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# Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed



## INCLUSION (SEN) POLICY



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# INCLUSION (SEN) 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, Community, Equality, Care and Excellence in Education.**

## PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. Please see Circular regarding the exemption of Irish 0055/2022 <https://assets.gov.ie/232778/8a54db37-2036-4d6a-861f-0be60c2cf7f2.docx>.

- 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, input from outside agencies or teacher observation/opinion etc.
- 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, the SENCO, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 the opportunity to be digitally literate.
- All students who have been granted Assistive Technology (AT) by the SENO, or have been using AT in their previous school, have a strong recommendation from a professional are timetabled where possible 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (DE).
- The SEN team currently compiles an SEN student profile on our school management system, Compass. This aims to be reflective of the NCSE Continuum of Support post primary model.

## **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 as per their professional code of conduct.

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.
- 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:
  - i. Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
  - ii. Adapting lessons for students' interests
  - iii. Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs
  - iv. Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology
  - v. 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, a range of curriculum options are available, including Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

### **EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION**

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 NEPS 'Friends' programme, NBSS transition and transfer programme, NBSS. Alert training, SESS Pathways to Prevention, Vocabulary Enrichment 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 FEW**

Colaiste Mhuire Co- Ed has provision for one ASD programme - 2 classes. There are 12 students affiliated to the programme and the SEN team have responsibility for timetabling and provision of care. This support will be delivered through a variety of mediums and the supports may change over time.

As per circular c10059-2021 the school acknowledges the existence of L2LPs. These are designed for certain categories of students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability, where the difficulties/needs of those students, prevent them from taking some or all of



the subjects or short courses on offer at level 3, as a result of being identified as requiring additional learning supports.

As per cl0059-2021 students who are identified as struggling with EBD, meet with a suitably qualified SEN teacher and benefit from targeted programmes and interventions.

### **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.

### **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. (See Appendix for Whole School Provision Map).

### **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 resources
- 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 the induction programme and early screening for early intervention and learning.
- 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 in so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 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, subject specific and mathematical needs.
- 4) Allocating support classes to teachers who are expert in the subject or learning support.
- 5) Providing flexibility for specialist teachers so that groupings timetabled for support may change over time.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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.

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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)

- 2) Working with and listening to the opinion of the student(s) and parent(s) concerned.
- 3) Making application to DE through SENO for support where deemed necessary.
- 4) Giving every student an opportunity to learn effectively so that he/she can achieve his/her potential academically and socially.
- 5) Providing our students with a wide variety of subjects.
- 6) Where resources permit, small class groupings will be formed so that each student is provided with support.
- 7) 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 or using the JCSP statements.
- 8) Students will be provided with a taster programme in all option subjects to assist with correct choice of subjects to be carried forward.
- 9) All levels of subjects are taught to Junior and Senior cycle.
- 10) Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied are offered and provide wonderful opportunities to our students.
- 11) Extra-curricular activities are provided to promote development and encourage social inclusion.
- 12) Using Educational technology in a way that supports students and assists them in their learning.

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

#### School-wide Planning

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.

### **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 relevant 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 or the transition or movement from one school to another. 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 Chéile

- Request transfer of School passport from the primary school (HSCL, SEN Co-ordinator & 1<sup>st</sup> 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 for incoming students

If a child transfers from another school

- Parents are asked to fill in an online form and this includes the request for their student support file and any relevant reports.
- Students allocated a mentor from the student support team.

## APPENDIX 1

### 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.

It is important to note that frontloading SNA support eliminates the need for an individual assessment for each student, ending the link with the requirement for a formal diagnosis to gain access to support, and will reduce the delays in making supports available to schools

This section 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 DES Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05, 0030/2014, 0035/2022

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)
- 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 2**

### **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. S/he 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 standardised 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).

### Role of the SEN Co-ordinator

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.

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 3**

### **EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH**

#### **CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE**

An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of this Circular. The decision to exempt a student from study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher/s, special education teachers and the student. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

#### **THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A STUDENT MAY BE GRANTED AN EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances referenced as 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 or 2.2.4 in Circular Letter 0055/2022.

