



CLONKEEN COLLEGE

Special Educational Needs (SEN) & Learning Support (LS) Policy

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1. Mission Statement

Clonkeen College seeks to educate students spiritually, academically, physically and socially through the promotion of Christian values, teaching the broad, prescribed academic programmes as well as a wide range of student activities under the guidance of a caring, dedicated management, staff and administration.

Educational Philosophy of Clonkeen College

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 student is entitled to an education of the highest possible quality. Our aim is to allow our students to develop their talents to the maximum. We are aware of the need to emphasise the value of a student's efforts and of the need for constructively challenging them to make further progress. We endeavour to foster a sense of self-worth and self-respect in all our students.

Mission Statement of Special Educational Needs and Learning Support (SEN/LS) Department

The SEN/LS Department of Clonkeen College strives to develop a whole-school approach to Special Needs. We also aim to provide appropriate assessment of the needs of our SEN/LS students and to provide what additional resources may be required by them. We endeavour to provide support, pastoral and academic, to our SEN/LS students throughout their education. We want our students' experience of Learning Support to be positive, fulfilling and inclusive.

2. Inclusion:

Clonkeen College welcomes students with Special Education Needs (SEN) and takes account of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Act (EPSEN) 2004 which states that "The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs."

At Clonkeen College we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our students. Special Educational Needs (SEN) can take a variety of forms, including specific learning needs, health related needs and behavioural needs. This policy takes into account the Special Educational Needs provision outlined in the various acts pertaining to the provision of students with Special Educational Needs, notably the Education Act of 1998, EPSEN Act 2004, Learning Support Guidelines 2000, the NCSE (ncse.ie) and guidelines for Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs 2007.

Some students will permanently, or from time to time, have a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age. Some may have disabilities that prevent or hinder them from making use of the facilities provided for our students. We will give these students individual consideration and make special provision for them, working in partnership with others, as necessary. The school's intention is that the needs of all students are identified and met as soon as possible.

3. Aims and Objectives of the SEN/LS Department

Aims:

- To enable students with low achievement levels and/or learning difficulties to participate in a broad and balanced curriculum
- To develop positive self-esteem and a positive attitude to school and learning in these students in order to encourage good attendance
- To enable students to become independent learners
- To liaise with all partners - teachers, parents, students, professional services (NEPS, OTs, Enable Ireland, Lucena Clinic etc)
- To create an awareness that we must foster a whole-school approach and share the responsibility of helping students cope with their difficulties
- To provide strategies that enable students achieve to the best of their abilities
- To identify and select students for Resource or Learning Support, subject to resources from the DES
- To monitor and review the progress of students receiving Resource or Learning Support and adapt individual allocations accordingly
- To involve parents in supporting their child's learning

Objectives

- To improve learning for all students
- To provide functional literacy, numeracy and social skills
- To develop a range of learning strategies that students can employ to suit the needs of different learning tasks
- To develop a positive attitude to school
- To develop high levels of self-esteem to encourage attendance and achievement
- To ensure a whole-school approach in meeting the needs of assessed students across the curriculum in an inclusive environment.
- To encourage alternative forms of support, including in-class support, differentiated work, use of software, team teaching, etc
- To ensure the referral system for students with learning difficulties is used where all partners are involved; School Principal, SEN/LS Coordinator/Learning Support, Guidance Counsellor, parents, student, psychologists and/or other relevant outside agencies

4. Enrolment

College College's enrolment policy welcomes the full participation of children with special educational needs and undertakes to avail of both financial and personnel resources, provided by the Department of Education and Skills, to make reasonable accommodation for students with special needs in order that these students, insofar as is reasonable and practicable, may participate fully in the educational and social opportunities provided within Clonkeen.

5. Transition to Post- Primary School

There is a formal and well-functioning communication structure between the school and its feeder primary schools.

Clonkeen College believes that the quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can be a determinant of how well they settle in school. There is a formal and well-functioning communication structure between the school and its feeder primary schools. Extra provisions made to smooth the transfer process of SEN/LS students are as follows:

- The SEN/LS team make contact with the Primary school if any additional information is required.
- Students who have Irish exemptions are identified and the procedure for their timetabling is communicated to parents
- Parents are welcome to contact the SEN/LS Team at any time prior to entry, either in person or by telephone
- An information booklet is issued to new students and their parents
- An effective anti-bullying policy is in place
- There is an annual Open-Day for parent/child visits
- The SEN/LS Team is present at the Annual Evening for all new parents and is available to speak with parents
- As required, special needs teachers from feeder schools visit our school in order to further smooth the transition from Primary to Secondary school
- When required, if a child is particularly anxious about transfer, a one-to-one meeting is set up between the SEN/LS Team and parents and child to alleviate any concerns

6. Admission arrangements

Clonkeen College will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs.

