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**CBS The Green**

**Special Educational Needs Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

St. Mary's C.B.S. The Green is a mainstream Voluntary Secondary School for boys operating under the Trusteeship of the Irish Christian Brothers. The Ethos of our school is that of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers Schools. Our ethos is one that values and prizes each student as an individual created and blessed by God.

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

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act passed into law in July 2014. Special Educational Needs are defined in this act as:

*A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning difficulty, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.*

## **3. Definition of Special Education**

Special Education is defined as any educational provision which is designed to cater for pupils with special educational needs and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made in ordinary classes for the pupils of the same age.

(Special Education Review Committee (SERC, 1993:18)

## **4. Mission Statement**

*'The Green strives for excellence in all of its endeavours as a school Community.'*

At the core of The Green's educational service is the desire to create a space in which all students are taught the values of courage in the face of adversity, respect for one another, truthfulness, and personal integrity. A space in which our students are afforded the opportunity to grow and mature into responsible adults. These values underpin this Special Educational Needs Policy, and this vision is also captured in the schools Mission Statement:

## **5. Aim of the Policy**

The aim of this Special Educational Needs policy document of CBS The Green is to provide a continuum of support for children with Special Educational Needs. It is written in the context of the Education Act 1998 (amended 2012) and takes account of the *Education for Persons with Disabilities Act (EPSEN)* published in 2004.

The Special Educational Needs policy will be reviewed annually and bases its rationale on the principles laid out in the EPSEN act which states that:

“The education of people with SEN (Special Educational Needs) shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs”

“People with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers”

“That people with SEN leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.”

*(EPSEN Act 2004)*

This policy will enable us to:

- Outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with SEN.
- Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Provide guidance for the enrolment of children with SEN in our school.
- Assist parents in making an informed decision about their child's enrolment in our school.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their child and in the decision-making process in relation to their child.
- Provide a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in our school.
- Enable pupils with SEN to share with their peers a complete educational experience as far possible.
- Co-operate and work closely with the *National Council for Special Educational Needs* (NCSE) and other agencies about the education of students with SEN.
- Ensure that students with Special Educational Needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of the Special Educational Needs of students and of their contribution in this area.

- Ensure that Special Educational Needs are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with Special Educational Needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with Special Educational Needs and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with Special Educational Needs.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at school.
- Co-ordinate the advice, guidance, and support of other agencies in supporting students with Special Educational needs.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure that our policy complies with recent and current legislation and DE circulars including Circulars 0014/2017, 0030/2014, 0035/2022

## **6. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all students attending CBS The Green secondary school and those who have Special Educational Needs.

The categories of Special Educational Needs include (but are not limited to):

- Learning Support students
- Borderline/Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Specific Learning Difficulties for example, Dyslexia
- Sensory Difficulties (Hearing and Visual Impairments)
- Physical Difficulties for example, Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder), Limited Mobility
- Speech and Language Difficulties
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder for example, Aspergers Syndrome
- Down Syndrome
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- English as an Additional Language (EAL (English as an Additional Language)) students

Students may also be withdrawn from class and provided with support within the SEN department because of low scoring on standardized tests. In addition to this, support may be offered for the following reasons:

- Referral from teacher and/or parents
- Through consultation with management

## **7. Enrolment, Induction, Attendance and Transfer from Primary School**

### **7.1 Enrolment**

The enrolment of all children is governed by the school's current admissions policy. The school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with Special Educational Needs and requires a close level of cooperation between parents, teachers and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.

Parents are regarded as partners in the provision of support for students. Every effort is made to facilitate this through:

- The seeking of consent for information gathering at enrolment from other schools and agencies.
- Regular contact by phone, as well as frequent face-to-face meetings both planned and impromptu, between parents and support teachers for the purpose of keeping parents informed of their child's progress at regular intervals.
- Facilitating all requests for information in a timely and efficient manner. Parents are required to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrollment to enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support that may be available. Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available on an ongoing basis.