2.2.1 A student moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish

AND either (a) or (b)

(a) who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment<sup>[2]</sup> or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

2.2.2 A student who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time. Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing:

- regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
- target-setting
- 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) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

**2.2.3 A student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life.**

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of students who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these students, consideration may need to be given to adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. In very exceptional circumstances, this means that consideration may need to be given to exempting them from the study of Irish.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life

AND

(ii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student

AND

(iv) who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach to language skills development and the communicative approach underpinning the Specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) and the Leaving Certificate Syllabuses for Irish.

AND

(v) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

2.2.4 A student in a recognised<sup>[3]</sup> special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation<sup>[4]</sup> and has been deemed eligible<sup>[5]</sup> for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

(i) Where a student is currently enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has previously been enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that student is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

OR

(ii) Where a student has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school, an application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.

## **PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING AN EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH**

### **(a) Steps required for a valid application for an exemption from the study of Irish**

1. A parent/guardian on behalf of a student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish.

2. The school staff shall mark the date of receipt of the application on the application form and issue an acknowledgement to the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student as relevant, upon receipt of the application.
3. At the earliest opportunity a school official should contact the applicant(s) and:
  - discuss the written application with the applicant(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (as outlined in section 2.2 above) N.B. If a parent/guardian, or the student where he/she is the applicant, does not confirm the sub-paragraph under which the application is based then the application is null and void and no further processing of the application will take place. Only criteria contained in this Circular can be considered as grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish and no other exceptional circumstances can be considered.
  - advise the applicant(s) of the steps involved in processing the application.
  - inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and the student on whose behalf an application is made of the implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
4. The application should be fully processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.
5. Where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted a signed Certificate of Exemption will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and a copy will be held by the school in the student's file. The record keeping requirements are outlined further at 2.3(c) below.
6. Where an application is refused, the principal must inform the applicant(s) in writing outlining the reasons for refusal and notifying the applicant(s) that the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

**(b) Considering an application for exemption**

In considering an application for exemption from the study of Irish the principal will

1. Review the application and any documentation provided by the applicant(s);
2. Consult with the student's class teacher/s;
3. Consult with the special education teacher and the assigned teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service where relevant;

4. Review school documentation for the evidence outlined in subsection 2.2;

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal will be issued.

- i. The Certificate of Exemption will state the name and address of the school, the school roll number, the student's name, date of birth and the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted. A Certificate of Exemption is hyperlinked in the checklists within the Guidelines accompanying this Circular, published by the Department on the government website.
- ii. The arrangements for the student's learning will be explained to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- iii. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student should be informed of the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.
- iv. The application form, all supporting documentation, and a copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian consent for the retention and use of such records.
- v. In addition, where an exemption from the study of Irish is granted, the school should update the student's record on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD) as soon as possible to include the reason for that exemption.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Where an application for an exemption from the study of Irish is refused, an applicant can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee (IEAC). The IEAC will comprise three persons who shall be selected from a panel of persons established and maintained by the Minister, having regard to the need for each IEAC to have available to it:



- Experience and skills in the provision of or inspection of special education in schools
- Experience and skills in the area of educational psychology and/or child and adolescent wellbeing and mental health
- Experience and skills in the leadership and administration of schools
- Experience and skills in the initial or continuing education of teachers of students with special educational needs.

The IEAC will make a decision on whether the exemption should be granted or not, inform the school of the decision and require the school to give effect to their decision. In making a decision the IEAC will consider the decision of the school and the grounds given for refusing the application, the criteria set out in this Circular and any supporting documentation that was available to the school, contained in the Student Support Plan(s) and any supplementary information provided to the school by the applicant. The appeal should be made on the appropriate form published on the Department's website.

The appeal must be lodged within 30 calendar days from the date of the written decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the applicant. Irish Exemption Appeal Form and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools can be accessed at [www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/](http://www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/)

### **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 officials. The Principal will report relevant information concerning Irish exemptions to the Department of Education.

