



**2017-2018**

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**St Colman's College**  
**Policy on Special Educational Needs**

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## **1.0: Introduction**

This policy was devised in consultation with all the teaching staff in our school. It was submitted to the Board of Management, and Parents Association and the student's council. It is being reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process.

In devising this Policy, we have given great consideration to the democratic and child centered principles of this school. The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is key to effective learning and teaching.

## **2.0: Scope**

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of students who have special educational needs. The Education Act 1998 defines the term "special educational needs" as "the educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students". The Education Act 1998 also defines the word "disability" and its meaning in this policy is the same as defined in that Act.

The policy applies to students who are exceptional; gifted students, student with learning difficulties, **International students**, travellers, students with

disabilities and students who are at risk - personal, emotional, social or educational; in short pupils who may need additional help or support to enable them to derive the maximum benefit from school.

### **3.0: School ethos:**

**"Colaiste Cholmáin, a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for boys only, aims to be a Christian community which respects all members of staff and nurtures each and every student to achieve maximum potential and to develop the whole person within a caring and respectful school"**

In accordance with our Mission Statement the school endeavours to promote the development of a community of faith inspired by Christian values. These values, whilst encouraging us to promote educational excellence, also require us to enable those with disadvantage to participate actively in the work of the school and to achieve their maximum potential.

We as a school community are therefore committed to preparing all students for the challenges of adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community.

### **4.0: The Legal Context**

This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and special educational needs, the statutory requirements placed on schools and Boards of Managements by:

1. The Education Act 1998
2. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
3. The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
4. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004

Section 9 of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that

"A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit-

(a) ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, are identified and provided for," and later on (j) subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school.

Section 15 (2) (d) states that Boards of Management shall "publish.....the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected"

Section 15 (2) (f) states that Boards of Management shall "within the resources provided to the school in accordance with Section 12, make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with special educational needs."

This policy is drafted in the context of Circular Letters as outlined below:

1. M10/94
2. S70/00
3. S11/00
4. M37/03
5. PPT06/04
6. M1/05
7. PP1/05
8. TES07/05
9. TES08/05
10. TES09/05
11. PPT12/05
12. M14/05
13. M23/05

This policy is drafted in the context of guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service. This policy is drafted in consideration of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill 2003 as well as guidelines on Individual Education Plan Process 2006.

### **5.0: Aims and Objectives**

As set out in The Education Act 1998, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 St. Colman's College aims to:

- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other special educational needs, as they relate to education.
- Provide, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible.
- Affirm that students with special educational needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from education as students who do not have those needs.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision making process in relation to their children.
- Co-operate and work closely with the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the special educational needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.

- Ensure that special educational needs is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with special educational needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with special educational needs and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at home.
- Co-ordinate the advice, guidance and support of other agencies in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with special educational needs.

## **6.0: Organisational Arrangements**

### **6.1: School Details & Organisation**

St. Colman's College strives to create an inclusive learning environment where the needs of all students are catered for. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum at both Junior and Senior cycle.

### **6.2: Organisation at Junior Cycle**

Students are placed in mixed ability teaching groups in First Year. Students are taught in their class groups for the majority of subjects. There is a small element of choice in the First Year curriculum with students choosing from one of the modern languages either French or German.

At the end of First Year students must choose to progress with three optional subjects. Students and parents can seek support from the subject teacher and/or the Guidance Counsellor in making this decision. For students

with special educational needs, the learning support teacher and/or the resource teacher are also available to support/advise the student and parents regarding these decisions.

In English, Irish and Mathematics students are placed in teaching groups according to their ability. This allows the brighter students to be extended appropriately and also ensures that less able students are following a curriculum, which meets their needs and gives them the best possible chance of success.

Whether students are taught in mixed ability or streamed classes it is expected that teachers will implement differentiated approaches for teaching and learning, ensuring that the skills of all students are catered for.

### **6.3: Organisation at Senior Cycle**

#### **6.3.1: Transition Year**

This is an optional year between Junior and Leaving Certificate. The Transition Year programme aims to:

- Educate for maturity with an emphasis on social awareness and increased social competence.
- Educate through experience of adult working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.
- Promote general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on inter- disciplinary and self-directed learning.
- A broad curriculum is offered in Transition Year, which caters for the needs and interests of all students.

