

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed
Inclusion (S.E.N) Policy



March 2018

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Mission Statement

School Mission statement: At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that encourages the potential of each person. The mission is realised through our core values of Respect, Effort, Honesty and Co-operation.

Pupils with Special Education Needs include

- Students with learning disabilities
- Students with emotional and/or behavioural issues
- Students with physical or sensory disabilities
- Gifted students

We seek:

- To encourage the development of the full person through imparting knowledge and skills and through inculcating values:
- To develop critical thinking faculties and to promote informed decision-making skills in students.
- To bring students to an awareness of their identity in a multi-denominational, multi-cultural context;
- To enable the transition to further education;
- To encourage the participation of parents in the education of their children;
- To respond to the educational needs of the local community.

Rationale

Rationale The school's Special Educational Needs policy is aspiring:

- To provide an inclusive learning environment where all are encouraged to achieve their potential
- To enable each student to develop social and personal skills, thus enhancing self-esteem
- To encourage students with special needs to participate in the full range of school activities
- To offer an education which develops a variety of skills i.e. practical, artistic, musical and sporting
- To allow special needs students access to the curriculum and where possible, encourage students to sit Junior/Leaving Cert examinations
- To encourage staff to avail of professional development from the S.E.S.S.

Identification of Needs

The following criteria can be used to identify students who may benefit from extra supports:

- School links with primary schools. Primary school passport documentation. Liaising with primary school class teachers, SEN teachers & SNA's.
- Link via SCP with primary schools in Homework Club etc.
- School meetings and discussions with parents'/guardians' of incoming students.
- Testing: CAT 4 tests, Maths (PT Maths), English (NGRT). Analysis (academic tracking) of monthly class test, term exams, mock exams, state exams.
- Referrals from teachers to SEN team or SEN coordinators.

- Educational (psychologists), clinical (OT, S&L, CAMS, physiotherapist etc) and medical (GP, consultant etc) reports presented to school.
- Meeting with NEPS and other external agencies.
- Induction days for incoming 1st years.

SEN Provision:

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all students, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all students are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. The following is a brief outline of the schools SEN provision.

- SEN teachers will help and offer advice to subject teachers on a needs basis
- The school has a mixed ability class system in first year. The results of the standardised assessments are made available to the subject teachers. This allows the staff to differentiate the classwork to meet the needs of the students
- Students who are exempt from the study of certain subjects are removed from class, and extra learning support is given in small groups during that time. Parents are informed regarding the implications of this and sign a letter to this effect.
- Some special needs students may receive help on a 1/1 basis. Each individual case is judged on its own merits based on the results of various testing, psychologists' reports or outside agencies.
- Small targeted groups are identified in consultation with the English and Maths departments (in areas of literacy and numeracy). Appropriate support and interventions are put in place.
- Application is made to state examinations Commission for reasonable accommodation in Junior and Leaving Cert examinations. These applications are made in consultation with parents, subject teachers and students.
- The coordinators of the School Completion Programme are proactive in assisting special needs students to stay in school and achieve their potential e.g. homework club, extra-curricular activities.

Inclusive Curriculum

- The school is part of the JCSP programme
- All first year students are given the chance to “taste” optional subjects so they are able to make an informed decision on the options they choose.
- All Junior Cycle students (1/2/3 years) have an ICT class. This gives all students to chance to be digitally literate.
- All students who have been granted AT from the SENO are timetabled for one Assistive Technology class per week.
- Mixed ability classes allow the students in our school to have equal opportunity to a broad and balanced curriculum commensurate with their ability. Co-timetabling of core subjects and/or team teaching from 1st year allows students to access the level most appropriate to their ability.
- Special needs students have equal access to the curriculum.
- At the provision of IEP is subject to agreement between unions and the DES

Role of the subject teacher:

Section 22(1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of students in schools. The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all students in his/her class, including any student with a special educational need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational needs.

Subject teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.

In line with the Continuum of Support Guidelines, the class teacher may gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions. The classroom teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to students with additional needs, including differentiating the curriculum as appropriate. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist, and the local Special Educational Needs Organiser.

The classroom teacher will also make specific accommodations for students within the class as a result of concerns about a student's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that student.

Where a student has an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the SEN department.

All teachers should also support/encourage independence within the students. This is particularly important for Senior Cycle students.

Subject teachers must have due regard to the rights of students with special educational needs.

