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SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY & LEARNING SUPPORT
DEPARTMENT PLAN

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Special Needs Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy on special needs outlines the aim of Clonkeen College to provide inclusive education for students with special educational needs in our school. It outlines the procedures and supports in place for dealing with special needs in Clonkeen College.

Scope

This policy applies to the whole school in general. In particular, the policy applies to students with learning difficulties and students who may need additional help or support to enable them to derive the maximum benefit from their time in school, including exceptionally able students.

Link to mission statement and guiding principles

Mission Statement

Clonkeen College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school, where each individual and group within the school community is encouraged and facilitated to contribute to the creation of a caring, supportive and inclusive educational environment, conducive to developing the diverse talents of all the participants

Guiding Principles

We believe that every pupil is entitled to an education of the highest quality. Our aim is to allow our pupils to develop their talents to the maximum. We are aware of the need to emphasise the value of a pupil's efforts and of the need for constructively challenging him to make further progress. By this learning experience we hope to foster a sense of self-worth and self-respect.

Mission Statement of Learning Support Department

The Learning Support Department of Clonkeen College hopes that our students will achieve their maximum potential, access support throughout their education and develop a clear ideal of the possibilities available to them after leaving school. We want our students' experience of Learning Support to be positive, fulfilling and one in which the needs of the individual student are recognised.

Rationale

- Section 9 of the Education Act, 1998 specifies that:

A recognised school shall provide education to a student which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to (Special Education Needs may also include the needs of exceptionally able students):

- a) *Ensure that the educational needs of all students including those with special educational needs are identified and provided for.*

- Section 15 (2) of the Education Act, 1998 points out that schools must:
.....use available resources provided to schools by the Oireachtas to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or other special educational needs.

- The Equal Status Act, 2000 makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on a number of specified grounds, including disability.
- Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 states:

A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or*
- b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.*

Definition of Special Needs

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 defines Special Educational Needs as follows:

‘Special Educational Needs means in relation to a person, 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 and cognate words shall be constructed accordingly....’

Goals

- To develop a whole school approach to Special Needs.
- To support Clonkeen College’s goal of full inclusion.
- To provide appropriate assessment of the needs of students who may have special educational needs.
- To assess Clonkeen College’s capacity to cater for the needs identified.
- To specify what additional resources may be required by the student or by Clonkeen College.
- Clonkeen College will have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures:
 - To identify the special needs of all incoming students,
 - To review the special needs of current students,
 - To seek to provide for the needs identified.
- Clonkeen College will seek adequate resources, equipment and accommodation from the Department of Education and Science and other relevant agencies. Clonkeen College will make every effort to maximise the resources available to students with special educational needs. These include resource teachers, therapists, psychologists, counsellors, technical aid and equipment etc. Clonkeen College will endeavour to provide access and accommodation for such personnel in the school buildings.

Policy Content

Assessment of Need:

Using a battery of tests, which include screening tests, diagnostic tests, psychological assessment and information from parents and feeder primary schools, a committee consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support Teacher (s) will assess the special needs of students upon entry to Clonkeen College.

Reassessment and re-evaluation with teacher observation and parental consultation will be an ongoing process.

Clonkeen College will make an assessment of its capacity to respond adequately to these needs.

Special Needs Provision

Clonkeen College endeavours to give every student access to a full curriculum. Learning support may be provided for those students identified as experiencing difficulties.

A special programme (Individual Education Plan or I.E.P) will be established for such students. This decision would be made following consultation with the National Educational Psychology Service (N.E.P.S) psychologist, Principal, Learning Support/ Resource Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Subject Teacher (s), Year Head, parents and student.

Learning support and extra tuition may be provided to the student by withdrawal during timetabled class following consultation with the subject teacher, parents and pupil.

Students who have been identified as having special needs on entry to Clonkeen College may be offered a place in a small group for learning support English and/or Maths in first year, provided resources are available.

