identification of Needs through the continuum of support process

<p>Classroom Support (FOR ALL)</p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures /assessments • Basic needs checklist • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review</p>
<p>School Support (FOR SOME)</p>	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures / assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

	A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review
School Support Plus (FOR FEW)	<p>This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. <p>Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation</p>

Based on the Continuum of Support the following options are available in JTBCS:

Team Teaching/Co-Teaching/In Class Support/Parallel Teaching

Team teaching is available in some classes where timetabling and staff availability allows. The mainstream teacher and SE teacher agree initially on which model of Co- teaching will most benefit the students of the targeted class.

Fig 1.4



Inclusion of SNA in Specific Classes

All students with access to an SNA receive support in some of their classes. SNAs will be allocated between the ASD units and the mainstream classes based on access and hours. If a student who is timetabled for SNA access is absent the SNA will be timetabled to support other students with access at this time.

Small Group Withdrawal

This is the main model of SEN delivery in JTBCS. In 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students are withdrawn at Irish and/or MFL time and offered academic and social/emotional support. Senior support is based on student's subject choice and teachers with the required subject knowledge are timetabled for this support where possible during Irish and RE time slots.

Individual Withdrawal

In JTBCS it is necessary on occasions to engage in one-to-one teaching. It is school procedure to

- Have glass panels in all classroom doors where one-to-one occurs.
- Leave the door slightly open during one-to-one sessions.
- Have an SNA with the teacher during some one-to-one sessions. This will be at the discretion of the teacher and the principal.
- Inform parents that their child will be attending one-to-one sessions.
- When a SE Teacher or SNA accompanies a child to a room for a time out session, he/she will sit outside the door and supervise the child through the glass panel or will stay in the room and leave the door slightly ajar. They will also let the teacher in the room nearby know that they are in the room.
- The SE Teacher or SNA will record in their work logs the dates and times when accompanying a child to the room or when on time out from the classroom.

Curricular Reduction

All students with the exception of the students in the ASD units, L2LP students and students who have already activated their exemption in Irish, start 1st year on a full timetable. The students who are experiencing difficulties are provided with the opportunity to reduce their timetable once all other avenues of support have been exhausted. Students who have an exemption in Irish from primary school are immediately exempt in JTBCS and will be given the option of studying a foreign language. Students who find areas of the curriculum challenging may be offered SE support and decisions around the period of intervention are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and students.

Support in Shared Area

Whilst inclusion is paramount in our delivery of SE, on occasion, students with ASD have the support of our ASD Units/Special Classes (Shared Area) available to them. We as a school recognise that a number of our ASD students find many aspects of the mainstream curriculum difficult to access. Therefore, in 2015/2016, the school established the first of its ASD Units/special classes, known as “Willow” (please see 3.4 for more detail). In 2018/2019 the ASD units/special classes relocated to room 8, which is centrally located in main school building and the name was changed to the ‘Shared Area’. In 2022/2023 academic year we are due to get a modular unit to provide additional space for the Shared Area students.

3.4 The Shared Area

3.4.1. The Role of the Shared Area

As per the continuum of support, the Shared Area is part of level 3 of this model in JTBCS. There are three units/special classes available in the Shared Area, with eighteen registered students. Teacher and SNA support in the Unit is as per guidelines reflecting the needs and movements of the students.

The units/special classes have allowed the school to include students with ASD in our school community, who may not have otherwise engaged with mainstream education. These students are integrated into as many aspects of school life as is beneficial for them and other students. The units/special classes are essential for such individuals as it provides a safe and comforting environment when they become overwhelmed with their surroundings. By providing them with the opportunity to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations, it encourages them to participate in both academic and social activities. By integrating, it facilitates inclusion.

While the school acknowledges that inclusion is the aim of education and life at JTBCS, students with ASD need the space and opportunity to exclude themselves in order to allow them be an active participant of our community. In 2018/2019 academic year the school opened the Sensory room which allows for sensory breaks for the students registered in the Units/special classes.

