

## **Important Information for Parents of Children**

### **With Special Needs**

Resources that have been assigned to a child at primary school do not automatically move with the child to second level school. A current (less than two years old) educational psychologist's report is needed by the school to apply for extra help to meet your child's needs and must be sent to the school at least 6 months prior to the child's start date at second level.

A report with recommendations from an educational psychologist, regardless of it being prepared by a NEPS or private psychologist, does not entitle a child to additional help at second level. The report simply acts as a recommendation that such assistance is required, at this time the Department of Education and Science (DES) is not obliged to provide extra teachers to meet these special needs.

If DES does not provide extra resources it is at the discretion of individual schools to decide what help they can and will give to each child.

Parents need to be aware that they may need to fight for any additional help that their children may need in second level.

An educational psychologist's report is not needed to apply for "reasonable accommodation" for Junior Certificate examinations. Second Level schools can now apply for reasonable accommodation using the child's educational history as evidence of the need. There is no requirement for an educational psychologist report and such a report does not automatically result in any special entitlements.

Where an accommodation is approved for Junior Certificate, it does not automatically follow that approval will be granted for Leaving Certificate. A fresh application will be required in respect of the Leaving Certificate and each will be considered on its own merits. Application is made through the school with the parents/guardians permission. An up-to-date (less than two years old) psychological report is not a prerequisite but should be included if available. All requests will be reviewed by NEPS, who may look for further information and will request to meet the student, before a decision will be made. Statistics over the last few years do show that fewer numbers of considerations are given at Leaving Certificate

When "reasonable accommodation" has been granted an asterisk will appear next to the subject on the student's Junior or Leaving certificate results. A supplementary report will be included on the back of the certificate explaining what help the student received.

If the student has received an exemption from Irish at primary level the exemption is accepted at second level and the student will be excused from having to study Irish. A copy of the "Certificate of Exemption" will be requested by the second level school before the student is excused from Irish classes.

If a student wants support at third level they must answer yes to the question asking if the applicant has a disability/specific learning disability, on the first page of the CAO form. They will then be sent a Supplementary Information Form to complete and send back to the CAO by March. An educational psychologist's full report written within the last three years confirming a specific learning difficulty must be included when returning this form.

### **How Special Needs are Assigned at Second Level**

#### *Case 1*

Entrance exam is held and the results are used as an indication of the child's ability.

If a child performs at below average further information is sought from the child's parents and their primary school.

If the child has performed well up to this and has not required help then it may be assumed that the child had a bad day on the date of the exam and will be okay without help.

However the progress of the child will be monitored and the need for support will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

#### *Case 2*

The child is identified at primary school as having special needs and resources were assigned.

A current educational psychological report is given to the second level school approximately six months before the child is due to start.

School forwards report to the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) requesting resources. SENO reviews the report and assigns resources to the child based on specific criteria.

#### *Case 3*

During the school year it becomes apparent that a child is having difficulty with a particular subject or group of subjects or some behavioural problem.

Child is assessed and supported with available resources. Support/resource teacher can request the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) carry out an educational psychological assessment of the child (with the parents permission). School forwards the report of the assessment to the SENO requesting additional resources. SENO assigns resources based on specific criteria.

Note: Parents have the right to choose the school that their child attends. All schools regardless of sector can apply for resources for special needs students. Resources are assigned to the child not the school.

## **House Exams**

For school exams the school decides what help, if any, a child will get. The school will try identifying what kind of help will best suit the student's needs.

### *Reasonable Accommodation*

Reasonable accommodations, are available to students with special needs when sitting state exams. Arrangements may include the provision of a reader or scribe, use of a word processor or a tape recorder, a spelling waiver, exemptions from examination components, braille translations and exam papers in large print.

The accommodations are intended to limit the impact of the candidate's disability on their exam performance, while not giving the candidate any unfair advantage.

## **Junior Certificate**

The school applies to the DES for "Reasonable Accommodations " for the student. The request has to be made by **November of the exam year**. Requests are typically responded to by March/April. The school can apply for these based on the educational history of the child. There is no requirement for a current educational psychologists report.

*"Reasonable Accommodations " at junior cert are usually granted if requested.*

## **Leaving Certificate**

The school applies to the DES for "Reasonable Accommodations" for the student. The request has to be made by May/June of the **year previous** to the exam year. Requests are typically responded to by March/April of the exam year.

Requests for "Reasonable Accommodations" can be accompanied by a current educational psychologists report if available, although this is not a prerequisite. All requests will be reviewed

by NEPS before a decision will be made. All students requesting Reasonable Accommodations at Leaving cert will be interviewed by NEPS

### **Getting an Educational Psychologist's Report**

The school can request that NEPS carry out an Educational Psychologist's assessment on your child. The Psychologist's will come to the school on a pre-arranged day and carry out a number of tests on your child. A parent's consent is needed before this assessment can be carried out. The cost of a NEPS assessment is covered by the Department of Education and Science (DES).

There is however usually a long waiting list for a NEPS assessment. Schools only have a set number of cases which they can refer to NEPS for any given year. The school will prioritise these assessments and your child may not be a high enough priority.

It is also possible to get an Educational Psychologist's assessment privately (typically costs €500-600). There is a long waiting list for private assessments

### **Exemption from Irish**

Children may be exempted from studying Irish if their reading and spelling levels in English are in the bottom ten percent of their age group. To secure an exemption, parents must make a written request to the School Principal and must provide a copy of an assessment report from a Psychologist. This report must be less than two years old and the Psychologist must recommend the granting of an exemption.

If the school authorities grant the exemption, then a certificate is given.

If the student has received an exemption from Irish at primary level the exemption is accepted at second level and the student will be excused from having to study Irish.

### **Type Of Teacher**

#### *Job Description:*

How they are assigned

How long a Learning Support Teacher works with children either on a one to one or group basis to address an identified short term need i.e. help with reading, maths etc.

School or parent identifies need Short term with a view to remediation

## **ResourceTeacher**

Works with an individual or group who have a specific learning or behavioural difficulty i.e. dyslexia, ADHD, visually impaired. This position involves not just class work but also looking out for the student's well being within the wider school environment.

Based on NEPS report SENO assigns hours to the school on behalf of the child.

## **Long Term Special Needs Assistant**

Works with an individual within the classroom and the wider school environment to help them with school activities.

Based on NEPS report SENO assign hours to a particular child Long Term

## **Useful Contact Details**

Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS) 086 8431118

<http://www.paccs.ie>

National Parents Council Post Primary <http://www.npcpp.ie> 01 830 2740,

01 830 2747

Dyslexia Association of Ireland <http://www.dyslexia.ie> 01 6790276

State examinations commission <http://www.examinations.ie> 090 664 2700

NEPS Head Office 01 889 2700

Eastern Region (East Coast Area) 01 283 3028

Eastern Region (Northern Area) 01 889 2787/89

Eastern Region (South W Area) 01 461 4824

Midlands Region 044 9337023

Mid-Western Region 061 430004

North-Eastern Region 046 9093310

North-Western Region	071 9141322
South-Eastern Region	051 310028
Southern Region	021 4536358
Western Region	091 864518

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