#### **6.3.2: Leaving Certificate Programmes**

- At Senior Cycle the students study the Leaving Certificate Programme. Students study Irish, English, Mathematics, French/German and three option subjects. Religion, computer studies and Physical Education are also provided for Senior students.



- The option subjects include Accounting, Art, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Construction Studies, Engineering, Geography, History, Agricultural Science and Design and Communication Graphics
- For some students the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is most suited to their needs and when appropriate this programme is offered at Senior Cycle.

## **7.0: Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1: The Role of the Board of Management**

- To ensure that all students with learning support/special educational needs are identified and assessed.
- To ensure that the school has a special educational needs policy in place, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided in the school to ensure in as far as is practical that students with special educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with special educational needs.
- To ensure that a special educational needs co-ordinator is appointed from among the teaching staff.
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies/personnel and to ensure that parents are informed of their child's special educational needs 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 ensure that the Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the School plan

- To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.
- To ensure that an awareness of special educational needs is inculcated in students in the school.

## **7.2: The Role of the Principal**

On behalf of the Board of management of St. Colman's College the Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. The Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers (as outlined in Section 18 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004).

- To appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator from amongst the staff and to work closely with the co-ordinator.
- In consultation with the Special Needs Co-ordinator ensure that a student profile is prepared for relevant students on entry to the school.
- To inform the Board of Management of issues, which are relevant to special educational needs.
- In consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other relevant personnel to liaise with the Department of Education and Science regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodations and exemptions in relation to state examinations as well as assessments.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds.
- To establish a 'Special Needs Support Team" within the school with a specific remit to ensure identification of and support for students with special educational needs.
- To promote a whole school approach to special educational need, 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 students with special educational needs.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with feeder primary schools with regard to the enrolment of new students with special educational needs.

### **7.3: The Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

The Job Description of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is as follows and is subject to change on an annual basis subject to consultation and negotiation.

- Collate and evaluate the assessments of incoming students and work with parents and teachers to ensure understanding of the potential challenges that students may face in post primary school.
- Prepare a student profile for relevant students on entry to the school.
- Work with the Principal in the allocation of resource hours to those who present with special educational needs.
- Liaise with and advise fellow teachers
- Assume responsibility for advising the Principal on the submission of NCSE forms.
- Assume responsibility for liaising with external service providers.
- Organise the reasonable accommodations for SEN students participating in the State Examinations.
- Organise assessments with NEPS, in consultation with the Care Team
- Prepare applications for Assistive Technology
- Prepare exemptions from the study of Irish and/or Foreign language
- Oversee the records on all students with SEN

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are met.

Together with the Principal and Guidance Counsellor, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is part of the Care Team which meets regularly to discuss issues and concerns in relation to students.

#### **7.4: The Role of the Subject Teacher**

At St. Colman's College the academic progress of students throughout the school rests in the first instance with the subject teacher. In order to ensure that as a school we meet the needs of all our students, subject teachers are encouraged to:

- Be aware of the School's policy and procedures (as outlined in this document) for dealing with students with special educational needs.
- Seek advice from the SEN Department regarding students with special educational needs. Advise the SEN Department where necessary.
- Take responsibility for their own continuous professional development particularly with regard to common difficulties e.g. Dyslexia & Specific Language difficulties
- Develop an attitude of ownership to the education of students in their classes with Special Educational Needs.
- Where a student has an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA, in consultation with the resource teacher or the SEN Co-ordinator.
- Support/encourage independence in the student. This is particularly important for Senior Cycle students.
- Subject teachers must have due regard to the rights of students with special educational needs. The school recognises that it is the professional duty of each subject teacher to support these students using the strategies, which will have been made available to them.
- Help identify students who may need learning support.

#### **7.5: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

The guidance counsellor is a member of the Special Educational Needs Support Team and works with other members of the team in facilitating the provision of education for students with special educational needs and their inclusion in the school. The Guidance Counsellor is also a member of the Care Team.

