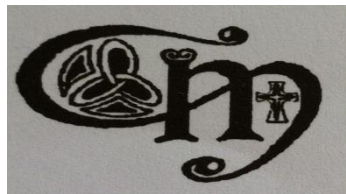


SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY
Reviewed 2021

A Whole School Approach



Colaiste Muire
SEN Department

This policy applies to all students with SEN, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Coláiste Muire, Ennis. It is also intended to serve the school community including the Board of Management, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

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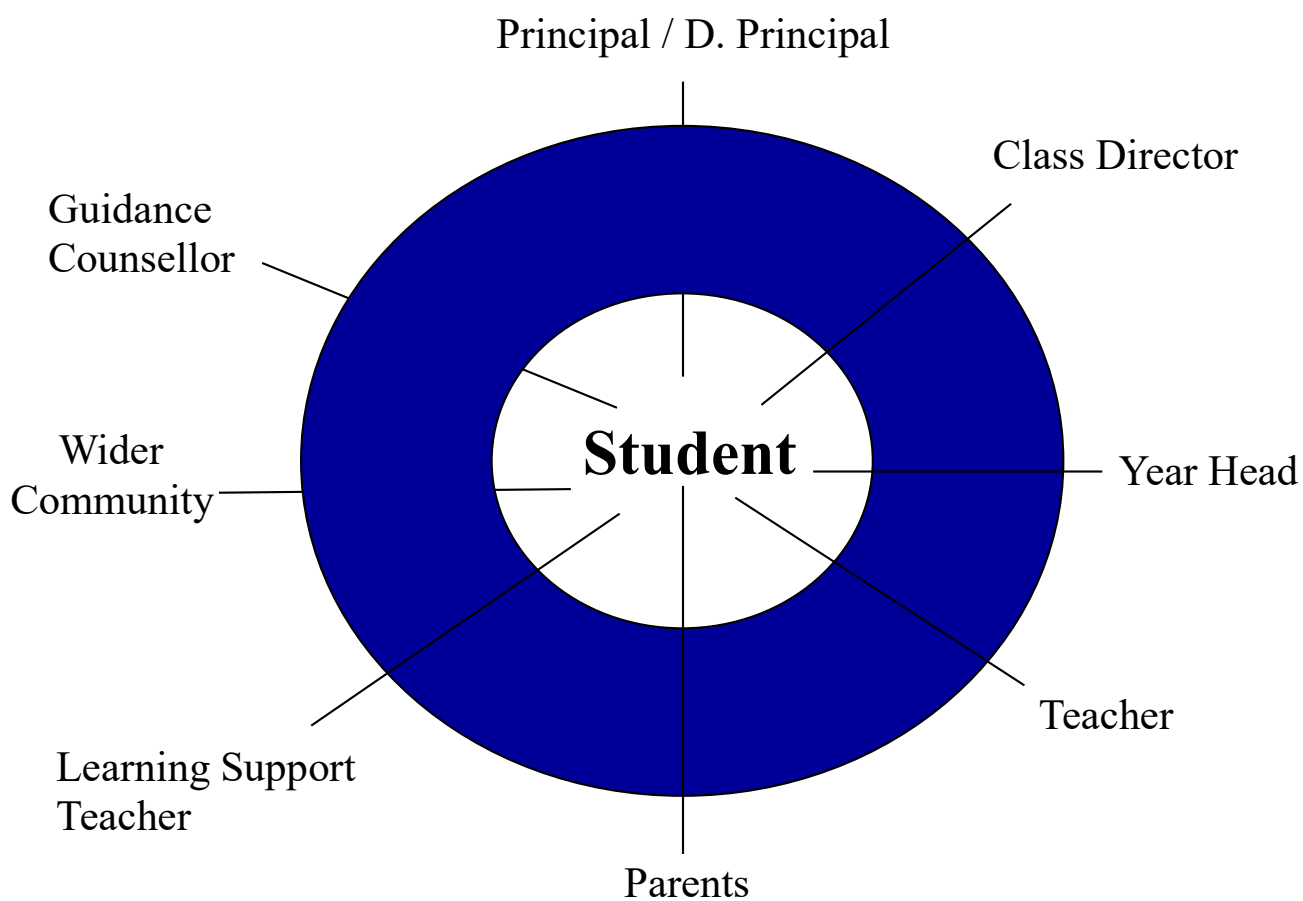
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A whole school approach to the Education and Welfare of our students.