3.4.2 Enrolment and Admission to Shared Area

Procedures for admission are set out having regard for the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000) and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004). The Board of Management reserves the right of admission within the terms of this policy. The Board of Management will not however refuse a child on the basis of: ethnicity, disability (severity of diagnosis), traveller status, political beliefs, family or social status, sexual orientation, gender or religious beliefs.

Any applications for enrolment in the Autism Class/special class will only be considered up to two years previous to entry of the candidate to our school. A dedicated group, typically consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principals, SE teacher(s) and the dedicated NEPS Psychologist, reviews the application for the enrolment. Applications are sent to the SENO who makes the final decision on which student(s) is to be registered in the Shared Area/special class. The decision is also subject to Board approval.

Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills, the number of places in the Autism Class/Special class is limited to six students per unit.

3.4.3 Enrolment Procedure

In line with our Enrolment and Admission Policy 2022/2023 the process of enrolment begins with:

- A referral from an external agency and a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
- A school application form, showing family details and medical history is then completed. This application must be accompanied by a diagnostic report confirming ASD diagnosis and educational psychological assessment, Occupational Therapist report and Speech and Language report if available.
- Fully completed applications are then recorded in the applications file.
- A Letter of Offer from JTBCS is sent to the parents, whereby they accept their place in the ASD Unit within 14 days.
- In March prior to the entry, an application to register the student in the unit will be sent to the SENO using NSCE Form 7. A special transport application form will also be sent to the SENO for this student at this time.
- It is the SENO who approves the registration in the Shared Area.
- The SEN department in the school will notify parents of the outcome of the SENOs decision.

If the number of the children on the list of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the following ranked criteria will apply:

- Applications with siblings already registered in the ASD units/special classes.
- Applicants with siblings already registered in the school.
- Applicants attending the feeder schools
- Applicants not attending these feeder schools for whom this Autism Class would be the nearest facility.
- Applicants not in any of the above categories.

Please note that place allocations will always be subject to emerging students needs. Please note that the fulfilling of the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if necessary, resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available, such as sufficient vacancies within the ASD units/special classes.

On admission to the ASD units/special classes, each pupil will be assessed by the school SEN Department and a student Individual Education Plan and a Personal Pupil Plan will be drawn up.

3.4.5 Health Service Executive Input

Essential services of Speech Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy are provided by the HSE. JTBCS has no control over these services or their provision. All queries about these services must be addressed to the HSE and not to JTBCS.

3.6 Programmes of study

In JTBCS we currently offer the following programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ):

At Junior Level – Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP)

Level 3 Junior Cycle (JC)

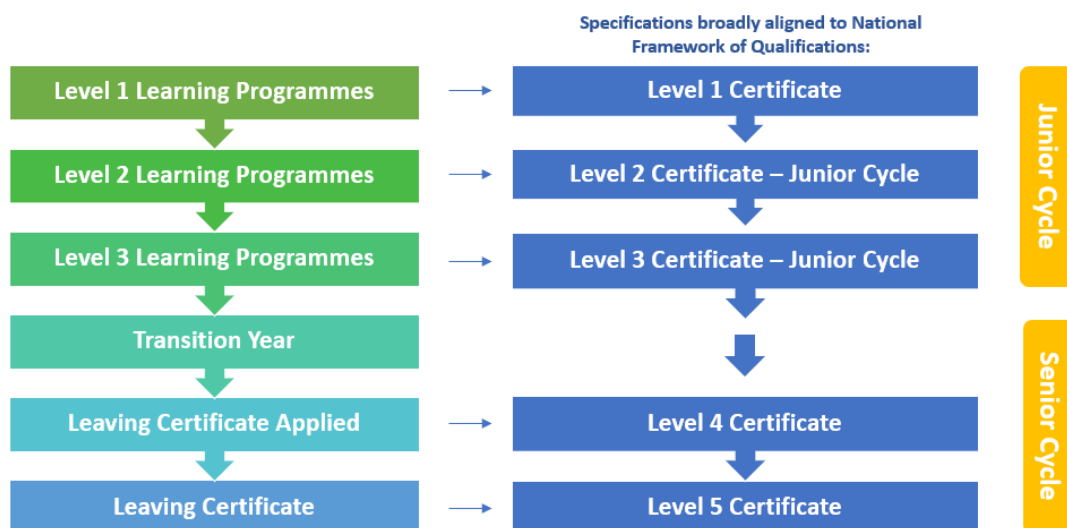
At Senior Level – Transition year programme (TY)

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

Leaving Certificate (LC)

SE support is provided at all levels.

