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## Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed



## INCLUSION (S.E.N) POLICY



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# INCLUSION (S.E.N.) POLICY

## 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**

The school's Special Educational Needs policy aspires:

- 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 N.C.S.E.

### **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 tests, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 school's 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 where possible, 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 (this step does not apply to students who join the school with an existing Irish exemption).
- 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 the 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 a chance to be digitally literate.
- All students who have been granted Assistive Technology by the SENO are timetabled for one AT 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 moment provision of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is subject to agreement between unions and the Department of Education and Skills (DES).
- The SEN team currently compiles an SEN student profile on our school management system, Compass.

### **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 independent learning with all 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 serve 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 through compass.

A review of attainment (through academic tracking), attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example sense of belonging and connectedness to school) will take place 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**

The SEN team will identify certain students who will benefit from more intensive programmes based on their needs. This support will be delivered through a variety of mediums- team teaching, group or individual support or a combination of all three.

The school's academic tracking data may be used for consultation when the SEN team are allocating these supports.

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. As a result of this the 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”<sup>1</sup>

**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.~~ SENO 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE\\_Inclusion.pdf](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE_Inclusion.pdf)

13) Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied are offered and provide 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/ coordinator 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 files on compass.
- Aid teachers in the recording, planning and implementation of 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, where possible 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 run 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 (HSCL, SEN Co-ordinator & 1st year head)
- 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/compass)

- Induction morning and evenings, half days for incoming students

## **Appendix 1**

### **Team Teaching in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed**

For school management team teaching:

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

For teachers' team teaching:

- 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.
- Is a 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 team teaching:

- Creates a more inclusive environment
- Allows More students get access supports
- Allows for Increased access to the curriculum (don't have to drop subject to pick up learning support)
- Provides services to students (i.e. every day instead of once or twice a week)
- Allows Student needs addressed on the spot (don't have to wait for Resource class)



## Appendix 2

### Role of the SNA / SNA policy

This section is included to clarify the role of Special Needs Assistants (SNA'S) in Coláiste Mhuire Co-ed.

The Policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties and is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and D.E.S Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05,0030/2014

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
- To assist the teacher in whatever way is necessary to help the student(s) integrate as fully as possible into school life
- 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). E.g., 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 support assigned students to become more independent learners. The SNAs are encouraged to develop independence in their assigned students through showing interest both in the classroom setting and during breaks
- Information received on students, and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully.

Parents with questions or issues about school policy or practice should be referred directly to SEN co-ordinator or the Principal.

### **Staff Meetings**

The SNAs may be required to attend Staff Meetings when an issue of relevance to their own particular work is included on an agenda.

On days of In-Service ancillary staff may be required to attend school to complete tasks laid out by Principal and Duty Principal

### **Training**

Regular training is offered to SNAs when appropriate. This may coincide with in-service days for mainstream staff or is availed of when appropriate courses become available through the local Education Centre.

## **Break Duty**

The SNA in Coláiste Mhuire Co-ed is not assigned to an individual child but rather to the school as a whole. However, during lunch break the SNA (or another SNA if the assigned person is not available) if the case arises will have direct responsibility for a particular child. It is the responsibility of the SNA to monitor their behaviour and to watch out for them.

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 register / database
- Liaise with external agencies, NEPS, NCSE, CAMHS, NBSS
- Liaise with external professionals, OT's, S&L, psychologists, doctors
- To work with "in house" supports such as HSCL, BFL, School Completion, Guidance counsellors 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, eBooks)
- 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 counsellor, the student support team and other support structures within the school.

## Appendix 4

### Exemption from the Study of Irish

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

The grounds for making an application for exemption from the study of Irish are listed in Section 2.2 of Circular 0053/2019 which sets out the exceptional circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting a student an exemption from the study of Irish. These are:

- a. students whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to the final year of their primary education) was received outside the state and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish,
- b. students who were previously enrolled as recognised students in a primary or post- primary school who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the State and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment,
- c.
  - i. students who present with significant learning difficulties that are persistent, despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in both Irish and English over time. Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school should include Student Support Plans detailing
    1. regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
    2. target-setting
    3. evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (word reading, Reading comprehension, spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review. and
  - ii. at the time of the application for exemption present with a Standardised Score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the **10th percentile**.