### **7.2 Induction and Attendance**

Induction is facilitated by:

- Extensive pre-entry contact with incoming students and their parents or guardians.
- A good information flow, including collaborative meetings, between the feeder primary school and the post primary school particularly in relation to students' achievements, learning strengths and material covered at primary level. These meetings will also identify students' difficulties and areas of need.
- An understanding by teachers of the teaching and learning approaches that characterise students' experiences in primary school in order to help them to make connections with and build on the learning that has taken place in primary school.

- An information desk on open days and involvement by members of the SEN team at induction events such as entrance exam mornings and induction for small groups of incoming students arranged by the First Year Head and in collaboration with the SEN department.
- Briefings and presentations made to teachers of prospective students as the attendance of students with Special Educational Needs, particularly during the early days and months of their first year in school are facilitated and closely monitored.

### **7.3 Transfer from Primary School**

Prior to entry to CBS The Green, the Special Needs Coordinator visits or contacts the feeder primary schools. With reference to our main feeder schools the Year Head for First Years will also accompany the Special Needs Coordinator. The school sees this liaison as a crucial step in ensuring proper identification of students with Special Educational Needs and the continuity of provision for them.

Where possible, visits are arranged for parents and students prior to their transfer to CBS The Green. Information received from the primary schools and parents coupled with the results of the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) help the school identify those students who may need additional support.

All First-Year teachers are briefed on matters relating to the students they are going to teach or come into contact with. The extent to which individual teachers are given confidential information is a sensitive matter. It is however important that teachers have as much information as possible regarding the students they teach in order to create and support a positive learning environment for every student.

*Students Transferring into other Year Groups:* When a student is accepted into CBS The Green to join a year group other than first year, information is sought from their previous school. The Principal/Deputy Principal are responsible for this. This information is passed to the appropriate Year Head and the Special Needs Coordinator if appropriate.

The school's resource allocation is student dependent and is variable on an annual basis.

## **8. Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process under the guidelines of Circular 0014/2017**

### **8.1 Whole School and Classroom - Support for All**

The focus in support for all is on preventative approaches and identifying needs through whole school systems. Interventions at this level arise directly from the information gathered.

Identification of those needing additional support can be informed by:

- Intake screening – CAT 4 Assessment
- Collection of information from primary schools, including information in the Student Passport
- Teacher observation
- Teacher assessment
- Student Support Team involvement
- Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy/handwriting - WIAT III at individual level and the PPAD-E at group level (PADD-E specifically designed from first year intake across the age range in post-primary). WRAT4 at individual and group level. The DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting)
- Student consultation
- Parental consultation

## **8.2 School Support - Support for Some**

At this level, a Student Support Plan (SSP) is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher assessments and teaching methods
- Parent and student interview
- Assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observations of behaviour
- Screening measures for social emotional and behavioural difficulties

Support at this level can take many forms, for example: small group or individual teaching, peer mentoring, social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems.

## **8.3 School Support Plus – Support for a Few**

It is expected that the students who are receiving support at the level of School Support Plus will be those in greatest need. At this level, subject teachers, parents, and special education teachers in collaboration with outside agencies as required, engage in a more detailed and systematic approach to information gathering and assessment. This involves using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools including teacher observation, student interview, parent interview, measures of cognitive ability as social, emotional, and behavioural data. Data generated from this process are used to plan an appropriate intervention and serve as a baseline used to map progress. A Support Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised and to involve longer term planning and consultation.



## **9. Referral System**

- Class teacher to obtain samples of work such as classwork, homework, test conditioned work.
- A Referral Form is completed which is available to teachers on the staff Microsoft team.
- All information is given to the Special Needs Coordinator.
- Permission is sought from parents to diagnostically assess the student.
- Diagnostic tests such as the WIAT III or the PPAD-E are completed and analysed.
- If intervention is needed, it is discussed with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), the SEN Coordinator, Year Head, Principal/Deputy Principal and Guidance Counselor assigned to that Year group.

## **10. Model of Organisation and Class Placement**

To facilitate SEN teaching, the following models are used:

- Mixed ability for all subjects apart from Irish, English and Maths which are streamed in second year
- 1:1/small group teaching.
- Reduced curriculum - exemptions from Irish, Modern Foreign Language (MFL), Religion.
- SEN Classes.
- A combination of the above.