Preparation of an Education Plan

An education plan is prepared in accordance with the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act, 2004 (EPSON Act). The Learning Support Teacher and relevant others are consulted in the preparation of the plan and the Council (The National Council for Special Education) guidelines are complied with.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) may include:

- ◆ The nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents.
- ◆ The nature and degree of the child's special educational needs.
- ◆ The special education and support services to be provided to enable the child to benefit from education and to participate in the life of Clonkeen College, including services to enable the child to effectively make the transition from primary to post primary.
- ◆ The student's goals over a twelve month period.

Role of the Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are responsible for the following:

1. The Provision of all learning support materials, for example, dictionaries, copybooks, etc..
2. Meeting teachers, management and all staff involved in the provision of learning support for students with SENs by appointment only.
3. Understanding and appreciating that such appointed meetings must have an agreed defined time limit.
4. Organising for the presentation of the Irish Exemptions Certificate to the school.
5. Being aware that any psychological assessment of their child is only valid for a two year period, after which they must organise for a new up-to-date psychological assessment by applying to the Guidance Counsellor in the first instance.
6. Be prepared to fill out any school organised home behavioural assessment form if requested to do so by the school.
7. Their son's punctuality.
8. Their son's preparation for school, for example correct uniform.
9. Checking that their son's homework is completed and assisting where necessary.
10. Checking the homework journal regularly.
11. Ensuring the nutritional healthcare of their son.
12. The administration of all medications.
13. Maintenance of up-to-date school records for communication purposes by notifying school office personnel of any such changes needed to the school database.
14. Having the latest school report/certificate of progress card from their previous school(s).
15. Organising for a translator if necessary when dealing with the school, if language difficulties exist.

Role of Management

School Management are responsible for the following:

1. To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of this policy.
2. To monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. To review the policy on a regular basis with all the relevant school partners.
4. Being a member of the Learning Support Team.
5. Attending Learning Support Team Meetings where possible.
6. Liaise with parents, the Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support Teachers and the Special Needs Assistants on a regular basis to ensure the delivery of the most effective SEN care possible.

Role of the Class Teacher

The classroom teacher will make specific accommodations for a pupil within the class as a result of concerns about a pupil's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers.

The class teacher is responsible for the following:

1. To be familiar with the special education needs of each individual within their class group
2. To know the students who have been identified as having a learning disability
3. Include a SEN policy within subject plans
4. Employ teaching methodologies which take cognisance of differentiated learning
5. Devise appropriate IEPs in consultation with the learning support teacher/coordinator

6. Identify and report students who may be displaying learning difficulties to the Learning Support Team

Role of the Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor is responsible for the following:

1. The Entrance Assessment Exam
2. Visiting, liaising, communicating and assessing feedback from all Primary Schools with regard to any prospective students' SEN's.
3. Applying for SEN resources to the local SENO.
4. Organising for Irish class withdrawal for students with resource hours.
5. Helping to organise the timetables of the Learning Support teachers and those of the students assigned for resource hours.
6. Being a member of the Learning Support Team
7. Attending all Learning Support Team Meetings where possible.
8. Organising a rotating roster of learning Support Team Meetings.
9. Receiving and processing all applications from parents for resource hours for their son.

Role of the Learning Support Teacher:

Learning support is provided to help students increase their comprehension, learning and writing skills. In this way the educational standard of the student is raised, providing improved chances for the student to achieve a higher academic standard. Self esteem and confidence building skills are also improved.

The Learning Support Teacher will endeavour to:

- 1) Identify any student who has a learning disability using the data provided by the parent/guardian, the result from the assessment on entry to first year, any psychological/educational assessment carried out by referral by Year Head or Subject Teacher.
- 2) In consultation with teachers and parents/guardians of each student, devise an IEP for each student who attends learning support classes, within the resources available to Clonkeen College.
- 3) Monitor the implementation of the IEP and will report on the student's progress to parent/guardian.
- 4) Review the IEP for the each student at the end of each academic year to determine, in conjunction with the parent/guardian the level of support that may be required in the following academic year.
- 5) Summarise the psychological/educational report on students for inclusion in a file in the staff room and update the student's information on Clonkeen College data base.
- 6) Have the IEP for each student available to relevant staff.
- 7) In conjunction with relevant staff decide which, if any, student requires psychological assessment.
- 8) Being a member of the Learning Support Team
- 9) Attending all Learning Support Team Meetings where possible