All subject teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of students with special educational needs. Each subject department will include in its plan how it caters for the different students taking their subject. These methodologies include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms (see Appendix 1)
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Varied group work
- Differentiation

- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Differentiation can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons for students' interests
- Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. In matching programmes to students' needs, management will look at the range of curriculum options available, including Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

Early intervention and prevention

Early-intervention programmes, which are evidence-based and are responsive to the school's context will be used. Focused interventions to develop literacy, social, emotional, life-skills and well-being are particularly important for junior cycle students with special educational needs. The school uses 'Effective Interventions for Struggling Readers', NEPS 'Friends' programme, NBSS transition and transfer programme, NBSS Alert training, SESS Pathways to Prevention, Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (NBSS) and the Ninja Maths Programme (NBSS).

Our Pastoral/Behavioural Support Team and the SEN Co-ordinator serves an important preventative and early intervention function, particularly in addressing the needs of students with social, emotional, behavioural and well-being needs. This team provides a

forum to share concerns and to work towards solutions. It plays an important coordinating role and facilitates monitoring and review of students' progress.

Target Setting

Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for students with special educational needs. Targets are: linked to assessment; strengths-based; linked to interventions and developed collaboratively.

Best practice indicates that targets should be few in number; they should be informed by priority learning needs and directly linked to suitable interventions. Targets are based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches. Where possible targets will be measurable and observable and will reflect the specific special educational need of individual students. Targets will be achievable within a specified time frame, they will also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address students' holistic needs.

The SEN department will liaise and collaborate with subject teachers in relation to the monitoring of specified targets.

A review of attainment (through academic tracking), attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example sense of belonging and connectiveness to school) for students with special educational needs.

Allocation of resources

In line with DES guidelines additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs. Support is given in a variety of ways to effectively meet students' needs. Examples include:

- Team-teaching

- Co-teaching
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual support within group

Support for All

The school engages with programmes in Numeracy, Literacy and Social/Emotional domains to promote early intervention and seek to provide a response to such intervention if necessary.

Support for Some

Based on needs some students will follow more intensive programmes. Some students will receive support within the context of a mainstream subject lesson through team-teaching, through group or individual support or, through a combination of these modes of intervention.

We decided on the needs of the school to implement specific subject support to assist students academic performance. Where needed the level and type of supports reflects the specific targets of individual students as set out in their record/planning forms.

Following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports. Accordingly, the groupings timetabled for support may change over time.

Resources are allocated based on need – students with the highest level of need have access to the greatest resources.

Planning

In line with Department of Education guidelines the core Learning support team, under the direction of the Learning support Coordinator supports subject teachers in:

- Identification of students with special educational needs
- Record keeping/planning, setting targets
- Planning teaching methods and approaches
- Organising early- intervention and prevention programmes
- Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

Timetabling practice/Rationale for the allocation of resources

School management and the learning support coordinator will seek to deploy resources appropriately by:

- 1) Using resources to promote early intervention and learning in an inclusive school environment
- 2) Allocating resources to students with the highest level of needs, as students with the highest level of needs receive the highest level of supports.
- 3) Providing additional supports which are tailored to meet the unique needs of students, addressing social, emotional and vocational/life skills, as well as literacy and mathematical needs.
- 4) Allocating support classes to teachers who are expert in the subject or learning support
- 5) Seeking to ensure that students with the greatest needs are supported by teachers who have the relevant expertise, and who can provide continuity of support.
- 6) Providing flexibility for specialist teachers so that groupings timetabled for support may change over time
- 7) Supporting a core team of teachers for special educational needs. Members of this team have the necessary experience and ongoing access to professional development to support the diverse needs of students with special educational needs.

- 8) A member of the special educational needs team, who has a recognised qualification in SEN, is assigned the responsibility for planning for the provision for special educational needs within the school.
- 9) Use of allocation is reviewed by the learning support coordinator and school management. The overall allocation is accounted for both from a teacher and student perspective in line with appendix C of DES Circular 70/14.

Whole School Approach

Inclusion

“Effective inclusive schools are problem-solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students” [\[1\]](#)

Our students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are members of an inclusive school community.

This is achieved by:

- 1) Having a special educational needs (SEN) team consisting of suitably qualified and/or interested staff members led by a SEN co-ordinator
- 2) Working with and listening to the opinion of the student and parent concerned.
- 3) Making application to DES through S.E.N.O. for support where deemed necessary.
- 4) Access to assigned class tutor to discuss progress/make recommendations on behalf of the students/liaise with parents and other staff.
- 5) Enhancing positive education experience through access to SNA support (where access to SNA support has been sanctioned by the NCSE). School Management and the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator will assign the hours.
- 6) Giving every student an opportunity to learn effectively so that he/she can achieve his/her potential academically and socially.