The chosen model relevant for the student will only be determined in collaboration with the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school.

## **11. The Gifted Student**

To meet the broad continuum of SEN, it is equally important to meet the needs and utilize the strengths of students identified as gifted and talented. Some students can excel in certain areas. To ensure they do not underachieve, it is vital to identify and monitor their progression. Gifted students, if enrolled in our school, are identified at a whole staff meeting early each academic year. Results are monitored by class teachers and year heads.

The following recommendations are advocated to subject teachers to fulfill their potential:

- Differentiation
- Mind Mapping
- Higher expectations and encouragement of student opinions
- Reflections and questioning
- Quality feedback
- Assessment for Learning (AFL).

## **12. The Role of the Board of Management**

- To ensure that all students with SEN are identified and assessed.
- 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 CBS The Green.
- 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.

## **13. The Role of the Principal**

Under current legislation, the school's principal is responsible for ensuring that the Special Educational Needs of students are met.

The principal:

- Works with the Board of Management, teachers and parents in the development, implementation and review of whole-school policies that promote the inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure that all such policies are described in the school plan.
- Monitors the implementation of whole school policies and provision for Special Educational Needs.
- Consults and liaises, as required, with relevant external bodies and agencies such as the *Department of Education (DE)*, the *National Education Psychological*

*Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive and local agencies.*

- Ensures that mainstream teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with Special Educational Needs.
- Facilitates the Continuous Professional Development of all members of staff in relation to the education of students with Special Educational Needs.
- Promotes the involvement of the parents of students with Special Educational Needs, by inviting them to share information and consulting with them on how this information will be used in the best interest of their child.
- The principal has delegated several functions concerning the practical organization of the provision to the Deputy Principal, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, and the Learning Support Teacher.

#### **14. The Role of the Subject Teacher**

The class teacher has a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs in mainstream classes. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the educational progress of all students in his/her class. It is particularly important that all class teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes account of learning and physical difficulties. Whether students are taught in mixed ability or streamed classes, it is expected that teachers will implement differentiated approaches for teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that the needs of all students, including SEN students, are catered for.

Class teachers will be aware of the Special Educational Needs of students in their classes. Information regarding students with Special Educational Needs is made available to all teachers at the beginning of a new school year through our Vsware system. Further information is available from the Special Educational Needs Coordinator on request. Teachers inform themselves of the discrete needs of any student in their classes and identify any concerns or observations to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator for discussion with the SEN team.

The class teacher plays a vital role in the early identification of students with SEN. The class teacher is alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and brings their concerns to the attention of the SEN team. A key element of successful SEN provision is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the class teacher and the SEN team. A class teacher or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN coordinator, who will begin a broader profile. This first step in the screening process allows the team to identify the nature of SEN being experienced. During this time, the learning, emotional, behavioural and social needs of the student are evaluated. The coordinator will gather all the relevant information, and after consultation with school management, parent and pupil support will be put in place.

The academic progress of students throughout the school rests, in the first instance, with the mainstream class teacher. To ensure that CBS The Green meets the needs of all our Special Educational Needs students, all teachers should:

- Be informed of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with students with Special Educational Needs.
- Seek advice from the SEN coordinator regarding students with Special Educational Needs.
- Take responsibility for their own Continuous Professional Development particularly about common difficulties, for example, Specific Learning Difficulties.
- Develop an attitude of ownership in respect of the education of students in their classes with Special Educational Needs. Where a student requires the support of an SNA, the subject teacher, in consultation with the SEN coordinator, should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA to support the student, support and encourage independence in the student. This is particularly important for senior cycle students.