The student is central to all our endeavours



Colaiste Muire Special Educational Needs Policy - A Whole School Approach

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Coláiste Muire is committed to developing a dynamic Christian School Community, which fosters spiritual and personal development. We strive for academic excellence and seek to nurture a sense of self-worth, while having particular concern for the needs of the academically and socially disadvantaged.

In line with the Mercy philosophy, the holistic development and full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, are of utmost importance. We strive to create an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy education is committed to on-going whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents and the wider community.

Consultation

This policy was formulated in consultation with the teaching staff and management of Coláiste Muire, parents of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the Board of Management (BOM), Special Needs Assistants (SNA's), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO).

RATIONALE

- This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional educational support for students with SEN.
- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision.
- The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below.
- The policy is a working document and will be reviewed annually.
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice.

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RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

The principal aim of Learning Support in Coláiste Muire is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students

with SEN and to enable each to realise their individual potential. In line with our ethos and official Department of Education and Skills (DES) recommendations, learning support strategies will actively seek to include the diverse range of cultures and abilities of its students.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all students with SEN, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Coláiste Muire. It is also intended to serve the school community including the B.O.M, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Coláiste Muire sets out to provide education for all its students, with reference to legislation regarding students with SEN as listed below:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

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AIMS OF THE POLICY

The principal aim of Learning Support in Coláiste Muire is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with learning difficulties and to enable each to realise their individual potential.

Learning Support provision also seeks to:

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

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

- To include the most recent best practice in SEN.
- To reflect the most recent recommendations, most particularly the Continuum of Support at Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with SEN.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of students with SEN in the school.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.

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- Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at home.
- To outline procedures and practices which will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with SEN.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN. (Learning Support Guidelines)

DEFINITIONS

Special Educational Needs

In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) the term “special educational needs” is defined as

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

(Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/A3004.pdf>

Inclusion

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the NCSE, has been adopted.

Inclusion is defined as a process of:

- addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities.
- removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/ her attendance at school.

Literature Review of the Principles and Practices relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs (NCSE 2010, p.39)

http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/NCSE_Inclusion.pdf

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS IN THE SEN TEAM

The SEN team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, the SEN Co-ordinator, the Learning Support and Resource teachers, the Guidance Counsellor and the mainstream teachers. The team also includes any SNA's, as approved by the DES. The SEN Co-ordinator is also part of the Pastoral Care team in the school and works closely with this student support team and with Year Heads.

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

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Board of Management	Principal	SEN Co-Ordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all students with SEN are identified and assessed. • To ensure that the school has an up to date SEN policy in place, monitor the implementation of that policy and ensure its evaluation. • To ensure that a board, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society. • To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN. • To ensure the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies and ensure that parents are informed of their child’s SEN and how these needs are being met. • To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child’s education. • To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of EPSSEN. • To promote the inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled in all of the school community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To appoint a SEN Co-ordinator and works closely with the co-ordinator. • To inform the Board of Management of issues, with SEN. • To consult with the SEN Co-ordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions. • To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds. • To establish a “Special Needs Support Team” in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN. • To promote a whole school approach to special educational needs, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area. • To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of SEN students. • To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN. • To process applications for Irish Exemptions. • To provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion. • To manage the implementation of policies and practices • To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions • To assign roles and responsibilities • To keep records of those receiving support and of the level of support provided. • To ensure compliance with statutory requirements when EPSSEN* is implemented. • To direct the work of the SNA’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-ordinate/ devise a school SEN Plan. • To create and maintain a school register of students with SEN • To communicate the needs of students to teachers • To assist in the identification of students with SEN. • To ensure that IEP’s and structured learning plans are in place for students with SEN. • To advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students. • To assist the Principal in the allocation of resources. • To process applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Exams (RACE) • To provide RACE in house exam where possible given the resources available • To liaise with outside professionals • To meet with parents in order to plan and to review interventions • To administer and correct standardised assessments • To ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents, etc • To report annually to the BOM • To be a member of the Pastoral Care Team. • To advise and collaborate with SNA’s around the care needs of relevant students and facilitate a weekly meeting. • To facilitate a weekly meeting of the SEN team. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>*These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are meet.</u></p>