The SEN/LS Department, in conjunction with The Board of Management, needs to be aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed if possible. In making provision for special students the following information is required to be included with any application to the school:

Has the student had access to any of the following?

- Special Needs Assistant
- Placement in a Special class
- Access to a resource/learning support teacher
- Assistance with behavioural modification
- Psychological and/or professional assessment/report. (If so, the report/assessment should be provided to the school)
- Any additional resources to help with their special needs
- Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, sensory issues, general learning disability or emotional disturbance
- Exemption from specific curricular areas
- Any supports in relation to travel/mobility or other

7. Facilities and Resources

- The SEN/LS Department will allocate all designated additional teaching support hours appropriately, to the students with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of these hours, in the most effective way possible.
- Additional funding will be used to purchase suitable resources for the department which will enhance the learning of all students
- The SEN/LS Department will continue to work from a core classroom which has been designated for learning support and resource teaching, using other free classrooms when there is great demand in a particular period
- The SEN/LS Department encourages learning support teachers to use many resources in supporting the students, including but not restricted to ICT resources, suitable Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate texts, exam material etc.

8. SAFE SPACE

The SEN/LS Department believes that the pastoral care of SEN/LS students is one of its core responsibilities. We believe if a student is happy in school, feels like he belongs, and feels as though there is somewhere he can go for help if it's needed, then learning outcomes are vastly improved. With that in mind we have invite SEN/LS students to come and talk with SEN/LS staff to ask advice, to store their laptops, to borrow a mislaid book or calculator or to ask for a loan for forgotten lunch money. The Learning Support Room and the SNA room serve as a safe spaces for students who may at times be overwhelmed with crowds, noise, workload, or general anxieties. We believe this is an essential duty and responsibility of the SEN/LS Department, and often it can be the difference between a high attendance rate and a high absenteeism rate.

9. Identification of students for support

- In-coming First Year students are screened by information supplied on the enrolment form, by information from Feeder school and on Initial Assessment Test.
- A class teacher or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the SEN/LS Department. This information is passed to the SEN/LS team who, in co-operation with Guidance Counsellors and parents identify the nature of supports the student may require
- When a parent refers their child to the SEN/LS Co-ordinator or Guidance Counsellor, a preliminary screen (as outlined above) may be carried out and the parent will be advised as to appropriate assessment

10. Model of SEN/LS 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:

- Support Teaching
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small Group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Team Teaching
- Curricular Reduction

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual needs. The duration of provision is reviewed annually. 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, relevant Year Head and student.

Allocation of Teaching Hours:

The resource teaching and learning support allocation of hours is utilised for the purposes intended. The majority of these hours are delivered by a core team of teachers and the remaining hours are allocated to a number of other teachers.

We function mainly on a withdrawal basis. Withdrawal means that the students attend support sessions either on a one-to-one basis or in small group situations with their assigned teacher. In most circumstances withdrawal is in a group situation in order to maximise the resources provided by the DES.

The use of Team Teaching as a method of providing support is also facilitated and encouraged.

Our role is to provide a proficient and responsive learning support service, which keeps up-to-date with changes in curriculum, syllabi, teaching and support methods. Within an appropriate

framework of support, we assist students to function as independent, autonomous learners. We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities for all.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The board of management has the overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special education needs.

Principal:

The principal has the general responsibility for establishing and promoting whole-school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with special educational needs. He convenes a Special Educational Needs Team and assigns responsibility of co-ordination to a member of the SEN/LS team.

Role of mainstream Teachers:

A key element of our SEN/LS provision is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the SEN/LS team. Mainstream teachers in Clonkeen College play a key role in bringing about the inclusion of students with special educational needs and have access (unless there is good reason for withholding certain information) to all information that is relevant to teaching a student with special educational needs. They play a central role in identifying students who may be at risk and for drawing the attention of the resource teacher or learning support teacher to such students. Teachers collaborate with the SEN/LS team and seek advice when considering the needs of SEN/LS students when planning for differentiation and teaching lessons, setting homework and formulating tests.

Role of Guidance:

The Guidance Counsellors work closely with the SEN/LS Department. The SEN/LS & Guidance teams collaborate on assessment processes and assist in making other teachers aware of relevant information about SEN/LS students. The Guidance Counsellors guide SEN/LS students through the DARE application process where relevant. They assist SEN/LS students at different stages of schooling and assist them in making career decisions and apply for Reasonable Accommodations in State Exams.