Role of the Resource Teacher

Resource hours are provided to meet the needs of children assessed as having low incidence disabilities. As well as providing additional teaching, Resource Teachers will advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and relevant professionals in the interests of children. Child eligibility and degree of need are established based on assessments carried out by appropriate professionals e.g. The National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)

The Resource Teacher will aim to:

- 1) Become acquainted with each student's aptitudes, achievements and difficulties.
- 2) Take responsibility for tutoring students who have special educational needs.
- 3) Liaise with the Learning Support Teacher and Special Needs Assistant on a regular basis providing information on the student being tutored, the frequency of the lessons, general topics covered and the progress of the student.
- 4) Be a member of the Learning Support Team.
- 5) Attend all Learning Support Team Meetings where possible

The Role of the Special Needs Assistant:

Special Needs Assistants are assigned to students by the Special Needs Organiser, usually based on a Psychological/Educational or Medical report.

The Special Needs Assistant is employed in a non-teaching role and helps a student who needs extra support such as physical support, organisational skills or who has behaviour difficulties which requires additional support.

The duties of the Special Needs Assistant are assigned by the Principal in accordance with DES Circular 10/76. The Special Needs Assistant's duties may include the following taken from DES Circular 07/02:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught
2. Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary, travel as escort on school buses may be required
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class)
9. Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned
10. Being a member of the Learning Support Team.
11. Attending all Learning Support Team Meetings where possible

Review of the Education Plan

The Learning Support Teacher and relevant others will ensure that the education plan is reviewed not less than once a year, to check whether the child has received the service required and achieved the goals specified in the education plan.

Summary

The adoption of this Special Needs Policy ensures that all students have access to, participate in and gain positive outcomes for schooling, with a view to providing the foundations of a fulfilling life. The staff at Clonkeen College, in co-operation with parents/guardians and external professionals, acknowledge the importance of providing support for its students with special needs and is committed to the ongoing reappraisal of its Special Needs Policy with regard to its suitability and effectiveness of implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

1. To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated
2. To approve the policy
3. To consider reports for the Principal on the implementation of the policy

Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads

- To establish structures and procedure for the implementation of the policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.

Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support, Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. (see Policy content section for a definition of these roles)

Subject Teachers

- 1) To inform learning support teachers, resource teachers, year heads, form tutors or class teachers of any concerns they might have in relation to individual students in this area.
- 2) To refer to the Special Needs File in the staff room, the student's individual file in the main office or the students file on Clonkeen College data base.
- 3) To work in co-operation with Learning Support/Resource teachers and SNAs, where relevant, in meeting the special education needs of the student.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged

- 1) To support the policy.
- 2) To seek the assistance of/inform Clonkeen College of the special needs of their son.

Learning Support Department Plan

Mission Statement

In the Learning Support Department we hope our students will achieve their maximum potential, access support throughout their education and develop a clear idea of the possibilities available to them after leaving school. We want our students' experience of Learning Support to be positive, fulfilling and one in which the needs of the individual student are recognised.

Learning Support Team

Mr. John Toomey – SEN Coordinator
Mr. Pearse McGloughlin – ModGLD Class Coordinator
Mr. Brian McMenemy – Learning Support Teacher
Mr. Damien O' Hora - (Guidance Counsellor)
Ms. Emer McGill – Special Needs Assistant
Ms. Mags Fox – Special Needs Assistant
Ms. Daphne Dent - Special Needs Assistant
Ms Maire Therese Doyle - Special Needs Assistant

Aim

The aim of the Learning support department is to provide a support service (with available resources and funding from the DES) for any individual student that requires additional help to access the curriculum due to special education needs. This enables the student to cope with the curriculum in the classroom.

Objectives

- To assess and identify students with learning difficulties and special education needs on entry to Clonkeen College.
- To assess the reading accuracy, reading comprehension and spelling abilities of each student identified as having special education needs.
- To create an individualised education programme for each student/learning support group. *See Programmes of work for individual students and groups.*
- To reassess each student at the end of the school year.

