

# Coláiste Chluain na Slí

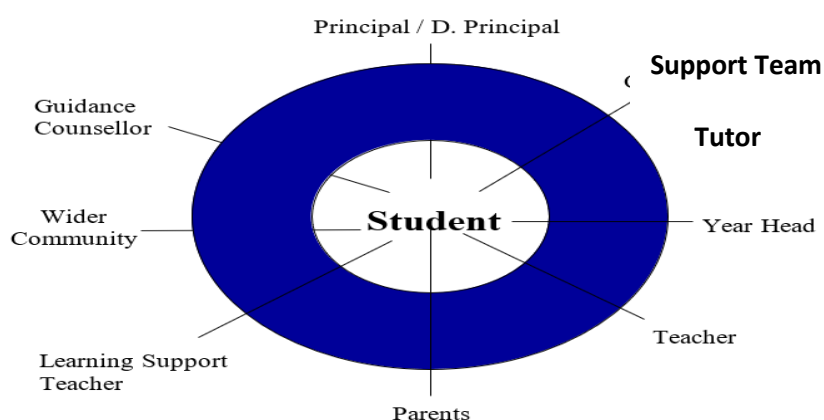


**Special Education Needs Policy**

**Ratified March 2019**

**A whole school approach to the Education and Welfare of our students.**

**The student is central to all our endeavours at Clonaslee College**



### **Introductory Statement**

This policy is the reviewed and amended policy completed by the SEN department in January 2019, in accordance with Circular No 0013/2017. Its principles stem from the Mission statement of the school.

### **Mission Statement**

*‘In Clonaslee College we aim to develop the full potential of every student in a learning environment where fairness, understanding, success and discipline will be pursued. A strong sense of community is fostered within the school which encourages mutual respect and co-operation among staff, students and parents’.*

In accordance with the above mission statement the Board of Management, Parents and Staff are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all students. We acknowledge inclusive education to mean “*the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of local mainstream educational institutions*” (Booth & Ainscow 1998). Clonaslee College is committed to on-going whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents and the wider community.

## **The effectiveness of this policy relies on:**

- Whole school policies
- Parental involvement
- The provision of intensive intervention by committed personnel
- The direction of resources towards students in greatest need
- The development of a team approach involving parents, teachers and relevant support personnel such as psychologists and speech and language therapists
- The effective communication among all participants involved
- An efficient Transition Programme from primary to post primary school aimed at supporting students within the target group
- The provision of appropriate time allocation and support services by the Department of Education and Science. Special Educational Needs Teacher Allocations and additional resource hours to address student's special educational needs are critical here. Additional support services, (Special Needs Assistants, National Educational Psychological Service, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Visiting Teacher for the Hearing Impaired etc) are of vital importance to provide a professional, holistic service.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- Identify additional needs that our students may have and outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- Comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000)
- Fulfil DES circular 0014/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Post Primary: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards.
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice

## **Aims of the Policy**

The principle aim of SEN Department in Clonaslee College is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with learning difficulties and to enable each student to realise their potential.

Learning Support provision also seeks to:

- Enable students of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
- Involve parents in the support of their child's education.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for students.
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the student.

The school hopes to achieve the following by updating the SEN policy:

- To include the most recent best practice in SEN.
- To reflect the most recent recommendations, most particularly the Continuum of Support at Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to students with SEN.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of students with SEN in the school.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at school and at home. To outline procedures and practices which will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of students with SEN.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of students with SEN.

## **Change in allocating special teaching supports**

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Report Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs (NCSE 2014), highlighted a number of shortcomings associated with the system for allocating special education teaching resources to schools. On this basis, the NCSE recommended a revised allocation model. Following successful piloting in forty-seven primary and post-primary schools during the 2015-2016 school year, the Department decided to introduce a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools with effect from September 2017. Special Education Circular 0013/2017 provides full details on the revised Special Education Teaching Allocation

## **The main features of the revised model for allocating special education teaching supports**

A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all students, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with special educational needs.

## **Whole School Planning**

When implementing the revised allocation model to address the needs of students with special educational needs, Clonaslee College has adopted a whole-school approach and updated their existing SEN policy in line with new guidelines.

A whole-school approach involves collaborative action by our school community (in consultation with parents, students, SNAs, class teachers, SETs, Principal) to improve student learning, behaviour and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices.

The whole-school approach in Clonaslee College addresses the full continuum of needs - ranging from milder and more transient needs to difficulties that are severe and enduring (for example, significant learning, sensory, physical, communication, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties).

The publication ‘*A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* (DES, 2016)’ is also used to examine the school’s provision for students with special educational needs. The domains and statements of practice are utilised to enable the teachers and school leaders in our school to review their practices, to identify what they are doing well, and to recognise aspects of the school’s work that could be further developed to improve learning experiences and outcomes for these students

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Partners of the SEN team**

The SEN department is part of the Student Support team in the school

The SEN department is advised by the SENO and NEPS psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with SEN students in the school. The specific roles and responsibilities of personnel are as described in the DES Inspectorate publication, *Inclusion of Students with Special needs, Post-primary Guidelines* (2007). **See Appendix 1**

## **Provision and the Continuum of Support**

### **Continuum of Support**

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Clonaslee College, is underpinned by recognition that special educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEPS’s Continuum of Support.

Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. **See Appendix 2**

## Identification of Needs through the Continuum of Support Process

### Provision of Students with Known and Documented Needs

#### Transfer from Primary School

The transfer of information from primary level to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. At the Open Night for prospective parents the importance of completing the enrolment form is the beginning of the information gathering process.

Following enrolment, parents of incoming first years are invited to meet the SEN Department to discuss their son/daughter's needs.

The Special Needs Coordinators will:

- Visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools to collect up-to-date information.
- Liaise with primary school and parents of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school.
- Meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students with SEN.
- Establish communication with the primary school SEN teacher.
- Apply for SNA support/Assistive Technology for students for relevant students.
- Analyse the Education Passports received from National Schools.

#### Entrance Exam

Once accepted to Clonaslee College

- All incoming first year students take the Cognitive Ability Test; CAT 4 digitally. They complete a Cloze 3 reading test and WRAT IV spelling subtest. These tests are used to identify strengths and needs of incoming students with SEN. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including exceptionally able students.
- On the same day students fill out a *student questionnaire* about themselves and their interests.
- The SEN Department will ascertain the students learning style and strengths.
- At the beginning of each academic year all students on the SEN caseload are reviewed individually in terms of type of support needed and curriculum load.
- The SEN Co-ordinators provide information on needs of students at the staff meeting in August.
- Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify students' performance in reading and mathematics. Those students performing below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.



There will be flexibility to provide for students who are not in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile but require supplementary teaching, where resources allow. Students who have an exemption from Irish, receive supplementary teaching at this time.

### **Students transferring into other Year Groups**

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information (*Educational Psychological report, School reports, attendance, etc*) is sought from their previous school(s). This is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Any relevant information is then passed to the SEN Department.

### **Provision of Students with Emerging Needs**

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT 4, in class assessment, informal observation, parental concern).

Teachers are asked to complete a referral form (*Appendix 3*) for students about whom they have a concern. Some students may need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural).

### **Models of SEN provision**

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context the following options are considered:

- Curricular differentiation
- Curricular reduction (reduced timetable) - A student with SEN who experiences difficulty in coping with the breadth of the current curriculum is permitted to ‘drop’ a subject. This occurs only after all avenues have been exhausted. A consultation between the parents/ guardian and guidance teacher is also necessary. Parents must sign a consent form giving permission for a reduced subject load.
- Team Teaching/Co-operative Teaching
- In-class support/Differentiation
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Organisation and Life Skills lessons

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is varied and is reviewed. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to continue in their mainstream class. All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers, the student, principal and guidance counsellor.

### **Reasonable Accommodations for State and In-House Examinations (RACE)**

3<sup>rd</sup> Year and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students are tested using various tests before an application is made to the SEC. Applications are made by the SEN Coordinators for RACE provision. Accommodations are granted by The State Examinations Commission.

The school will make applications for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Certificate/Cycle and these accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Certificate, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need for the accommodation. Further details are available in the RACE Guide for Exam Students at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)

Where resources permit and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations at Pre-Leaving and Junior Certificate exams and in-house exams.

### **Reduced Time-table**

Information collected from Primary Schools, entrance exams and parents' involvement can warrant a reduced time-table for a student.

Students can avail of a reduced time-table as they progress in their education in Clonaslee College.

## **Irish Exemption**

### **Categories of students eligible:**

As per Circular **M10/94** an exemption from Irish is sought for the following categories of pupils:

- a. Pupils who arrive to Ireland after the age of 11 from Northern Ireland or outside of Ireland. This includes pupils who were previously enrolled as recognised pupils in a primary or second-level school who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three years have elapsed since their previous enrolment in the State.
- b. Pupils from abroad, who have no understanding of English, when enrolled, would be required to study one language only, Irish or English.
- c. Pupils who have been assessed as having a general learning disability, due to serious intellectual or sensory impairment and are also failing to attain adequate levels in basic language skills in the mother tongue.
- d. Pupils who have evidence of a specific learning disability of such a degree of severity that they fail to achieve expected levels of attainment in basic language skills in the mother tongue.

### **Procedure**

The following procedures will apply:

1. The school requires that a written application for exemption from Irish be made by a parent or guardian to the principal of the school. This application will specify the grounds on which the exemption is sought. If the school does not already have the relevant reports, the letter must be accompanied by documented evidence such as age, previous schooling, a psychologist's report if required or a report from a medical specialist if relevant.
2. A decision to grant exemption will be conveyed to the parent or guardian by way of a written Certificate, signed by the school principal, that the exemption has been given in accordance with Circular M10/94.
3. The application, school report, psychologist's report, report of medical specialist, copy of Certificate of exemption and other relevant documents will be retained by the school and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department.

Students who qualify for an Exemption from Irish do not have to use this exemption – i.e. they may study Irish.

## **Communication**

The SEN Coordinators meet weekly at a formal meeting.

- Members of the SEN team can meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the year between the mainstream teachers and SEN team with regards to incoming first year students with SEN.
- The SEN Department use SharePoint via Office 365 to share and update SEN files.

### Mainstream Teachers

- At the beginning of each school year, the SEN Coordinators update a register of information focusing on the incoming first years with SEN.
- Class teachers are informed of students' needs at staff meetings.
- Teachers are asked to complete a referral form(***Appendix 3***) for students about whom they have a concern.

### Parents

Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:

- School Open Day
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Letters to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone Calls
- Email
- Meetings involving external agencies

## **Record-Keeping**

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual students file in a locked filing cabinet. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of the Freedom of Information, Data Protection Acts and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).