Fig 1.5



3.6 Timetabling of SE provision

Timetabling of SE hours and SE teachers commences at the end of each academic year for the following year. Timetabling is completed with collaboration from SE Teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal.

3.6.1 Junior Cycle

SE is available at Junior Cycle. L2LP is recommended for students with SEN where the traditional Junior Cycle would not meet their needs. Additional support is given to a student with SEN completing the Junior cycle. This support is offered at Irish time, MFL Religion time and/or PE time when appropriate. Many students are also supported through the Junior cycle via team teaching.

3.6.2 Transition Year

At present students with SEN get SE hours at Irish and MFL time if they do not study these subjects. This provision is reviewed annually.

3.6.3 Senior Cycle

SE is available at Senior Cycle. Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is recommended for students with SEN where the traditional Leaving Certificate would not meet their needs. It is generally accepted that the LCA curriculum itself supports the student. Additional support is given to a student with SEN completing the traditional Leaving Certificate. This support is offered at Irish time, Religion time and/or PE time when appropriate. Many students are also supported through the traditional Leaving Cert curriculum via team teaching.

3.6.4 Irish Exemptions

Students with SEN, who have an Irish exemption, are timetabled for SE at this time. They may also be allocated support at MFL time. Exemptions are granted in line with Circular 0055/2022, where students have to be below a percentile of 10% in one subtest of word reading, spelling or comprehension and also have had some differentiation in the mainstream classroom along with a block of intervention by the SE team in order to qualify for an exemption. The test administered for exemptions in Irish is WIATIII. Exemptions can also be granted for students who are accessing a special class (like the Shared Area) or who have been recommended for a special class, and students who have had time living abroad (before 12 or away for three consecutive years). Under the new circular Irish exemptions can also be granted to a student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life and where there is evidence of this difficulty for two school years.

3.6.5 MFL Support Arrangements

SEN students who are exempt from Irish often elect not to study a modern foreign language. These students are given SE hours at this time. At Junior level students who do not study a MFL will be allocated

SE time if they also have an Irish exemption or a recognised SE need. Students who self-elect to withdraw from MFL without SE needs will remain in the MFL classroom. At senior level languages are not compulsory and are timetabled against option subjects. SEN students not studying a foreign language on senior level choose an option subject at this time.

3.6.6 Reduced Timetabling

Students may be permanently withdrawn from a subject area in consultation with the respective subject department, guidance counsellors and with parents' permission. Whilst this is not encouraged, it may be necessary to facilitate the ongoing inclusion of the student within JTBCS.

3.6.7 Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP)

L2LP is available to students with SEN who have ability scores in the lower mild to higher moderate range of learning disabilities and whose ongoing participation in level 3 curriculum is not feasible. Students' participation in L2LP will be discussed with all relevant parties prior to this decision being made. Eligibility is based on IQ level and/or consultation with the parents, SEN department, Management, Primary Schools and NEPS psychologist. The L2LP co-ordinator works closely with subject departments, mainstream subject teachers and special education support teachers to allocate the learning outcomes of the PLU's each year. Completed work is then tracked and uploaded to measure the achievement of each PLU.

3.6.8. English as Additional Language (EAL)

While EAL has not been a significant feature of SE provision in JTBCS, the school is committed to responding in a proactive manner to the changing nature of the school community as it responds to global events. When the need arises we will cater for EAL students by:

- Application of funding in terms of SE hours and SNA hours.
- Assessment of EAL students to establish language acquisition attainment in English.
- Dissemination of information to the all staff and supporting the staff in creating an inclusive environment.
- Development and use of resources to support inclusion and language acquisition including dictionaries and visual supports from Language connects.
- Structured individual and group interventions where appropriate.
- A rich programme of extra-curricular activities.
- A buddy system where appropriate.
- Social and emotional support provided within the school support structures.
- Review of the effectiveness of supports and interventions.