- The guidance counsellor works closely with Year Heads, Special Needs and Learning Support Departments to identify students requiring

further attention. If appropriate the guidance counsellor may assist with arrangements for the successful transfer of students to St. Colman's College and in gathering information about students, including those with special educational needs, before their transfer from primary school.

- The guidance counsellor has an important role in assisting all students, including those with special educational needs at the different stages of schooling. To facilitate this, students and parents are welcome to make appointments with the guidance counsellor. This is particularly encouraged for students progressing from Junior to Senior Cycle. Students in Sixth Year are offered appointments with the guidance counsellor to support them in making career decisions. It is acknowledged that students with special educational needs may require greater support at formal transfer points in their school career and the guidance counsellor will be particularly aware of these students.
- An Options Information Evening is held for parents of students progressing to Fifth Year. The guidance counsellor attends and makes a presentation at this meeting. Prior to entry to St. Colman's College, First Year students are tested using the Cognitive Ability 4th Edition Tests. The Guidance Counsellor works closely with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Special Educational Needs team in the organisation of these tests.
- At key stages throughout the students schooling, the guidance counsellor is responsible for co-ordinating a number of assessments including the DAT's tests.
- When appropriate the guidance counsellor is available to staff who may want to seek advice/relevant information regarding students with special educational needs and how they can best be supported in school.
- The School Guidance Plan for St. Colman's College was drawn up in consultation with teaching personnel including the Learning Support and Special Educational Needs Team.

### **7.6: The Role of the Learning Support / Resource Teacher**

At St. Colman's College the resource teacher(s) if one (they) is (are) timetabled works closely with students who have special educational needs. The role of the resource teacher is wide-ranging and varied. Resource teachers and subject teachers should work in partnership thus ensuring that students are supported as effectively as possible.

- The resource teacher has a very good insight into a student's needs and when appropriate can provide advice to subject teachers as to the teaching methodologies best suited to that student.
- The resource teacher provides direct teaching to a student with special educational needs 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.
- At times withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. In these instances the resource teacher and the subject teacher may decide that team-teaching would have a greater educational benefit.
- When appropriate the resource teacher is invited to contribute at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies.

### **7.7: The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

The Special Needs Assistant provides care assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the schools capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.

The Special Educational Needs Department and the Principal work collaboratively in devising an appropriate strategy plan for a student with special educational needs. The SNA is made aware of this plan and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.

The Special Needs Assistant plays an important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development. It is important that the Special Needs Assistant supports student participation in school life without developing a culture of dependency.

The duties of the Special Needs Assistants involve tasks of a non teaching nature such as:

- 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 special needs students with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with 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. A Special Needs Assistant 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 the Principapl. In such instances teachers will have been informed.
- General assistance of the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal of a non-teaching nature.
- Special Needs Assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. It is ill advisable that 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 special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.

- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- Special Needs Assistants are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.

### **7.8: The Role of the Special Educational Needs Support Team**

The Special Educational Needs support team comprises the:

- Principal/Deputy Principal
- Resource Teachers
- Learning Support Teachers
- Guidance Counsellor
- SEN Co-ordinator

Through the work of the Special Educational Needs Support team the school endeavours to create a whole school ownership in the management of Special Educational Needs.

The SEN Support team plays a key role in the evaluation of practice and procedures relating to Special Educational Needs. The school acknowledges that it is particularly important to continually review and develop our practices in relation to:

- Accessing relevant information about all our intake students
- How we use assessment data results, including the Cognitive Ability Tests & DAT Scores
- More able students

The Special Educational Needs Support Team plays a key role in this process.



## **8:0 Transfer from Primary School**

Prior to entry to St. Colman's College the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Guidance Counsellor visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools. The school sees this liaison as an important step in ensuring proper identification of students with special educational needs and the continuity of provision for them.

Where possible visits are arranged for students with special educational needs prior to their transfer to St. Colman's College. Information received from the Primary Schools and Special Educational Needs Questionnaires completed by parents, together with the results of the Cognitive Ability Tests and copies of all information and reports relevant to the students special educational needs, help the school identify those students who may need additional support at Secondary School level. Additional help, by way of a psychologist's report and/or additional resources, may be sought from the Department of Education.