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Year Head/ Class Director	Learning Support/ Resource Teacher	Guidance Counsellor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute significantly to the work of the special educational needs support team. • To facilitate the inclusion of an individual student with special educational needs by monitoring the student’s progress within the year group. • To encourage an awareness of special educational needs from the students, including a respect for students with SEN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention • Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student. • Providing direct teaching to a student with SEN either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum. • To provide team teaching/ cooperative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. • Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate. • Collecting and analysing school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records. Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff • Planning, implementing and reviewing individual and/or group interventions • Seeking external professional advice, as needed • To advise SNA’s around the care needs of relevant students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with the other members of the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school. • Counselling in personal, educational and career development • Co-ordinating a number of assessments including the CAT4 prior to entry and again in third year. • Providing career information • Presenting at the Options Information Evening for students and parents of students progressing to Senior Cycle • Consulting with parents and staff • Consulting with community organisations • Providing vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience • Working closely with Year Heads and the SEN team to identify students requiring support • Facilitating individual appointments for students in third year, TY and Leaving Cert Year to support them in making career decisions • Advising students and parents on subject choice and subject load • To liaise with students, parents and the SEN team in relation to DARE applications.

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SNA	Mainstream Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students. • To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan. • To recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency. • Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate. • Assisting / escorting students on school trips. • Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping student with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment. • Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student. • Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate). • Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another. • Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed. • Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class. • Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process. • Engagement with parents of students with SEN as required and directed by school management. • Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school. • The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise. • To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential. • SNA's are expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator with a copy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be aware of the School's policy and procedures (as outlined in this policy) for dealing with students with SEN, and ensure all students needs are met. • To seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with SEN. • To participate in CPD in the area of SEN. • To devise a plan, in consultation with the resource teacher or SEN Co-ordinator, on the most effective use of an SNA for a student in the class. • To support/ encourage independence in the student. • To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students • To create a positive classroom environment for all students. • To create opportunities for success • To use assessment for learning and comment-only marking. • To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations. • To assess/ monitor progress. • To consider the needs of students with SEN in all aspects of classroom planning. • To identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour, or interaction with other students). • To complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, etc as required by the SEN team • Contribute to group or individual planning and review • Implement agreed strategies • Prepare information for IEP planning meetings • Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies • Direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom • Inform parents of the progress of students through the parent-teacher meeting and school reports. • Contribute to the school development planning for their subject area whilst always having concern for students with SEN. • Build a bank of differentiated resources pertaining to their subject area, which are shared collegially.

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Involvement of Parents	Involvement of Students
<p><u>* The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education.</u></p> <p><i>Parents and transition to and transfer from post-primary school</i></p> <p>The quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents can provide valuable support to a child with SEN while the child is making the transition.</p> <p>Coláiste Muire provides support to parents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liaising with parents prior to transfer and organising an induction meeting in May, prior to the student transferring. • running an 'Introduction to Second Level' programme where all incoming students can attend the school for a day. • informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first-year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate. • having an effective anti-bullying policy (including a 'peer helper' system), and keep parents informed of issues relating to bullying. • Actively encouraging parents to contact the SEN Co-ordinator <p><i>Parents and the transmission of information</i></p> <p>The parents of a child with SEN can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child's learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning preferences. The SEN team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN with the acceptance of a place in the school. Once they have accepted a place in the school parents are asked to complete a form indicating if student has had educational/medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and if they have previously attended learning support/resource. Copies of IEPS/student support plans and Irish exemptions are also requested.</p> <p><i>Parents and home-school links</i></p> <p>The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school journal is used for weekly/ daily home-school communication, and parent-teacher meetings are held once a year for face to face communication. • Students receive a written school report twice in the school year (at Christmas and Summer) • For some students with SEN a differentiated report is provided (School Support Plus). • Special arrangements may be made with the parents in relation to the homework that each individual student with SEN is expected to undertake. • Regular communication is available through direct email to SEN Co-ordinator and meetings on request. • Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties, they observe in their child's learning as they progress through post primary school. This should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEN department fully involve students in skills audits and discussions around their learning needs. • Students have input into their learning targets • Students at School Support Plus are involved in the planning of their IEP and are invited to attend the IEP meeting. • Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self-monitor. <p><u>*The school believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.</u></p>