## **15. The Role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for the overall coordination of support for students with SEN within the school. The responsibilities of the coordinator include:

- Planning for the successful transfer of students from primary school to CBS The Green by gathering information about students, including those with special educational needs, before their transfer.
- Organizing and overseeing the timetable for SEN students to meet their individual needs through:
  - One to One/Small group teaching
  - Exemptions: From Irish/MFL
  - In class support for students with SEN
  - Mixed ability for all subjects (with exception of banding in Irish, English, Mathematics in second year and third year)
- Meeting and liaising with parents/guardians of SEN students and of prospective students to discuss their child's needs both academic and otherwise.
- Liaising with the school's NEPS Psychologist regarding:
  - Assessment of priority students

- Consultation regarding planning and support for each academic year
  - Advice on individual students
  - In-service for staff.
- Communicates with relevant staff essential information regarding SEN students.
- Facilitates and chairs SEN department meetings.
- Facilitates and chairs SNA meetings.
- Provides updates and details of all matters SEN to the school authorities.
- Liaises with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through the school's Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) in relation to all matters SEN including:
  - Assessment reports
  - Provision of SEN
  - SNA access
  - Applications to the NCSE for example, applying for Assistive Technology
- Liaises with other outside agencies and providing information on SEN students where appropriate to agencies such as:
  - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
  - Educational Psychologists
  - Occupational Therapists (OT)
  - Speech and Language Therapists (SLT)
  - Tusla
  - Visiting teachers for hearing/visually impaired students.
- Providing in-house training for teachers new to the SEN department, giving advice on testing, record keeping and planning.
- Maintains and updates Student Support Files (SSF).
- Administers and maintains records of assessment tests carried out throughout the school year.
- Makes applications on behalf of Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate students for Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examinations (RACE) to the State Examinations Commission (SEC). Informs students, parents and the school of decisions made by the SEC.
- Organises readers, laptops, and smaller centers for SEN students for both mock examinations and in-house examinations.

- Processes exemptions from Irish.
- Liaises with the Principal and Deputy Principals regarding timetabling.
- Supports and advises Special Educational Needs teachers and subject teachers, Year Heads, and the Student Support Team on specific difficulties that students with SEN have.
- Liaises with school management regarding specific and whole school professional development.
- Provides advice to the Student Support Team on students referred to the team with SEN.
- Gives presentations to the whole staff regarding many aspects of SEN.
- Attending case conferences with school management in relation to specific students where appropriate.
- Strives to develop a climate of confidentiality regarding the sensitive information of all the partners involved in SEN through GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) compliance.

## **16. Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE)**

The scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations facilitates access to the certificate examinations by candidates who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical, visual, hearing and/or learning difficulty. The scheme assists candidates who have Special Educational Needs to demonstrate what they know and can do in certificate examinations, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The focus of the scheme is on removing barriers to access, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying skills and competencies as are assessed for all other candidates.

The Special Needs Coordinator, in consultation with other members of the SEN department, identifies these students in need of reasonable accommodation in school and state examinations. In-house assessment will continue to be administered to students identified as potential candidates requiring reasonable accommodation. Applications for reasonable accommodation will be made for those students that meet the criteria necessary for additional support.

## **17. Liaison with outside Agencies**

The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) liaises closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and facilitates the delivery and co-ordination of educational services to children with SEN.

The SENO also processes application forms for resources for SEN students to the NCSE and advises parents/guardians regarding their son's needs.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator also liaises with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). NEPS provides psychological assessments of students and recommendations on how best to address strengths and weaknesses identified. The service also advises as to how best to employ resources and strategies in the classroom, and the school environment in general, to benefit SEN students throughout the school. NEPS also provide support in relation to individual students presenting with complex and varying SEN.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support for students experiencing difficulties of an emotional/behavioural nature and provides advice and recommendations on how best to address those difficulties in a school environment.

As part of the Student Support Team, the SENCO works closely with the school's Guidance Counsellors and Senior management to liaise with external agencies.

## **18. Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

The Special Needs Assistant provides care 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. SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, or another person acting on behalf of the Principal in accordance with Circular 0071/2011. The role of the SNA continues to be to support the care needs of students, to assist classroom teachers and special education teachers and to ensure that the student is able to access education as set out in Section 5 of DE Circular 30/2014.

The SEN Department of the school devises an appropriate strategy plan for a student with Special Educational Needs. The SNA takes care of the implementation of this plan.

The Special Needs Assistant plays a key role in the health and safety of the students and in their social, emotional, and educational development. It is important that the Special Needs Assistant support student participation in school life without developing a culture of dependency.