Where relevant information is not made available by parents or guardians, the school may determine that it is unable to make an accurate assessment of the needs of the student and may decline to accept the student into the school.

Where, following consultation, the Principal is satisfied that the school can cater for the needs of the student, the student will be accepted into and retained in the school subject to the following:

- The necessary resources are made available to the school by the Department of Education & Science and any other relevant agencies
- Parents/guardians co-operate with the school to ensure that the students needs are met as fully as possible and that they supply further information from time to time as may be required
- The student is well behaved and in particular, that the behaviour of the student will not/does not interfere with the progress of lessons or with the rights of other students to their education.

Where a student does not avail of resources allocated to him, due to continued absence or lack of motivation etc., the school reserves the right to withdraw such resources and reallocate them to other students. Parents will be notified in writing of this possibility in advance and will be given an opportunity to rectify the non-attendance or other factor.

Where a student is refused admission, parents will be advised of their rights of appeal. Once admitted, decisions will be made as to the appropriate provision for the student.

A student who has been sanctioned Resource hours by the Department of Education at Primary School will not automatically have this entitlement on transfer to Secondary school. A new application is made, however applications are not always successful.

To support the transfer of all students to St. Colman's College there is a comprehensive Induction programme. A 'Prefect' system operates in the school, which gives Senior students the opportunity to work with the incoming First Years.

All First Year teachers are briefed on matters relating to the students they are going to teach or come into contact with. Clearly the extent to which individual teachers are given confidential information is a sensitive matter. It is however important that teachers have as much information as possible regarding the students they teach if they are to contribute towards the best possible learning environment for them.

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

When a student is accepted into St. Colman's College to join a year group other than First Year, information is sought from their previous school. The Principal/Deputy Principal usually does this. This information is passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Co-ordinator, if appropriate.

The education of students throughout the school rests in the first instance with the subject teacher. Each teacher should be aware of which students are likely to experience barriers to learning. In many cases a student's needs are resolved through the provision of differentiated work suited to their needs. For those students whose progress continues to cause concern referral to the Special Educational Needs team may be appropriate. A referral to the SEN Team should be underpinned by evidence which shows that despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities the student makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted to a pupil's identified area of weakness.

Having reviewed the documentation and liaised with the relevant staff, the Special Educational Needs Support Team may decide that the student's needs do not warrant their involvement. If the Special Educational Needs Support Team decides that a student would benefit from further intervention, they will assess the student informally. Parents are informed and their consent is sought prior to any assessment taking place. The outcome of this assessment will determine what course of action is taken.

The results of the assessment may indicate that a student has not got a learning difficulty. In this case the student's needs are supported through the structures available to all students. These include:

- Mentoring/monitoring by Year Head
- Differentiated work appropriate to their needs
- Review of entry levels for State Examinations
- An agreed referral to an outside agency (family matters)

If the results of the assessment indicate that a student has a learning difficulty a decision is made as follows:

- Referral for a Formal Assessment e.g. to NEPs
- Allocation of learning support time

## **11: Organisation of Resource / Learning Support allocations**

- The school employs \_\_\_\_ whole time equivalent Learning Support Teacher.
- The school's resource allocation is student dependent and varies on an annual basis.

## **12: Arrangements for Students with Resource/Learning Support**

In consideration of the definitions relevant to this policy, as outlined in the Education Act 1998, the Education of Persons with Disability Bill 2003 and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs, the School considers a student as being in need of **learning support** if he/she:

1. Is recognised as being at the 10th percentile or below on a standardised test and following an assessment by the relevant professional personnel.
2. Is failing to achieve in school due to specific personal circumstances.

A student is defined as having special educational needs if s/he has a learning/physical difficulty, which calls for support provision to be made for him/her. This in particular refers to:

1. Students with a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for students of the same age.
2. Students, who following the correct identification procedures, have been assessed as special educational needs by an educational psychologist and are sanctioned **resource support**. At present the Department of Education and Science defines this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile or below and grant hours to these students accordingly.

### **12.1: Procedures regarding withdrawal/co-operative teaching**

The Special Needs Department endeavor to provide an eclectic mix of teaching styles and strategies when working with students with special educational needs. Team teaching, when appropriate is encouraged.