- 7) Providing our students with a wide variety of subjects.
- 8) Where resources permit, small class groupings will be formed so that each student is provided with individual attention.
- 9) The curriculum may be differentiated/reduced to accommodate the diverse needs within each group e.g. worksheets, class material presented in a user friendly manner.
- 10) Students will be provided with a taster programme in all option subjects to assist with correct choice of subjects to be carried forward.
- 11) Extra individual assistance in literacy and/or numeracy may be provided to those for whom resource hours have been allocated. Support may also be assigned to other subjects as necessary.
- 12) All levels of subjects are taught to Junior and Senior cycle.
- 13) JCSP and Leaving Certificate Applied is offered and provides wonderful opportunities to our students.
- 14) Extra-curricular activities are provided to promote development and encourage social inclusion.

School-wide approach to provision for students with special educational needs

School-wide Planning

The school will adopt a school-wide approach to planning and implementation of early intervention and prevention programmes. The school-wide approach will involve collaboration across the school community to improve student learning, behaviour and well-being. The school-wide approach will address the full continuum of needs ranging from milder and transient needs to more severe and enduring needs.

Role of the school principal

The principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met. The principal will take general responsibility for establishing and promoting school-wide policies and procedures which support the learning of all

students including those with special needs. The principal will oversee a school-wide approach to assessment to identify needs. He/she will guide and support the SEN team/ co-ordinator in their duties.

The special education needs team / SEN co-ordinator (SEN team)

The SEN team/co-ordinator will:

- Form a special education needs team (SEN team) to coordinate the provision of special education in the school.
- Delegate the performance of specific responsibilities to other staff members including the SEN team
- Co-ordinate data gathering, to facilitate the implementation of standardized tests, to collate the information and identify needs.
- Allocate resources (organise suitable support for the SEN students with a variety of needs)
- Plan, implement and review student support plans
- Record, plan and implement group SEN sessions
- Facilitate continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with special educational needs ensuring also that all school staff understand their roles and responsibilities in this area (SEN Handbook)
- To work with and support non qualified SEN teachers in the provision of support for SEN students.
- To consult in the identification of literacy and numeracy target groups
- Test relevant students. Plan, and prepare applications for reasonable accommodations in the state exams (This has been delegated to a member of the SEN Team)
- To facilitate the new JC level 2 programmes
- To work with and support the ASD programme - The ASD programme is ran primarily by identified SEN teacher(s)

Details of additional SEN co-ordination duties see appendix 3

The SEN team/co-ordinator will work closely with the principal, subject teachers, parents, the guidance counsellor, the pastoral care/discipline team and other support structures within the school. Members of the team will provide support to subject teachers to meet students' needs within their classroom and subject areas.

Parental Engagement

The school recognises that good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for students with special educational needs. Parents will be consulted in relation to

- The child's needs and strengths
- The support and strategies being developed to support their children
- Reviewing of student progress
- Levels taken in State Exams

Parents will also be consulted when the special education needs policy is being developed and/or reviewed.

Student Engagement

The school will regularly review its approach to student engagement and participation so that all students, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to share their views on issues that affect them in school.

Engagement with External Bodies and Agencies

Where appropriate the school will seek support and guidance from external bodies and agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate and allied health professionals. This will be particularly relevant in the case of those students presenting with complex needs. The school will facilitate meetings between parents and these support services where appropriate. The school will endeavour to

incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the continuum of support.

Transitions

The school recognises transitions can be challenging for all students and may pose even greater challenges for children with special educational needs. These transitions include the transition from primary to second level school and the transition from second level onwards. In managing the transition of students with special educational needs from primary to post-primary school the school will liaise in a timely manner with the parents and the primary school. This may involve some of the following:

- Meeting between designated staff members (HSCL & SEN co-ordinator) and a representative of the primary school
- Open evening
- Peer mentoring – Le Cheile
- Request transfer of School passport from the primary school
- One to one meetings between designated staff member and parent (and student) where individual needs of the students are discussed
- Sharing of information with subject teachers at the start of the academic year (staff meetings)
- Induction morning and evenings, half days for incoming students

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____ 6

Appendix 1

Role of the Class Teacher and Support Teacher

For admin: • reduces pressures of trying to schedule teachers, students' free classes, and students' needs • More efficient: more students are served with team teaching than one-to-one resource

For teachers • reduces pressure to "do all things at all times" i.e. one teacher sets up power-point and takes roll, while other teacher checks homework. • More efficient use of class time • Allows for more one-to-one interactions with students • Offers professional and moral support* in and out of class • Makes for more dynamic teaching.