Role of SEN/LS Co-ordinator

The SEN/LS Co-ordinator has oversight of all matters regarding the day-to-day management of all aspects of special educational and provision within the mainstream school, for leading the SEN/Learning Support Team and co-ordinating the involvement of outside agencies. Specific responsibilities of the role include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN/LS provision
- Coordinating the SEN/LS Register. The SEN/LS Register lists the names of students in receipt of Learning Support

- Providing management with the necessary information on SEN/LS students to set-up of the department time table each year
- Chairing meetings with the core SEN/LS team and meetings with SNAs
- Meeting/Liaising with teachers as regards students with SEN/LS needs
- Meeting/Liaising with parents of students with SEN
- Managing Learning Support Team
- Meeting/Liaising with and advising Special Needs Assistants
- Overseeing SNA access for students and SNA timetables
- Identification of students for reasonable accommodation in house exams and overseeing provision of same, in conjunction with the Exams Co-ordinator and Deputy Principal
- Meeting/Liaising with external agencies including the DES, NCSE, NEPS, Visiting Teacher Service, health and social services, psychologists and other relevant voluntary bodies. Overseeing the transition of First Years from Primary to Secondary School including: school visits, meeting with parents and partaking in care team.
- Monitoring and reviewing students' progress and reorganising resources if required

Role of Mod GLD Coordinator

- Planning and Teaching a curriculum which is adapted for students with GLD (namely Level 2 and Level 1 Learning Programmes)
- Sharing information on students with staff working with L1, reporting at staff meetings
- Organising educational outings for the group once a week
- Identifying opportunities for inclusion of students in L1 in mainstream classes, liaising with teachers on L2LP/L1LPs and mainstream inclusion where possible.
- Liaising with ISAs and meeting with ISA team to discuss any issues related to L1
- Meeting with teachers who work in L1
- Collaborating with SEN Coordinator
- Developing Behaviour Support Plans and addressing incidents as they occur
- Drafting Student Support Files Stage 3 and convening SSF Meetings with Parents and ISA staff • Recording and storing SSFs
- Admissions to Class for students with Mod GLD
- Liaising with SLTs and attending sessions in Clonkeen College per year with students' service provider (c. 18 SLT sessions)
- Discuss any issues with students as they arise, should students wish to talk
- Developing Best Practice Guidelines for SEN staff and updating as necessary
- Communicating with Parents via email, phone and face to face on a regular basis
- Advising school management on timetabling of L1 group
- Collaborating with teachers on 'Reverse Inclusion' programmes
- Applying for ISA support as necessary
- Applying for student transport to school as necessary
- Applying for Assistive Technology as necessary

- Liaising with prospective students' schools and families before students commence in the school
- Meeting with Visiting Teacher for the Deaf
- Liaising with Educational psychologists where deemed necessary and arranging appointments in school where necessary with families, students and psychologist. Ensuring necessary assessments are undertaken (by psychologist) before students leave school and commence HSE services available to students
- Liaising with driver of students availing of school transport
- Fielding calls and meeting with all expressions of interest in the class
- Speaking about the class at meetings by local HSE service providers
- Attending seminars on Positive Behaviour Support and informing school management and staff of availability of same

In the instance of remote teaching and learning, co-ordinating same.

Role of Resource Teacher

The core task of the Resource teacher is the teaching of students with special educational needs. The model of organisation that has been adopted in Clonkeen College allows the resource teacher to implement their teaching role in the following ways;

- By withdrawing students for additional classes in literacy or mathematics (or both), as appropriate.
- By providing specific support for students with special educational needs in other areas such as the development of social skills and life skills
- Liaising with management, Year Heads and subject teachers

Role of Special Needs Assistants

The special needs assistant's role is to look after the care needs of students with SNA access. Care needs include: arranging special chairs, monitoring movement on corridors, hygiene and safety particularly in practical classes, encouraging students to remain on task, monitoring emotional well-being, assisting organisation and promoting appropriate interaction with peers and staff. Through the course of their time at Clonkeen College students are encouraged, where appropriate, to become independent of their SNA.

Role of Year Head

Year Head have general responsibility for monitoring the academic and social progress of students. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Liaising with the Learning Support Co-ordinator
- Monitoring and reviewing the progress of students with SEN

12. Assessment and records

The SEN/LS Co-ordinator, Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers and Guidance Counsellor work together to carry out the following functions:

- Liaise in relation to the formal and informal assessment of SEN/LS students

- In consultation with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), we adopt a systematic approach to arranging Reasonable Accommodation in certificate examinations
- Are involved in the administration of standardised tests in spelling, reading and writing
- Advises on applications for Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Exams (RACE)
- SEN/LS teachers are encouraged to keep a folder of a portfolio of work to allow a continuum of support between teachers and to facilitate reporting

SEN/LS Department and Guidance Counsellor work together in compiling and maintaining records relating to students with SEN:

The SEN/LS Department compiles and maintains data on students with Special Educational Needs. This data is received from outside or generated within the school. Data from outside includes psychological reports and reports from parents and other schools. Data created in the schools includes those in relation to assessment, student progress, state examinations, or planning to transfer inwards from the primary school. Data relating to students is treated in a sensitive and confidential manner. Our school acts in accordance with the Data Protection Acts (1998 and 2003) in relation to the management and maintenance of such data.