The individual needs of the student dictate what type of practice is most appropriate. In deciding how best to support a student in a sympathetic manner, the special educational needs team take account of:

- The programme requirements
- The student's personality/wishes
- Recommendations from relevant clinicians
- Parental opinion

### **12.2: Students with Irish Exemptions**

A number of students with Special Educational needs have Irish language exemptions. The special needs department has structures in place to ensure that students get maximum benefit from the additional timetable allocation that exemption from Irish creates.

Students are normally taken for additional work in reading, spelling, comprehension and development of other skills as appropriate.

International students, who have exemptions from Irish, may be given additional classes as an alternative to Irish, as and when resources permit.

### **12.3: Students who withdraw from the study of Modern Foreign Language**

On entry to the school, all First Year students receive a six week taster module in French and German, following which they select a Language to study. If a student's learning difficulties are such as to preclude them from the study of a Language, the school endeavours to provide alternative appropriate instruction, resources permitting. In Second Year students select subjects to take to Junior Certificate level. Students who have withdrawn from the study of Modern Languages in First Year can select an alternative to the Modern Languages.

### **13:0 Leaving Certificate Applied Programme**

The LCA Programme is offered to all students. An advantage of the LCA programme is that it focuses on the talents of each individual student and is intended to meet the needs of those students who are not adequately catered for by other Leaving Certificate programmes or who choose not to opt for such programmes.

For these reasons a number of students with special educational needs opt to follow this course. The LCA curriculum is reviewed at the beginning of each cycle and where resources allow the elective modules are selected to reflect the needs of the group.

### **14.0: Banding in English, Irish and Mathematics**

Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year where practicable will be banded for English, Irish and Mathematics. This facilitates the creation of smaller groups for those students who find the subject difficult and require more individual attention.

### **15.0: Reasonable Accommodations**

#### **15.1: Arrangements at Junior Certificate**

Applications for reasonable accommodations are collated and signed off by the school at Junior Certificate level. Applications may be based on Screening Tests on entry to the school, the CAT test and WRAT II reading, spelling and sentence completion tests, recommendations from Psychological Assessments and feedback from class teachers.

#### **15.1: Arrangements at Leaving Certificate**

The School assists parents and students in collating the requested information if they decide to submit an application for Reasonable Accommodations for the Leaving Certificate. NEPS considers and decides on the matter. Students may be interviewed and subjected to relevant testing as part of the application process.

## **16.0: Monitoring Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting**

All students are assessed on an ongoing basis. Assessment may be formal, informal, summative or formative.

### **16.1: Formal Assessment**

1. Incoming First Year students sit the Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) prior to entry to the school.
2. On entry to the school, First Year students take some of the following tests:
  - Young's Cloze 3
  - Vernon Graded Spelling Test
  - Drumchondra Verbal Reasoning Test
  - Non-Reading Intelligence Test
  - Maths Competency Test
3. Students sit house examinations in November, February and at the end of the school year.
4. Students sit Differential Aptitude Tests (DAT) in Transition Year.
5. Other professionals working with the school may formally assess students with SEN.

### **16.2: Informal Assessment**

1. Informal writing and spelling tests on entry to First Year
2. End of unit/chapter tests
3. In class questioning
4. Assessing homework/project work

The responsibility for many aspects of formal and informal assessments lies in the first instance with the subject teacher. The organisation of the DAT and CAT tests is the responsibility of the Guidance Department who are supported by the SEN team.

### **16.3: Using Assessment Data**

Assessment data is used to:

1. Highlight brighter/less able students
2. Profile a class group/year group
3. Track student progress

#### **16.4: Recording Assessment Data**

Teachers record assessment marks both formal and informal in the Teacher Planner provided by the school each year. House examination results are included on the school report to parents in November, February and at the end of the school year.

The SEN department maintains files for the students with whom they work (Learning Support and Resource students). Included in these files are any additional assessments that the students may have taken.

#### **16.5: Access to Assessment Records**

The school is aware that some assessment material is of a sensitive nature and therefore it is treated confidentially and only made available to appropriate personnel.

The SEN department manages a significant amount of the assessment information for students with SEN. Relevant information is disseminated as appropriate by the SEN team.