Assessment Procedures for In-coming Students

- Drumcondra Verbal Reasoning Test.
- Drumcondra Numerical Reasoning Test.
- Group Reading Test II

Diagnostic Testing Procedures

- Neale Analysis Reading Ability Test
- Blackwell Spelling Test

Timetabling

Management of Clonkeen College endeavour to provide learning support classes in numeracy and literacy which run concurrently with maths and English classes

Withdrawal

- Students may be withdrawn from certain subjects such as RE, SPHE or PE as much as possible.
- Students who are exempt from Irish will be withdrawn from this class where possible.

Suggested Programmes of Work for Individual Students and Groups

The following are areas of work could to be covered in the relevant Learning Support year groups:

Year 1

- Comprehension
- Spelling programme
- Homework journal organisation
- Organisation of books and homework.
- Mind Mapping
- Study skills
- Maths
- Free writing

Year 2

- Comprehension involving reading and timing.
- Homework journal organisation
- Mind Mapping
- Free writing
- Continuation of spelling programme
- Additional subject support.

Year 3

- Exam preparation
- Study skills
- Preparation for use of tape, lap top, reader in examinations.
- Comprehension
- Writing skills
- Revision planning

Year 4

- Comprehension
- Exam preparation
- Reading
- Organisational skills
- Subject support

Year 5

- Comprehension
- Exam preparation
- Reading
- Organisational skills
- Subject support

Year 6

- Revision planning
- Exam skills
- Exam papers
- Students with reasonable accommodation – preparation
- Subject support

Co-ordination of Learning Support/Resource Teaching

- Learning Support and Resource Teachers follow an IEP for each student.
- Written records are kept on each student.
- Meetings and phone contact with parents on a regular basis.

Procedures for Development of Education Plans

- National Council for Special Education guidelines for IEP's are implemented, when funding and resources are made available.
- IEP's are reviewed on a regular basis.

Record Keeping Procedures

- The school has a folder for all students with SEN's. This folder is available to all staff
- Records in IEP

Materials and Resources Available

Alpha to Omega, Books 2,3, Teachers manual.

Toe by Toe by Keda Cowlings

Stride Ahead by Keda Cowlings

Prim-ed – Cloze encounters

Cloze – comprehension and pictorial clues

Draw to a cloze

Differentiated Cloze

Comprehend it

Contemporary Cloze

Comprehending the news papers

Comprehension, fiction and non fiction texts

English Matters Skills Book – Susan Dugley

Word zone 1,2 - J Moriarty

False teeth and vampires – C Jarman

Corncircles and codswallop – C Jarman

Visual discrimination – Looking and Thinking 1,2,3 – A.J. Evans

LDA – Lightening Reads 2

Writers companion - Peter Caffrey

Finish the story - K Fitzsimons

Read Write Now – NALA

Maths Steps – B Robbins

Reading for comprehension series – 10 sets of comprehension exercises

Reading and Thinking Series – A.J Evans

Directions 1,2, reading skills – J Cooper

More Directions 1,2, - J Cooper

Headwork stories 1-3 – Chris Culshaw

Headwork anthologies 1-3 – Chris Culshaw

Headwork series 1-5 – Chris Culshaw

Spelling – J. Smyth

Spell it yourself – G Hawking

Sounds OK – T. Walsh

Master your spellings – T. Dillon

New Nelson Handwriting Bk 1-4 P. Smyth

Developing Comprehension Blue /Green series

Rainbow reading programme – Blue and Violet series.

Availability/Use of ICT Facilities

- PC available in office
- Laptop computer available
- Access to computer room when required.

Links with Special Needs Organiser

- Regular contact with the local SENO

Links with NEPS Psychologist/DES**Links with Primary Schools**

- Transition form sent to all class teachers and principals of all incoming students
- Visit/Phone call when necessary

Links with Parents

- Regular meetings with parents
- Phone contact when necessary

Applications for Reasonable Accommodations in the State Examinations

- Reasonable Accommodations in the state exams are applied for by the Learning Support Department
- DES guidelines are followed
- Students who are granted reasonable accommodations will be given instruction and practice in the use of tape recorders and/ or necessary equipment which they will use in the exam.

Procedures for Applications for Irish Exemptions

- Relevant documentation from primary school
- Follow the department circular letter MI0/94