### **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 s/he 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 website at this link:

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

## APPENDIX 4

### TEAM TEACHING IN COLÁISTE MHIURE 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 5

Area of Need	Class / Year Group	Whole School & Classroom Support / Support for All	School Support / Support for Some	School Support Plus / Support for Few
<b>Social and Emotional Learning</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> & TY	Programme Choice Information Workshop	Student Support Team	Sensory Room
	6 <sup>th</sup>	CAO Information Workshop	Care Team	Support from NEPS/CAMHS
	TY, 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>		HSCL	HSCL
	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	Work Experience Programmes	Sensory Room	SCP
	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	Visiting Speakers – Higher Options College Open Days	Mental Health Ireland Art Competitions	Lunchtime in ASD Programme Room Games and activities in ASD Programme Room at lunchtime
	5 <sup>th</sup>	Progression After School	Supervised walks at lunchtime	
	TY 5 <sup>th</sup> 6 <sup>th</sup>		Positive Postcard sent home JCSP initiative	Outings to the local park
	All	DARE		Staff notified (by HSCL/BFL/Student Support Team) via email, in relation to certain student(s) with concern, staff
	All	Zeminar	Wellbeing Wall	
	All			

	All	Friendship Week	Career Guidance	to monitor and observe students interactions, behaviours, etc.
	1 <sup>st</sup> Yr	Let's Talk About Drugs Anti-Bullying Week / Policy	Staff – notified of certain student(s) wellbeing concern placed under 'smilie face' board.	Teacher observation monitoring
	All	Student Support Team		Why try (BFL)
		Student Passport	Seating Plans devised and classroom layout appropriate	Talk about (BFL)
	All	Positive Quotes on classroom doors	Teacher Observation monitoring	Seeing Red (SCP)
	All	Wellbeing Celebrations & Committee	Check and Connect	Retracking (SCP)
	1 <sup>st</sup> Yr			
	All	Wellbeing Wall		
	All	Belonging Plus (Transition)		
	All	Mental Health Week		
All	Pastoral Care			

	All	Care Team		
	All	Breakfast Club  FRIENDS  Three positive notes recorded in journal each week to promote happiness and positive psychology (in religion)		
Social and Communication Skills	All	Keyword (Poster, Noticeboard, Copies)	Google Classroom	Support and guidance with SLT
	All	Visual Supports	Support for some, focus on communication and organisational skills	Support and guidance with NEPS  Sensory Room
	All	Learning Intentions and Success Criteria outlined before each lesson.	Social Skills small group in ASD Programme Room	Green School task (everyone gets a role and works as part of team)
	1 <sup>st</sup>	Make a Book JCSP initiative	Sensory Room	Individual support with HSCL & SCP
	All	Green Schools	Student Voice	

	All	Student Council	Career Guidance	Additional support with SPHE focusing on role play and walk about debates.
	All	School Trips	.	
	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	CSPE	Teaching Strategies: Worksheets: mind maps, brainstorming and placemat.	Numeracy games; countdown.  Teacher observation monitoring
	All	SPHE	Group work, pair work, peer assessment.	
		Teaching Strategies: ICT – mentimeter, padlet, google classroom, eportfolio (both individual and groups) Worksheets: mind maps, brainstorming and placemat. Group work, pair work, peer assessment.	Teacher observation monitoring	
		Seating Plans devised and classroom layout appropriate		
Self – Management and/or organisational skills	All	Class Tutors	Students have zip folders with labels for each subject. (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Lockers provided in ASD Programme Room
	All	Academic Tracking in journals		



	All	Merit System (organised for class)	SNA assistance meeting some for organisation of books/equipment	Students purchase lunch ticket in the morning time and attach their lunch ticket on a designated wall space in ASD Programme Room.
	All	Target Grades set by students	Lessons broken down have overview outlined.	SNA assistance (opening the ASD Programme Room)
	All	AfL, traffic lights, 2starts and a wish, questioning. feedback	Teacher observation monitoring.	Targets set for students with to focus on self-regulation
	All	Study timetable		Visual supports
		Whole staff devise Seating Plans and classroom layout appropriate		Reward System
	All	Reach for the STARS		Coloured Timetable
	All	Learning Intentions and Success Criteria		Individual support with HSCL & SCP
	All	Google Classroom		Lessons broken down and in step-by-step approach