#### **16.6: Monitoring Arrangements**

The responsibility for monitoring student progress lies in the first instance with the subject teacher. Subject teachers may liaise with Subject co-ordinators and/or Year Heads and/or the SEN department if they have a concern about a student in their group.

#### **16.7: Evaluation**

The successes of any intervention strategies are monitored on an ongoing basis through formal and informal assessment.



## **17.0: Involvement of Parents**

The school regards the partnership with parents as a very important one and is always open and responsive to expressions of concern made by parents. Parents are invited to meetings prior to the enrolment of their son and as required thereafter. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend any meeting concerning their son/daughter's progress. Parents are also welcome to contact the school and make appointments to discuss any concerns they may have. The Tutor, Year Head and when appropriate the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and/or the Guidance Counsellor are available by appointment to meet with parents regarding concerns. Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity.

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 to:

- Inform parents of their child's special educational needs and how those are being met.
- Consult parents with regard to the making of all decisions of a significant nature concerning their child's education and invite them to participate in such decisions.
- The Special Needs Department are in regular contact with the parents of students with special educational needs. This contact can take the form of a meeting or a telephone call.
- Students receive a school report on three occasions in the school year. There is one parent-teacher meeting each year where parents have the opportunity to meet with all teachers. The Special Needs team make themselves available to parents on these evenings.

## **18.0: Involvement of Students**

The School believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning. Students in the Senior Cycle are particularly encouraged to adopt a proactive and independent approach to their studies.

## **19.0: Links with Outside Agencies and Services**

The school works with a significant number of outside agencies. These include:

1. Special Educational Needs Support Service
2. National Education Psychology Service
3. National Council for Special Education
4. State Examination Commission
5. National Education and Welfare office
6. HSE Social Worker team
7. Professional Development Service for Teachers
8. HSE
9. Psychologists
  - a. Psychiatrists
  - b. Consultant paediatricians
  - c. Foster care
  - d. Occupational Therapists
  - e. Physiotherapists
  - f. Speech & Language Therapists
10. Irish Learning Support Teachers Association
11. Irish Association of Special Education Teachers
12. General Practitioners

This list is not exhaustive and the school will further develop links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate.

## **20.0: Individual Education Plans**

While the school wishes to comply with the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs ACT 2004, until adequate resources are supplied by the Department of Education and Skills for their production, the school has decided to provide a student profile in its place.

## Appendix 1

# Learning Support Special Education Needs Programme 2017/2018

## September 2017

- Screening Tests for incoming First Years
  - Young's Cloze Test
  - Vernon Graded Spelling Test
  - Compilation of CAT scores, Screening results and STEN scores
  - Analysis of results
  
- CAT testing carried out 1st year students
  - Results are analysed
  - Students that may require learning support are listed and names are given to Learning Support Team
  - List compared with existing data
  
- First Year Maths Test
  - Creation of concurrent maths class for a small number of weaker students
  
- Irish & language Exemptions list prepared
  - After discussion with Year Head/language teacher affected
  - Teachers are notified of students with Irish/language exemptions
  
- Learning support students
  - Team meetings are briefed of learning needs of all students requiring learning support and the provisions made
  - SEN Student Profile document is updated and circulated to staff

- Meet with parents/guardians of students receiving supplementary teaching
- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Parents evening with the Care Team and/or other relevant staff
  - Informal presentation to parents
  - One-to-one discussions with members of the Care Team and/or other relevant staff
- Learning Support Plan prepared
  - Timetables set up for pupils receiving supplementary teaching
  - Resources are allocated
- In-service training for all teachers on different aspects of learning difficulties provided
- External agencies such as NEPS psychologist and SENO are contacted when/if necessary
- Learning Support Team meet to finalise arrangements and agree monitoring process

## **September - October**

- Reasonable Accommodations arranged for Leaving Certificate students for June 2018 exam
- Letters to parents/guardians
- Preparation of reactivation forms
- Testing of students and preparation of application forms where new applications are necessary or where a change in accommodation is required.