13. Involvement of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and students

The students realise their potential by striving to fulfil their potential and by discussing with their teachers their own strengths and weaknesses. This is achieved by regularly attending and working in learning support classes while developing ‘ownership’ of the skills being taught in learning support classes and applying these skills to all their studies. Students are encouraged to contribute to the evaluation of their progress including self-assessment and this allows students to grow in independence

Parents support the process through consultation and collaboration and by working in partnership with the school to help meet their child’s needs and by encouraging their child to take the support offered them by the SEN/LS Department. Parents are invited to give consent where necessary for their child to be tested by the SEN/LS Department or outside agencies. Parents are advised to act on the recommendations made in professional assessments in the best interests of their child. Parents will be informed through school reports, and regular phone calls, of their son’s progress. Parents are made aware that the SEN/LS Department is readily available for advice, consultation, and support when they have a query.

14. Assistive Technology

Assistive technology in our school supports students’ regular activity within the mainstream classroom.

Procedure for new entrants to the school:

- If a laptop is already being used by the student in his Primary School (as granted by the NCSE) the laptop should be transferred with the student on transition.

- All laptops which are grant-aided by the NCSE are the property of the school, can be used by the student for their personal use but must be returned to the school when the student leaves the school.
- In cases where a laptop is in need of repair and where this repair work is deemed economical and essential by the SENO, the school will undertake to have it repaired. Parents must first submit an *Application for Approved equipment Repair Form* to Clonkeen College and the school will then supply to the SENO for approval.

Procedure for Students who are already enrolled:

- If on entry to 1st year or at a later stage, it becomes obvious that due to hand-writing speed, motor co-ordination difficulties or other, use of a laptop is necessary, an application will be made to the NCSE on their behalf.
- In cases where the NCSE do not grant finance for the purchase of a laptop but in the opinion of NEP Psychologist/Educational Psychologist its use is necessary, the parent can purchase a student's personal laptop. The student can use this laptop in school for subjects where there is a high volume of writing.
- The SEN/LS Department will facilitate the students practice and improvement in typing by installing a typing course on the laptop and providing resource time to practice if necessary.
- The SEN/LS Department will assess the student's suitability for a RACE application to use a laptop for exams. The SEC has issued clear criteria for this application process, and the SEN/LS Department will follow these guidelines, and apply where a student meets criteria
- Where possible the school will facilitate all students using laptops in House exams, this is contingent on staff resources. Parents and students must sign the „Laptop Use in House Exams“ form in advance of any House exams.

15. RACE (Reasonable Accommodations for Certified Exams)

- The SEN/LS Department works closely with Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, and subject Teachers to determine what students may be eligible for a RACE application.
- These students are then tested according to the SEC guidelines on RACE applications.
- The testing is carried out by the 3 teaching members of the SEN/LS team, and results and recommendations are documented carefully.
- Applications are then made accordingly for students who meet the criteria.
- As soon as written confirmation of the results of the application are received, these are added to the student's file.
- The list of accommodations granted is then given to the Exam Secretary who uses this information to make the appropriate arrangements

16. DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)

- The SEN/LS Department and the Guidance Counsellors work closely to identify students who may qualify for DARE

- There are deadlines set out by the CAO for completion of an online statement from the student outlining how their disability affects their learning
- These students are then advised, directed and supported by the Guidance Counsellor and SEN/LS Department through the process of application

17. Further Education

On occasion a student may be moving on to SEN Third Level Education. Where this is the case the department will do their best to facilitate the application, enrolment and preparation of the student for the school

18. Continuing Professional Development

- The SEN/LS Department strives to keep up with changing syllabi, curriculum, and best practice policies.
- It is the policy of the school to encourage and facilitate the main teachers in the Department to have completed the Graduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs.
- Teachers are encouraged and financed by management to undertake regular CPD courses online or in class.
- Whole Staff training is recognised as vital to the positive educational experience of SEN/LS students, and with that in mind management has supported initiatives to bring speakers on various SENs to address to the staff.

19. Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually and updated where needed.