Study Skills	1 <sup>st</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> Yr	Study Skills multi-sensory learning	Learning Support provided to students who have difficulty in a particular subject area. (Maths, English, Science)	Homework Club
	All	Study Clix for all years (have their own access codes)	Growth Mindset (multi-sensory approach)	List for study timetable.  Support in how to study for exams (what to highlight, what to revise for exams)
	All	After school study	Homework Club	Google Classroom
	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Homework Club	PQRST	Mentimeter
	All	Academic Tracking in journals (target grades actual grade)	SMART targets (as listed in school journal)	Visual Supports
	All	Dulingo	Flash Cards	
	All	Google Classroom	Traffic Lights	
	All	Flash Cards	Google Classroom	
		Peer Assessment	Study Timetable	
		Think Pair Share		

Life Skills	All	SPHE	Small group of students meet once a week in ASD Programme Room to carry out Health and Hygiene classes.	Life Skills further support attend to ASD Programme Room.
	All	Parent Teacher Meetings		Visual Supports provided for Health and Hygiene tasks
	All	Home Economics	Sensory Garden	
	All	School Trips (nationally and internationally)	Rules of the road	Additional support with Home Economics (weighing, measuring, health and safety)
	All	P.E.	Growth Mindset (multi-sensory approach)	Additional support focus on money and money management
	All	Electronic Notice Screen in assembly	JCSP statements and worksheets in relation to life skills.	Sensory Garden
	All	Academic Tracking in journals (target grades actual grade)	SNA's support in practical subjects with the use of equipment and tools	Organised meetings with parents / guardians
	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	CSPE		Rules of the road  JCSP statements and worksheets broken down

				Special education teachers support in health and safety, the use of equipment and tools in practical subjects this is done in ASD Programme Room (visual support)
<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Yr</b>	Whole School Behaviour Policy	Monitoring report card.	Behaviour Support Plan
	<b>All</b>	Class Rules	Why Try	Sensory Room
	<b>All</b>	Reach for the STARS Positive merits (rewards)	Sensory Room	Board Games at Lunchtime
	<b>All</b>	ALERT	Peer mentoring	NBSS – individualised support / counselling
	<b>All</b>	Monitoring Report Card system (white, yellow, red)	SCP support	BFL team – student support
	<b>All</b>	Seating Plans devised and classroom layout appropriate	Stress Balls (made in school)	Movement Matters initiative
			Games in ASD Programme Room	Targets set for students with to focus on self-regulation
			Blue Monitoring Card (attendance)	

			<p>Purple Monitoring Card (homework)</p> <p>Visual Supports</p> <p>Trust Pass (issued by BfL teacher)</p>	<p>Reward System</p> <p>SCP support</p> <p>Trust Pass (issued by BfL teacher)</p>
<b>Language</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Yr</b>	Learning Intentions and Success Criteria outlined before each lesson.	Additional support with focus on speech and language	RACE / exam accommodations for tests.
	<b>All</b>	Repeat new/difficult terminology	SEN team provide in-class support co-teaching	Keywords revised
	<b>All</b>	Extra Time	Multi-sensory approaches to literacy / numeracy	Spelling tests weekly (2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
	<b>All</b>	Keyword notebooks	Keyword notebooks	JCSP literacy workbooks
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	One Voice (Reach for the STARS)	Library Reading Skills	Learning Strategies broken down and amended to suit learners needs and requirements)
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> TY</b>	Ipads,	Kahoot	Visual Supports
	<b>All</b>			KWL