- Notification to parents of Department decision, where necessary

## **September - December**

- Reasonable accommodations forms completed for 3rd year students for Junior Certificate Exam 2018
- Letters to parents/guardians
- Appropriate testing
- Preparation of application forms
- Notification to parents of Department decision

## **December**

- Arrangements made for separate centres for in-house exams for SEN students

## **November - February**

- List of incoming 1st years for following year (Sept 2018) received from school secretary
- Details from Primary Schools on needs of students
  
- Incoming 1st year intake examined:
  - Applicants are processed by the Learning Support Team
  - Students with SEN are identified
  - Analysis of Resource needs
  - Application to SENO
  - Additional resources
  - This phase may involve a meeting between the Learning Support co-ordinator & parents

- Arrangements made for separate centres for Mock exams for SEN students

## **January - February**

- On observing Winter exam results, 1st and 2nd year Academic Monitors identify and recommend to the LS co-ordinator any student(s) who have come to their attention due to low achievement (copy to Class Tutor):
  - Parents/guardians of students are contacted if further assessment is thought appropriate by the Academic Monitor
  - Screening and diagnostic assessments administered to these students where appropriate
  - Parents/guardians meet with the Learning Support co-ordinator to discuss results, where appropriate
  - Students/parents/guardians meet with Counsellor, where appropriate
- Subject teachers to inform Learning Support Coordinator about upcoming project work for Junior/Leaving Cert for students who may need a scribe/word processor
  - Arrangements made for these students to receive appropriate support with the production of their project work
- Staff training needs for the coming year are identified and provisions are made

## **March**

- Application made to the SENO for resource hours for the following year

## **April**

- Reasonable accommodations lists for 2018 forwarded to the Principal and the DES exams co-ordinator

- Lists of students needing learning support for coming Year (2018/19) are prepared

## **May**

- Arrangements made for separate centres for in-house exams for SEN students
- Parents/guardians of students with SEN are contacted regarding separate centres
- Special Education Needs Programme 2018/19 prepared
- Staff are given an overview of the SEN student list at May staff meeting & list copied to the relevant Year Head

**Appendix 2:**

**Special Needs Questionnaire for Parents' of children  
seeking admission to St. Colman's College**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/s Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary School attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Principal's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The following survey must be completed by **parents of prospective students with special needs and returned by post or by hand** to the Principal or the Special Needs Co-ordinator upon enrolment or as soon as possible thereafter.

All applicants must answer the following question: Has this student ever (i) been diagnosed as having any of the following or (ii) been recommended by their school for assessment for any of the following:

A. .... any form of **Physical Disability?** **Yes**   
**No**

B. ... any form of **Hearing Impairment?** **Yes**   
**No**



- C. ... any form of **Visual (Sight) Impairment?** Yes   
No
- D. ... any form of **General Learning Disability?** Yes   
No   
(i.e. Was your child ever diagnosed as being a slow learner?)
- E. ... any form of **Specific Learning Disability?** Yes   
No   
(e.g. Dyslexia)
- F. ... any form of **Speech or Language Disorder?** Yes   
No
- G. ... any form of **Emotional or Behavioural Disorder?** Yes   
No
- H. ... any form of **Autistic Disorder?** Yes   
No
- I. ... **any other disability** Yes   
No

If you have answered "Yes" to any of these questions, please fill in the details requested below for each heading to which you answered 'Yes'. **You must also let the school have a copy of the relevant: Medical, Psychological, Speech and Language or other professional reports, as soon as possible.** Your child may not be admitted to the school until the reports are received. If your child was recommended for assessment at Primary School and you did not follow that advice please explain your reasons in the comment section below.

## Comment Section

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Disability:</b><br>_____ | <b>Please give details of the most recent assessment:</b> |
| <b>Comment:</b>                     | <b>Name of Specialist:</b><br>_____                       |
| _____                               | <b>Place of Assessment</b><br>_____                       |
| _____                               | <b>Address:</b><br>_____                                  |
| _____                               | _____   |
| _____                               | <b>Phone No.:</b><br>_____                                |
| _____                               | <b>Date of Assessment:</b><br>_____                       |

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Disability:</b><br><hr/> | <b>Please give details of the most recent assessment:</b> |
| <b>Comment:</b><br><hr/>            | <b>Name of Specialist:</b><br><hr/>                       |
| <hr/>                               | <b>Place of Assessment</b><br><hr/>                       |
| <hr/>                               | <b>Address:</b><br><hr/>                                  |
| <hr/>                               | <hr/>   |
| <hr/>                               | <b>Phone No.:</b><br><hr/>                                |
| <hr/>                               | <b>Date of Assessment:</b><br><hr/>                       |

**If you need to provide more details please use a separate sheet of paper.**

**Please also complete the following:**

Did your child's national school ever recommend that your child attend the school's Learning Support Teacher or their Resource teacher? **Yes**

**No**

Did your child attend the **Learning Support Teacher** at National School?