3.6.9. Exceptionally Able/Gifted and Talented

John the Baptist CS recognises the importance of enabling all students to achieve their full potential. Our school is committed to providing an environment which enables all children to progress towards achieving their potential. John the Baptist CS recognises that, by virtue of their ability, Exceptionally Able children may require specific interventions to enable them to achieve their potential and to maximise their performance. Differentiation strategies used within the classroom in addition to enrichment activities and materials provided by teachers, affirm and encourage exceptionally able to excel.

Moreover, a number of initiatives have been trialled and introduced in John the Baptist to address the specific needs of our gifted students. Subjects Hubs in specifically in the areas of Maths and Languages was first trialled in September 2019. A 4-week module was developed incorporating materials from 3rd level courses and advanced placement programs to develop and enhance students critical learning strategies and approaches in often unusual and thought-provoking activities. The students gaining a high mark in Mathematics were selected to take part, in addition to those nominated by their math's teachers, allowed for a holistic view of those excelling in the subject. This first initiative was reviewed using student feedback and focus groups to further develop the program and content. A Second of this program was planned for April 2020 in conjunction with a German Hub facilitated by a native German speaker. However due to covid this was not possible. In The academic year 2022.2023 it is planned that such hubs will be re-established.

In the Academic year 2021.2022, our SSE Co-Ordinator piloted an intervention with students in TY who emerged as gifted and talented from their CAT4 results. A number of students were selected and funded by the school to attend the a pre- college programs with DCU incorporating areas of Law & Medicine. For the coming year a further period has been put in place for this teacher to meet with and engage in interventions with students emerging in 1st year.

The School prides itself in the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities which allows all students to engage and in particular for those gifted and talented to display their gifts in a number of areas e.g. school Musical, sport, Junk Kouture, young social innovators, debating, essay and public speaking competitions, chess club, young scientist, this list is not exhaustive.

John the Baptist also accepts that those defined as exceptionally able/gifted or talented is a diverse group and may include those with a dual diagnosis with a series of complex needs. Therefore, recognition and affirmation of such abilities is crucial.

4 Communication at JTBCS

4.1 Methods of Communication at JTBCS

- VsWare
- Email with staff/parents/Guardians
- Phone calls with parents /Guardians as required
- Office 365 Teams
- Office 365 OneNote
- Staff notice board
- Staffroom television
- Staff meetings
- Informal meetings with teachers
- Referral forms
- Cabhair meetings
- Class tutor and Year Head meetings.
- Subject meetings
- Year head meetings
- Year assemblies
- Reports home to parents/guardians

4.2 SEN pupil register/Provision Plan

At the beginning of the new school year the SEN staff informs the whole staff of those students on the SEN register. The categories and needs of the students are identified and strategies for in-class teaching and learning are outlined. A copy of the register/provision plan of all students with SEN is made available for further reference to all staff for a limited period. All mainstream teachers who require additional information can request access to a students' SEN file.

4.3 Dissemination of information regarding to SEN students

All staff are informed about SEN students during the first school term at a whole staff meeting. The information pertaining to the students SEN is given through the Password Protected Provision Plan on SEN Teacher Team in which all teachers have access to. Additional information is available from a member of the SEN team and is held in the student file. Access to the provision plan (SEN register) will be made available to all teachers at the commencement of the school year. This will be a read only document. Teaching and learning strategies are available to all staff from the school website and whole staff Team/Journal.

4.4 Record keeping

All relevant information including every communication with parents or outside agencies is recorded in the student file and/or in minutes of meetings.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is completed for each student in the ASD units/special classes (support for few).

Pupil personal plans (PPP) are completed for all students with SNA access (support for few).