		Differentiate lesson planning, multi-sensory approaches, various methodologies	Learning Strategies (mind maps, brainstorming, randomisers, dotmocracy, placemat)  KWL	
<b>Literacy</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	NGRT Literacy Testing	NGRT Literacy Testing (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	RACE/accommodations for state exams
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Yr</b>	Literacy week.	Team Teaching small groups	Intensive Support focus on literacy
	<b>All</b>	D.E.A.R	Keywords notebook	Assistive Technology
	<b>All</b>	PDST Keyword posters in every classroom.	JCSP workbooks (1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Read Write Gold
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Keyword notebook	Inter-generational Readings (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year)	Support/ Guidance from Ed. Psy
	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	VEP – vocabulary enrichment programme. (1 <sup>st</sup> year)	Station Teaching small groups	C-Pen
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> yr</b>		Learning Strategies (mind maps, brainstorming, randomisers, dotmocracy, placemat)	Catch Up Literacy
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	RED WALL (reading)		JCSP Literacy Workbooks
	<b>1<sup>st</sup>_3<sup>rd</sup></b>			Visual Supports

	<p>All</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> yr</p>	<p>Library Reading Skills</p> <p>Keyword Challenge (merit rewarded in school journal)</p> <p>Differentiated learning</p> <p>KWL</p>	<p>Mentimeter</p> <p>KWL</p>	<p>Learning Strategies broken down and amended to suit learners needs and requirements. (mind maps, brainstorming)</p> <p>Colour background on google docs.</p>
Numeracy	<p>1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Yr</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Maths Week.</p> <p>Converting test grades from fractions to percentages.</p> <p>Sign posts</p> <p>Common Calculator</p> <p>CUBES</p> <p>JCSP Maths Posters in rooms and assembly area</p> <p>Maths moment in classes</p>	<p>PT Maths Testing (2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup>)</p> <p>Co-operative Teaching small groups</p> <p>Ninja Maths</p> <p>Visual Supports</p> <p>JCSP workbook</p>	<p>Co-operative Teaching few in a group for additional support</p> <p>Multisensory / kinaesthetic learning for mathematical vocab</p> <p>JCSP workbook</p> <p>Games; countdown</p> <p>Visual Supports</p> <p>Additional testing</p>

Physical and / or Sensory	1 <sup>st</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> Yr	Bag Rack in Practical Rooms	Sensory Garden	Sensory Garden
	All	Seating Plan devised	Definite seating arrangements for students with visual and hearing impairments.	O.T.
	All	Classroom layout alternated (when carrying out an activity)	Lunchtime in SEN ASD Programme Room	Pre-teaching keywords to student with hearing impairment with Resource Teacher
	All	Staff informed of physical impairment	RACE / accommodations for state exams	Assistive Technology – laptop
	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> TY	iPads used in all classes	SNA / support for in house exams	iPads, to capture work on the whiteboard. To take down notes from teachers.
		Whole staff aware of individual with hearing impairment	Whole staff to use frequency-modulated system (Hearing Assistive Technology device) in every lesson placing it on front collar / neckline of jumper.	Whole staff to use frequency-modulated system (Hearing Assistive Technology device) in every lesson placing it on front collar / neckline of jumper.
		Whole School approach – all bags to be placed in lockers (hallways & corridors clutter free)	Group/ peer work; student should wear hearing assistive	Group/ peer work; student should wear hearing assistive technology
	ICT – implemented into planning and delivery of lessons. (group work, pair work)			



	All	ICT – whiteboards, projectors, sound systems in some rooms	technology device placing it on front collar / neckline of jumper.	device placing it on front collar / neckline of jumper.
		Classwork and Homework done on iPads	Learning Strategies used (mind mapping,	Support from clinical therapist  Enlarge Text
		Differentiated lesson planning	Classroom layout alternated prior to commencement of lesson when carrying out activity. Adequate space for movement.	RACE/ accommodations for state exams; scribe, reader, recorder  Supports / guidance from VTHI
			Homework and Classwork- via iPads	Extra time allocated to students changing clothes for PE.
			SNA support for P.E and activities outside the classroom	Visual Supports
			Special education teacher and SNA support with tools and equipment in practical rooms	Homework and Classwork via- iPads  SNA support for P.E and activities outside the classroom
			Movement breaks	

				Special education teachers support with tools and equipment in practical rooms this is done in ASD Programme Room (visual support)  Movement breaks
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