#### **Granting an exemption from the study of Irish**

A written application for an exemption is made by the parent or guardian to the school principal on behalf of their child or the student themselves if they are over 18. The application should state the reasons why the exemption is being sought and a form is provided for this (Appendix 1). The student must meet one of the criteria mentioned above.

In deciding whether to grant or refuse an exemption, the Principal will, as relevant, consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student on whose behalf the application is being made, or the student where he/she is the applicant, and relevant school personnel in order to satisfy himself/herself that all key evidence has been assessed.

A meeting will take place with the Principal, SENCO or relevant Special Education Teacher (SET), Career Guidance, parents and students. The consequences of an exemption from Irish will be explained to parents and student. Parents will be given a copy of all relevant documentation.

### **Students attending ASD centre**

In line with Circular 0053/2019, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required for students attending the ASD centre. Pupils enrolled in the ASD classes in Colaiste Mhuire Co Ed will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption if that is what they and their parents wish. Students will be issued with a formal exemption certificate to facilitate them if they move to full mainstream education. The consequences of being exempt from Irish will be communicated to both parents and students before this is issued. Students in the ASD centre will be allowed to continue to study Irish if this is appropriate to their needs.

### **Processing the application for exemption from the study of Irish**

The school principal, on behalf of the school's board of management, processes applications received by the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish after they have been reviewed by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or relevant SET. The formal written application submitted by the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student must indicate the exceptional circumstance that forms the basis for the application in accordance with criteria explained above.

In considering the application the principal will:

1. Ensure that the date of receipt of the application by the school is recorded on the form.
2. Acknowledge receipt of the application for exemption from the study of Irish in writing.

3. Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and confirm the criteria on which the application is based as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
4. Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student of the next steps in processing the application.
5. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student regarding any implication of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
6. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that the application will be processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.
7. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that a signed Certificate of Exemption will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.
8. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that, where an application is refused, the reason(s) as to why it was refused; and the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
9. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student, and the student on whose behalf the application has been made, the arrangements for the student's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.
10. Convey the outcome of the application in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
11. Make arrangements for the retention of the application form and all supporting documentation, including a copy of the Certificate of Exemption (Appendix 4) where applicable, and the Checklist in accordance with data protection law.

### **Appeals procedure?**

Where an application for an exemption from the study of Irish is refused, the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student, may appeal the decision not to grant an exemption to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days from the date on which the school's decision was notified in writing. The appeal will be confined to a review of whether the school adhered to the guidelines for processing the application for exemption as set out in the Circular.

This written appeal should contain the specific reason(s) why the decision is being appealed by the applicant and the circumstances in which it is considered that the process has not been correctly applied.



A parent/guardian/ student who is unhappy with the outcome of the appeal to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee will have recourse to the offices of the Ombudsman for Children if the student on whose behalf the application is made is under 18 years of age, or to the Ombudsman.

### **Record keeping / Reporting**

All documentation concerning the application and processing process will be maintained in the Students file and be available for review by authorised Department of Education and Skills officials. The Principal will report relevant information concerning Irish exemptions to the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Arrangements for students who are exempt from the study of Irish**

Where a student has been granted an exemption from Irish due to learning needs, they shall attend support classes to address their learning needs. If a student is granted an exemption on other grounds they will remain in the Irish class and study where possible.

### **Sharing information of student's Certificate of Exemption between schools**

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the student (where he/she is the applicant) to ensure that a copy of the student's Certificate of Exemption is made available to Coláiste Mhuire Co Ed on enrolment into the school.

### **Further Information and Guidance:**

Further information including Application Forms, Guidance Information, and Appeals Form can be found on the Department of Education & Skills website at this link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/>