Student support files (SSF) are completed for all other students with SEN (support for some)

Daily records are kept for all SE classes and all classes in the ASD units/special classes.

Each of the above documents are working documents and are reviewed as required.

5 Enrolment and Assessment

5.1 Admissions and Enrolment policy

This is outlined in detail in the school's Admissions and Enrolment Policy. Details pertaining to the enrolment in the ASD units/c, i.e., the Shared Area, can be viewed in 3.4 of this document.

5.2 Transition from primary to secondary school programme

5.2.1 Sharing of information

The feeder school plays a very important part in identifying students entering JTBCS with SEN. Through direct communication with teachers and parents prior to entry of students the needs of the students are identified, and resources put in place to meet these needs. Parents are requested to share all relevant information to assist JTBCS in making the provision for their child's SEN. JTBCS have made transition resources available on a Padlet on the school website. This will enable the transition of students to take place smoothly as information is available to students prior to entry to the school.

5.2.2. Steps in moving to JTBCS

Our transition from Primary to Post primary includes the following:

- A visit by the Deputy Principal and another member of staff to all feeder National Schools outlining the education and facilities available at JTBCS.
- For ASD students they who avail of July provision may visit or take part in activities in JTBCS.
- An Open Night for parents of incoming 1st years.
- At registration night parents complete a form where they get an opportunity to inform JTBCS of their child's SEN.
- The PPADE, WJIII Calculation subtest and CAT4 is administered on entry to JTBCS. This is used as baseline data for students with SEN and also to identify any students with emerging needs.
- Mixed ability classes are formed.
- Optional private tour of the school is provided for SEN students and their parents during June, to ensure they gain familiarity with the surroundings and ease to the transition from Primary to Secondary.

- A stand-alone Induction Day at the beginning of the Autumn Term where only first years are in school and settling-in activities are undertaken.

5.3 Assessment Procedure

5.3.1 Purpose

Assessment is carried out for a specific purpose with the intention of acting on the results. It can be carried out at JTBCS for any of the following reasons:

- To track a student's progress
- To establish a baseline in students' attainments including EAL.
- To set clear and achievable targets for the student.
- To form mixed ability classes
- To select students for additional teaching support.
- To complete Irish exemption process.
- To complete RACE and DARE processes.
- To inform a NEPS referral.
- To establish a student's needs following a referral.
- To assist outside agencies with diagnosis.

5.3.2 Methods of Assessments

Methods of assessment used at JTBCS are appropriate and do not create barriers to inclusion for students with SEN.

Formal assessment

This is in the form of standardized criterion, referenced and certain diagnostic tests. Formal assessments are summative and formative in nature.

- Assessment of Learning – This includes CAT4, WJIII, WIATIII, DASH, PPAD-E, EAL Post Primary Assessment kit, class tests, end of unit tests, chapter tests, term assessments, in house exams, CBAs, final projects and state examinations. WIATIII is administered in assessing for Irish exemptions.
- Assessment for Learning – Staff at JTBCS both mainstream and SE staff use several strategies for assessment for learning namely, success criteria, effective questioning (blooms taxonomy), self-assessment, peer assessment and effective feedback. (see Assessment Policy)
- Assessment as Learning – Students with SEN have to be supported through this process and given the skills to use this form of assessment. It includes self-reflection and peer evaluation.

The first formal assessment students will undertake in JTBCS is in September of 1st year when students will complete the WIATIII, WJIII calculation subtest and CAT4. The SE staff administering and interpreting these formal tests have training and knowledge of the area.

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment methods are applied in all school environments including classroom and yard and information gathered can lead directly to the planning for supporting the students.

- Classroom progress checks – quizzes, whiteboards, tweet board, number line.
- Informal observation by the teacher/SNA/student
- Evaluation of homework
- Informal analysis of students language and social development
- Interaction with others
- Student journal and VsWare
- Organisational skills
- Self Management skills
- Strategies – think-pair-share, placemats, tweet boards, exit tickets, whiteboards, 3-2-1, must-could- should, success criteria, reflection number line, 5W and 1H (see assessment policy)

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is used to identify the students learning strengths and needs. The assessment may be carried out to aid the planning of the learning programme for students with SEN. This testing is also used to provide background information for the NEPS psychologist. From 2019/2020 the diagnostic testing is also used to grant Irish exemptions. Diagnostic test results are held in the students file and also on a computer which can be accessed by SE staff.