The duties of the Special Needs Assistant involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- Attending both staff and departmental meetings when appropriate

- Attending meetings with outside agencies and/or parents as appropriate.
- Assisting/escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for students with difficulties, for example helping SEN students with typing, writing or other use of practical equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of the health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with reading/scribing examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance of the subject teacher in a non-teaching nature. Special Needs Assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.
- Engagement with parents of SEN pupils in both formal and informal structures as required.
- Other appropriate duties which may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school. Special Needs Assistants may be reassigned to other appropriate work when SEN students are absent or when particularly urgent work demand arises.

## **19. Teaching and Learning**

The SEN Department of CBS The Green uses a wide range of teaching methodologies and resources to engage students and support their learning. Teachers are expected to effectively use Assessment for Learning strategies from each subject department to monitor progress and support student learning. Feedback is encouraged and self-assessment is also used, allowing the student to identify errors and progress.

Differentiation by task involves setting different tasks for students of different abilities, for example, a worksheet comprised of tasks which gets progressively harder. The teacher will ensure all student abilities are catered for, especially in larger classes.

A mixture of visual, kinesthetic, and auditory resources and activities is recommended. It is important that some students can work with more advanced resources than others and that it is possible to use multiple materials in order to approach a topic from different angles. When differentiation is used in lesson



planning, the available time is used flexibly in order to meet all students' needs. Students who grasp quickly core activities will not be held back as others spend more time on the fundamentals of the topic. They can instead be allocated more challenging extension tasks in order to develop a more rounded understanding of the subject matter or progress through the work more quickly.

## **20. A Whole School Approach to SEN**

As part of a collaborative/ inclusive whole school approach we take the following policies into consideration as they interconnect with our work. work closely with the student support team and all subject departments.

- The Whole School Guidance Plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- RSE Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Literacy and Numeracy Policies
- The School Improvement Plan
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- All Subject Department Policies
- Wellbeing Policy

## **21. Meetings and Collaboration**

In CBS The Green we promote collaboration with subject colleagues in order to share good practice, provide mutual support, linkage and integration and review subject needs.

Collaboration takes place in an informal way within CBS The Green when teachers meet in the staffroom or in the corridors when they sit down and discuss SEN matters. Collaboration happens in a formal setting when the SEN team have a weekly minuted SEN department meeting and share resources, good practices and discuss matters relating to SEN. These minutes are shared with the Principal and Deputy Principal on a need's basis.

We use confidential, electronic Vsware software to update all staff on matters relating to SEN students. This information is of a highly sensitive nature and is treated in line with GDPR regulations.

## **22. Administration and Record Keeping in accordance with GDPR**

All information regarding students is always treated with the utmost confidence and is disclosed on a need-to-know basis. Information in relation to students with SEN is

digitally stored using GDPR compliant Vsware software and is information that has been deemed appropriate to make known to relevant staff.

All other documentation is stored securely within locked cabinets secured by a coded entry door and is not to be copied or removed from storage without the permission of the Principal or the SENCO. All records relating to students with SEN are kept within this locked system for a period of seven years after the date of the student's intended year for sitting the leaving certificate.

### **23. List of Teachers Timetabled for SEN Classes in 2022 – 2023**

- Brian Horgan
- Catriona Kelliher
- Eugene O’Sullivan
- Aileen Somers
- Barbara O’Connor
- Kelly Scanlon
- Shane O’Sullivan
- Lauren O’Leary
- Helen Kelliher
- Geraldine O’Shea
- Fionnuala English
- David Griffin
- Mary Lou O’Connor
- Denise Dunlea
- Mairead Cahill
- Derval Fitzgerald
- Caroline Crowley

## 24. Monitoring and Review of SEN Policy

It is very important to review the provisions of SEN and the review process of this policy needs to measure its success, development and improvement. It is proposed that this should take place regularly, a minimum of every two to three years, or as a response to legislative changes.

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signature of the Chairperson, Board of Management:

Sean Spillane 27/3/23

Signature of the Secretary, Board of Management:

R. H. [Signature] 27/3/23