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Provision and the Continuum of Support

Continuum of Support

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

Student Support Plans (SSP)

A Student Support Plan is devised for students with Special Education needs. All students involved in SEN support will have a tailored learning plan, with students with resource teaching hours or more complex needs having a more detailed Student Support Plan.

The Student Support Plan involves:

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- SEN provision
- Priority Need
- Setting targets for each priority learning need:
- Identifying the strategies and resources required:
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances

These SSP's aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner so that it functions practically as a working document.

Enrolment

The schools admissions policy outlines the procedures with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN (See Appendix 1).

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH KNOWN AND DOCUMENTED NEEDS

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Transfer from Primary School

The transfer of information from primary level to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. At the Open Night for prospective parents the importance of completing the specific form for the SEN Department (See appendix 2) is outlined.

Following acceptance of a place in the school, parents of incoming first years are invited to attend an information meeting outlining practical supports, structure of learning support and resource teaching hours, pastoral care structures and information regarding Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Exams (RACE).

The Special Needs Coordinator also will:

- Visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools to collect up-to-date information.
- Liaise with primary school and parents of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school .
- Meet with the parent/ guardian of students with SEN.
- Establish communication with the primary school resource/ learning support teacher.
- Apply for Resource Teaching Hours/SNA support/Assistive Technology for students for relevant students.
-

Once accepted to Coláiste Muire:

- All incoming first year students take a Cognitive Ability Test; CAT 4. These tests can also be used to identify strengths and needs of incoming students with SEN. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including exceptionally able students.
- All first year students will undergo standardised testing in literacy using the PPAD-E. Individual parental permission is not sought for this test as it is part of our universal testing programme.
- Numeracy testing is conducted for students where there is an identified concern.
- The SEN team will ascertain the students learning style and strengths.
- The SEN team will create learning targets for each student with SEN. These targets are monitored and evaluated at regular intervals. Once achieved, new targets are set.
- At the beginning of each academic year all students on the SEN Register are reviewed individually in terms of level of support needed and curriculum load.

Students transferring into other Year Groups

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychological report, School reports, attendance, etc) This is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Any relevant information is then passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

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PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH EMERGING NEEDS

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT4, in class assessment, informal observation, parental concern). Teachers are asked to complete a referral form for students who they have a concern about that focuses on the student's behaviour, academic performance, homework etc. Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Parental consent is obtained before diagnostic tests are administered on an individual basis. Teachers are also encouraged to refer to students' CAT 4 results to determine the student's areas of strength and their needs and link with at least two other subject teachers before completing a referral form.

Models of SEN provision

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

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

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

Resources

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- Teachers and students have access to approximately six resource rooms. One of these is a large room and a dedicated computer lab which is equipped with five student PC's, extra-large screens, Interactive Whiteboard, Printers. All mainstream classrooms have Interactive White Boards, PC's and Overhead Projectors. iPads for all new enrolment students were introduced in the academic year 2012 - 2013. Students are not required to maintain their use of the iPad at senior cycle level.
- The SEN department purchased a license for year-long access to iXL, a numeracy programme that students can use both at school and at home once registered.
- Students with a visual impairment and their teachers have access to the TeamViewer software
- The SEN Department and the English Department have received support from both the BOM and Parents' Association enabling establishment of the Accelerated Reader Programme for first year students and the purchase of books for the programme.
- Following training of 3 staff members and beginning the academic year 2016/17 the FRIENDS for life Programme will be delivered to two first year classes with a view to rolling it out to all first year classes in the academic year 2017/18.
- Show Me Boards
- iPad Apps eg Gflash, Prizimo, Quizlet
- Colaiste Muire runs a Lunch Time Club every day in room 30. Any student who wishes is welcome to go to this room for some or all of their lunch break. An SNA supervises each day. This room can be particularly attractive to students who dislike noise, crowds etc.