Files and psychological assessments are stored in the SE Office. These are confidential. Mainstream teachers have access to these files on request from the SEN Department. Teachers are given access to the SEN register/Provision Plan and are encouraged to read these files in order to inform their teaching practices and meet the needs of their students.

5.4 Ongoing monitoring of progress and support of transfer from second level

JTBCS is committed to ensuring that all SEN students receive full support in progressing and accessing 3rd level education. All SEN students receive extra Guidance Counselling Support when applying to PLC, and CAO to ensure all supports are accessed. They are fully assisted and advised in applying to DARE and all parents/guardians are encouraged to meet with Guidance Counsellors in order to progress all applications. The Guidance Team have established links with the Disability Support Services at 3rd Level

Institutions in both Cork and Limerick. Guidance Counsellors regularly attend information sessions and meetings with staff at all these institutions. On the day of CAO offers Guidance Counsellors are available at the school to meet with SEN students to assist them in making contact with the DSS staff at the relevant 3rd level provider.

SEN students who progress to PLC colleges are advised to contact the guidance department throughout the year after they finish in JTBCS, in order to apply for DARE should they wish to pursue a CAO application. Guidance Counsellors regularly liaise with the SEN Dept to ensure efficiency of the system and may follow up regarding individual students. The Guidance Dept operate an open-door policy for all students and SEN students are advised that Guidance support is available to them in the years following completion of education at JTBCS.

6 Liaison with Outside Agencies

6.1 Special Needs Organiser (SENO)

The SENO has responsibility for coordinating and facilitating the delivery of educational services for children presenting with SEN. The SENO reviews SNA requirements, Shared area registration (ASD/Special classes) special transport applications, and also processes the applications for assistive technology.

6.2 NEPS Psychologist

The NEPS psychologist visits the school on a regular basis, students are referred to him based on the criteria above in 3.2.2. and 3.2.3.

- Gives advice on classroom strategies and resources.
- Conducts full psychological assessments.
- Advises on individual students needs.
- Advises on SEN policy and practice.
- Advises on Literacy and Numeracy
- Meets with the parents and members of the SEN team to follow up on the progress of the students presenting with SEN.
- Meets with students to track progress/give advice as appropriate.
- In the event of a NEPs psychologist not being assigned to the school, the SCAPA Scheme will be accessed.

6.3 Health Service Executive (HSE)

- Social Workers
- Child and Adolescence Psychiatric Services

6.4 Other Agencies:

- Youth reach
- Irish Learning Support Association
- Guidance organisation
- Family Resource Centre Hospital
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Visiting Teacher for the Blind
- TULSA
- East Limerick Services
- St. Gabriel's Services



Appendices

Appendix 1 Exceptionally Able/Gifted and Talented Policy



Exceptionally Able/Gifted and Talented Policy

Under Review

School Mission Statement

JtBCS is committed to the provision of a broadly based education in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, balancing vision with realism, which facilitates personal growth and development among students, staff and community within the context of a Christian ethos.

Context

John the Baptist CS recognises the importance of enabling all students to achieve their full potential. Our school is committed to providing an environment which enables all children to progress towards achieving their potential. John the Baptist CS recognises that, by virtue of their ability, Exceptionally Able children may require specific interventions to enable them to achieve their potential and to maximise their performance. This policy outlines the school's practice and procedures relating to the support of

Exceptionally Able pupils. This policy is in its draft stage and will be formalised following consultation with management, teaching staff, parents and pupils. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the identification and ongoing support of Exceptionally Able student, to ensure that they have an opportunity to progress towards realising their full potential.