Yes   
No

If 'Yes' please state: Name of Learning Support Teacher

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For how long your child attended this teacher?

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Did your child attend the **Resource Teacher** at National School? Yes   
No

If 'Yes' please state: Name of Resource Teacher

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For how long your child attended this teacher?

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If your child was recommended for such support and you did not avail of it please state why you did not choose to avail of it?

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**If your son was granted an exemption from Irish while attending Primary School, please provide us with a copy for our records.**

**If your son came from a school outside the Republic of Ireland and started Primary School here after age 11 please provide details to management on enrolment.**

**Please also note the following additional information.**

- Please note that ultimate responsibility rests with parents to bring any Special Needs concerns or information to the attention of the school and no liability/responsibility will be accepted by the school for failure to do so.
- It is the responsibility of parent's/guardians to ensure that any relevant medical, learning, physical or psychological disabilities are brought to the attention of management and/or the Special Needs Co-ordinator upon enrolment or as soon as possible thereafter.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that all relevant, medical psychological or other specialist reports are made available upon enrolment or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Students who have come from schools outside the Republic of Ireland after age 11 and who have not mastered the English language will receive Language Support classes as an alternative to Irish.
- All pupils at Junior Cycle in this school follow the Junior Certificate programme though the programme may be restricted for some students.
- Some students who have learning difficulties and have an exemption from Irish are placed in an Extra English class instead of Irish and follow a programme of literacy support.
- These students also take extra English in second and third year as an alternative to Irish.
- Where resources are available these student will receive extra English in 5<sup>th</sup> year and 6<sup>th</sup> year as an alternative to Irish.
- Some students are placed in an Extra English class instead of French or German in First Year where they receive additional classes in literacy.

- Some students who have numeracy/maths difficulties will take Maths in a small group of no more than eight during First, Second and Third years. This facility is also provided for Fifth and Sixth year student subject to demand and resources.
- Some students with very specific difficulties may be withdrawn from some mainstream classes on a one to one basis for resource teaching, with the consent of parents/guardians.
- Subject to the above all instruction is provided for all students in mainstream, class size groups for all other classes.
- The school will make every effort to provide the best possible education for your child with the resources available to it.
- However due to shortage of resources, it may not always be possible to implement every recommendation made in an assessment report.
- Students with a psychological report stating a Specific Learning Difficulty are advised to attend one-to-one tuition outside of school (through ACLD or a private practitioner).
- Where a student has any of the disabilities listed in page one above parents should ensure that the advice and recommendations of professionals for treatment are followed.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that the programme on offer in this school is the most suitable for their child. Where there is any concern, parents must contact the Principal or Deputy Principal, the Special Needs Co-coordinator/Learning Support Teacher and/or the Guidance Counsellor as appropriate.

In particular, where parents wish to seek special arrangements (Reader, Scribe, Tape Recorder etc.) for their child for the State Examinations,

the parent should meet with the Special Needs Co-ordinator/Learning Support Teacher at **the First Year Parent-Teacher Meeting or as soon as a psychological report becomes available** for students in Junior Cycle; and, at **the Fifth Year Parent Teacher Meeting** for Senior Cycle students.

The Department of Education and Science decides eligibility for Special Arrangements for Examinations on an individual basis.

Where you have any concerns about your son's education prior to or upon enrolment or prior to admission in September we urge you to make an appointment to meet with the Special Needs Co-ordinator at your earliest convenience and definitely no later than October of 2017. You should phone the school office and the secretary will make an appointment for you.

Regards,

**Michelle Howley**

**Special Needs Co-ordinator.**

Parent's

Signature:

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