Reasonable Accommodations for State and In House Examinations (RACE)

Applications are made by the SEN Coordinator for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. Information relating to RACE is provided to parents on an annual basis at an information meeting held in the school.

Exam accommodations are provided as part of a continuum of support for a student whose needs are known to and already supported by the school.

The following are the range of accommodations available to the students which are applied for as per circular criteria. Accommodations are granted by The State Examinations Commission. From October 2016 the State Exams Commission SEC will operate a devolved model at both Junior and Leaving Cert Level. The school will make application for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Cycle and these accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Cert, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need for the accommodation. Further details are available at www.examinations.ie.

Where resources permit and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations at mock

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exams and other school assessments. Students in non-exam years sitting a differentiated test will have that noted on their report. Specialised reports can be created where the student has sat many differentiated exams during in-house assessments.

COMMUNICATION

SEN Team

- The SEN Coordinator and teachers of the Learning Support and Resource department aim to meet formally at a weekly scheduled meeting. Informal meetings occur on a daily basis.
- Members of the SEN team can meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the year between the mainstream teachers and SEN team with regards to incoming first year students with SEN.
- The SEN Team aims to communicate with each other as much as possible through email using the school systems Office 365 and Microsoft Teams.
- At the end of each year, the SEN team fill out a student transfer form to use as reference for the following school year, should a change of SEN teacher occur.

Mainstream Teachers

- At the beginning of each school year, the SEN Coordinator updates a register of information focusing on the incoming first years with SEN. This information is shared using Office 365, and all teachers are made aware of its existence at the start-of-year staff meeting and encouraged to consult it regularly.
- SEN is on the agenda at every staff meeting.
- Teachers are kept up-to-date with regards to all students with SEN through email and the SEN notebook on Office 365, detailing relevant student information.
- Information is also communicated via the year head and student support structures such as the Pastoral Care Team.
- At the end of each year, the subject teacher completes a transfer of student form for each student with SEN detailing interventions that work for the student, assessment of course work, homework, behaviour and attendance. Completion and storage of these forms is the responsibility of each subject department. The forms are passed on to new teachers of the student in each particular subject area.

Parents

Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:

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

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- Meetings with the SEN Coordinator and Principal/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head where relevant.

Record-Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual students file in the SEN co-ordinator's classroom/office in a locked cabinet. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. Student records are destroyed after five years.

Exemptions from Irish

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular 0052/2019). There is a strict protocol for the processing of requests for consideration for an Irish Exemption and exemptions will only be granted where a student meets the relevant criteria following an evidence based intervention.
- Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support/ Resource is arranged for students with SENs, who do not study Irish, during Irish time. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Extend use of 365 SEN Hub for access to Student Support Plans and Learning Targets.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff in the area of special education. In particular in relation supporting students on the Autism Spectrum.
- Raising teacher awareness of, and expertise in, differentiated teaching methodologies.

Appendices

Colaiste Muire Special Educational Needs Policy - A Whole School Approach

Appendix 1- Enrolment Policy

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Colaiste Muire welcomes students with special needs and will use the financial and human resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs up to a nominal cost so that these students are free to participate in the life in the school in so far as it is reasonably practicable.

While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply or resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

Colaiste Muire welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of these needs is such that to enrol the student would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

The Board of Management must be made aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed where possible.

Parents are requested to outline the details of a child's special educational needs on the application form.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of these students can be met.

Contact will be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding special needs resources to which the student may be entitled.

The Principal may request a meeting with the parents of the student to discuss the application and the student's needs.

The parent of the student may request a meeting with the Principal to discuss the student's educational or other needs.

N.B. It may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making an application.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided all the relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof.
(Education Welfare Act – Section 19 (3))

Colaiste Muire Special Educational Needs Policy - A Whole School Approach

The Board of Management will therefore:

- Request that the school Principal meet the parents/guardians to discuss the student's needs and the school's capability to meet those needs.
- Request a copy of the student's medical/psychological report/individual educational report if available and/or
- Request immediate assessment.
- Apply, prior to enrolment, to the D.E.S. for the resources necessary to meet the needs of the student e.g. a special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, learning support, transport etc.

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