Inclusion

The School encourages and expects all students to involve themselves in the life of the School according to their abilities and subject to demand for specific activities. John the Baptist CS will endeavour to provide such activities and opportunities, where finances and administration allows. Exceptionally Able pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life. The School promotes a culture of success and encourages respect for all achievement whether academic, cultural or sporting.

Definitions

- An Exceptionally Able student is one who ranks in the top 10% of his/her peer group in terms of academic ability. The school recognises that this can change from one year to the next, as demands on the students alter or as the circumstances of the student's life may influence them.
- A talented pupil is in the top 10% in a non-academic area such as sport, visual or performing ability, mechanical ability, leadership and social awareness, creativity and arts and drama. This includes any pupil who could be recognised as gifted or talented but who is presently not reaching his or her full potential.
- A Twice Exceptional student is a student that is gifted but also has a learning difficulty. In this situation, the school will liaise closely with parents in ensuring appropriate support for such pupils within the context of the SEN programme and this policy.
- Twice Exceptional Children – those with a learning difficulty but who are also Exceptionally Able – qualify for Department of Education funded support but only on the basis of their learning difficulty.

Identification

The School uses a range of strategies to identify Exceptionally Able pupils. The identification process is ongoing and begins when the child joins the School.

Identification procedures used by the school may include:

- information from parents or guardians,
- information from primary school teacher,
- entrance test results,
- nature of class work (creativity)
- observations by subject teachers/SNA/peers
- tests or other assessment

Programmes for Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

The Department of Education does not provide specific funding for the support of specialist programmes for Exceptionally Able students in schools. However, John the Baptist CS recognises that

there is much that can be achieved despite this. Additionally our school has, as a matter of course, several activities that can make a significant contribution towards Exceptionally Able students achieving their potential.

In the first instance, students identified as Gifted are expected to understand the obligations of the school in relation to the delivery of the State curricula.

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are provided by teachers within the context of classroom instruction. To meet the needs of Exceptionally Able students John the Baptist CS promotes use of a variety of strategies including:

- ✓ differentiation
- ✓ active learning methodologies
- ✓ independent learning
- ✓ learning centers
- ✓ flexible groupings
- ✓ competitions
- ✓ clubs
- ✓ withdrawal groups.

Our school also assigns mentors to Exceptionally Able students to oversee their development within the school. Students identified as Gifted and wishing to avail of the School Programme will be expected to accept a 'contract of learning'. This contract may include:

- curriculum and performance targets for individuals so that they can achieve at the highest level and always aim to make further progress. Students will take an active part in this process.
- Extension activities, that are more demanding of their abilities, or enrichment activities that provide new and different ways of working will be provided.
- Opportunities for Exceptionally Able pupils to work together may be provided, particularly in the context of competitions and extra-curricular activities.
- There will be opportunities for performance, or to display talents during the school year, for example during Parents Evenings, Prize Giving Ceremonies, Arts and Sports Awards and Transition Year Awards ceremony.
- The school provides an extensive range of curricular and extra-curricular activities suited to the needs of Exceptionally Able children. These include "Trad" Group, School Choir, Lunchtime Club, BT Young Scientist, Debating Club, Irish Debating Group.
- Students may also identify other activities which, if possible, the School could support.
- If appropriate, outside adult mentors, in specific areas of interest, may be approached to facilitate input on specialised topics.

Implementation of an EA Policy

- Maintain a register of Exceptionally Able pupils in consultation with other staff.
- Monitor the school's provision for pupils identified as being gifted or talented.
- Monitor the progress of pupils identified as being gifted or talented.
- Be responsible for giving information to parents and teachers and the Board of Management.

- Co-ordinate the handover of information for students in transition (coming from or going to another school).
- To liaise with the Guidance Staff regarding the progress of Exceptionally Able pupils.
- Review the policy in the light of practice and modify when necessary.
- Evaluate the policy annually.

Professional involvement

The Principal will coordinate the implementation of this policy in collaboration with the Special Needs Coordinator.

In-Service Training

The School may, from time to time as appropriate, assign staff training days to provide support to teachers in the implementation of this policy. www.sess.ie

Evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in consultation with parents, students and teachers every 2 years.