There are a few different models of team teaching and more than one model may be carried out within the one day. These are:

1. Both teachers give introduction to topic and explain different activities that they will host at different stations/areas.
2. The class divided in half with both teachers teaching the same lesson simultaneously.
3. Both teachers delivering same instruction at the same time to both groups.
4. Teachers divide instructional content into several segments and present the content in two or more separate stations around the classroom. Teachers work with one group of children and then switch groups
5. Station Teaching: Various learning stations are created and the co-teachers provide individual support at different stations.
6. One teacher giving whole class instructions whilst the other working with one child, or working with a small focus group. Small focus groups could be enrichment, pre teaching, re teaching, interest groups, special projects, extra support or assessment.
7. One teacher working with a small focus group, the other providing 1: 1 conferences with children where necessary.

For parents and students • More inclusive environment • More students get extra help • Increased access to the curriculum (don't have to drop subject to pick up learning support) • More services to students (i.e. every day instead of once or twice a week) • Student needs addressed on the spot (don't have to wait for Resource class)

https://jmb.ie/images/pdf/events/Education_Conference/2016/W11-Presentation_Ed_Conf.pdf

http://www.powerstownet.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/PETNS_26_team_teaching_sept15.pdf

Appendix 2

Role of the SNA

The duties of the SNA are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with circular 10/76, 07/02, 71/11 and 30/14 - latest circular – do we need to reference the others???

The work of the SNA should be supervised either by the Principal or in the absence of the Principal by a Class Teacher. Those duties involve **tasks of a non-teaching nature** such as:

- Provide input with regard to care needs for the preparation of IEPs
- Assist with care planning
- Provide assistance and information in relation to care needs for preparation of physiological and school reports and files. Also helping with briefing profiles on SEN pupils
- Assist in analysis of attendance for SEN Pupils
- Assist transition process in relation to care needs for pupils from one school to another and from one teacher to another.
- Provide Preparation and tidying up of SNA room(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught – this includes any special equipment needed
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary, travelling as an escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping **physically disabled** pupils with typing or writing.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, trips to matches, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom (this may be to provide timeout)

- Administering approved medication
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teacher. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class). Eg assist SEN pupils to display work, ensuring uniform and use of journal is maintained
- Participation with school development planning with special reference to SEN pupils
- Liaising with class teacher/resource teachers/Principal
- Assist in compiling information for staff on the care needs of SEN pupils.
- Work with teachers to promote independence of students as they progress through the school

Please note: it is not the job of SNAs to transcribe notes for students or to take notes down from the board.

Appendix 3

Role of the SEN Co-ordinator

In addition to working with the SEN team the SEN co-ordinator in collaboration with school management will engage in the following duties:

- Plan for the transition of students with special educational needs from primary school
- Engage with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with special educational needs (with the assistance of the HSCL to visit the relevant primary schools for the effective transfer of essential SEN information)
- Assist in the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject teachers, year heads and other relevant staff on an ongoing basis (staff meetings, compass)
- Create / update the SEN registrar / database
- Liaise with external agencies, NEPS, NCSE, CAMS, NBSS
- Liaise with external professionals, OT's, S&L, psychologists, doctors
- To work with "in house" supports such as HSCL, BFL, School Completion, Guidance councilors in relation to SEN students
- Assist in the preparation of applications to the NCSE for access to SNA support (see Appendix 2)
- To work with the schools SNA's
- To chair and take minutes of all SEN meetings
- To go through reports/assessments and update relevant data bases and school compass system
- To continuously identify and allocate (where possible) support for students who require it but have no assessment
- Assist in the preparation of applications to the SENO for access to a variety of suitable Assistive Technologies (AT)
- To ensure the effective use of AT (organise the equipment, specialised classes, e-books)

- To meet with different subject departments, consult on supports and programmes
- In collaboration with the in-school management team, deploy SEN staff
- In collaboration with management allocate SEN resources
- In collaboration with school management organise students and timetables
- To meet and discuss individual SEN students with parents/guardians
- Ensure that an efficient system of sharing information with teachers in relation to students' needs is in place (compass)
- Consult and support other programmes in the school such as LCA, JCSP (identification of candidates)
- Test relevant students. Plan, and prepare applications for reasonable accommodations in the state exams (This has been delegated to a member of the SEN Team)

The SEN co-ordinator will work closely with the SEN team, the school principal, subject teachers, parents, HSCL, BFL, the guidance counselor, the student support team and other support structures within the school.