

Coláiste Phobail Leamhcáin Lucan Community College



Inclusion Policy

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1. Mission Statement

The inclusion policy reflects the principles outlined in our mission statement where each person is valued for who they are. The school aims to meet the needs of all within a supportive, safe and friendly environment so that each student's full potential is realized.

2. Overall Vision

Within the context and the parameters of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) regulations and resources, as well as the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) ethos, we support the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation, parental choice and a respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life as per the school's Enrolment Policy.

In its discussion paper on special educational needs and curricular issues, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA 1999) states that a precise definition of special educational needs is difficult. They note how some experts believe that all students can, at some time in their lives, have some form of special educational need. Such need may range from physical disability, to exceptional or gifted ability in a particular area.

However, the general understanding of students who have special educational needs is that they encounter barriers to learning. In Lucan Community College, we recognise that all students have common needs which include a sense of belonging, being respected as an individual and being challenged as a learner. Our experience does show that some students, however, may have a particular individual need that arises from characteristics that are different from all others.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act defines special educational needs as "a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition" (EPSEN 2004)

The report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC 1993) defines areas of Special Educational Needs under four broad headings, which embrace a wide range of special educational needs and include:

- General Learning Disabilities
- Emotional and Behavioural Disturbance
- Language and Communication difficulties and disorders
- Physical and Sensory disabilities

It further describes special education as "any educational provision which is designed to cater for students with Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made in ordinary

classes for pupils of the same age.”

3. Aims and objectives

In keeping with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills guidelines for the Inclusion of Students with Special Education Needs (2007) at post primary level, we acknowledge that the broad aims of education for pupils with special educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

- Enabling students to live a full life and to realize his or her full potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum;
- Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realize that full potential;
- Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.

Specific Objectives

In real terms the objectives for SEN students are as follows:

- All students will access State Examinations at an appropriate level. Courses currently offered by Lucan Community College are Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme;
- Students will achieve functional literacy and numeracy. The school places particular emphasis on reading, writing, spelling and functional mathematics;
- Students will develop social and life skills;
- Students will participate in an inclusive learning environment.

Gifted and Talented Students

All students at Lucan Community College have a right to an education that is appropriately challenging and takes into account individual needs. Gifted and talented students are those who are recognized to require further opportunities for enrichment and extension.

Students who are exceptionally able or talented are those that have demonstrated their capacity to achieve in a specific field or in multiple areas. These areas may range from a specific academic aptitude, creative and productive thinking, visual and performing arts aptitude, mechanical aptitude to advanced psychomotor ability.

The learning environment in Lucan Community College aims to provide educational pathways and appropriately challenging and stimulating learning experiences to maximize wellbeing and learning outcomes for all of our students, including those recognized as being gifted and talented.

4. Admissions Policy

Lucan Community College affirms the right of all students to a full education in as inclusive a setting as possible in line with the school mission statement and enrolment policy.

5. Assessment of Needs

The school will assess the special educational needs of students upon admission and through the transfer from primary school and will re-examine these periodically.

The school will in addition make an assessment of its ability to respond to these needs. Where a student's condition or circumstances change in the course of their school career, such a student will possibly merit reassessment and re-evaluation of appropriate provision.

Where a psychologist has assessed students while in primary school, parents are requested to provide the details to the school and are asked to produce a copy of any such assessment and make it available to the principal on enrolment. Where a student has availed of any special tuition, resources, or equipment at primary level the parents are required to make this known on the parental information sheet for entrance interviews and also to the principal. Where any other supporting documentation exists, including medical, Occupational Therapy reports, speech and language reports, these should also be made available to the school.

In addition the school will contact the student's most recent primary school to ascertain knowledge of the student's needs, including special educational needs. Additionally, help by way of a psychologist's report and/or additional resources may be sought from the Department of Education and Skills via application made to the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) appointed to the school. Where relevant information is not made available by parents/ 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.

In relation to transfer from other schools, the school will adhere to the EPSEN Act 2004, "Where the transfer from one school to another school of a child in respect of whom an education plan has been prepared is proposed, the principal of the first-mentioned school shall consult, before such a transfer takes place, with the principal of the second-mentioned school for the purpose of:

- (a) Insuring the principal of the second-mentioned school is informed of the content of the education plan;
- (b) Assisting the principal of the second-mentioned school in amending the plan where such an amendment is considered necessary by that principal having regard to the Special Educational needs of the child and the operation of their school".

After assessment of the student's needs, there will be an assessment of the school's ability to fit their needs and if the principal is satisfied that the school can cater for the needs of the student, the student will be accepted and retained in the school subject to the following:

- The Department of Education and Skills asking any other relevant agencies to make the necessary resources available to the school.
- Parents/guardians co-operating with the school to ensure that the student's needs are met as fully as possible and that they supply further information from time to time if required.
- 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.

Once admitted, the principal will decide as to the appropriate provision for the student in conjunction with staff members who are or will be directly in contact with the student, the parents/guardians of the student and the Special Education needs coordinator where required.

Where a student is refused admission parents will be advised of their rights of appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

6. Transferring from Primary School

December: Information night for parents/guardians of incoming first years, addressed by the principal and incoming First year coordinator. An information pack is given to parents/guardians including school ethos, mission statement, code of behaviour, uniform information, subject information, subject choice form, homework policy and locker application form, parent's guide and child protection guidelines.

February: Assessments for incoming first years. Parental/ guardian interview- provides for two-way information giving – parents are required to inform the school during this process of any special needs. Reports and assessments are also provided to the school on this day if available.

March/April: The feeder primary schools are contacted by the incoming First year coordinator and class teachers of all new first year students are spoken to. This contact is made through a school visit or by phone.

April/ May: Resource teacher contacts the feeder schools in relation to SEN students.

May: Gluais team contact and go out to the main feeder schools. They explain who they are and their function in the school.

May: Incoming 1st years are invited to the school where they meet the Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Gluais team and Induction Coordinator. They are given information about the school and receive a tour of the school by the Gluais team. Any questions they have can be answered on this day.

When necessary, SEN students visit the school in June with their resource teacher and/or Special Needs Assistant (SNA) for an extra visit/tour.

August: 1st year student induction with tutor – commencement of Lucan Community College's tutor/student relationship

This calendar may be subject to change.

Class Placement:

This is decided by:

1. Assessment in February of 6th class students (standardised testing in intelligence, literacy and numeracy and school devised test in Gaeilge.
 2. Consultation with primary school (6th class teachers/ resource teachers/principal)
- Further detail is available in the enrolment policy.

7. Curriculum

The school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. All S.E.N. students follow the traditional Junior Certificate programme. The traditional Leaving Cert, LCVP and LCA programmes are offered to all. Students are actively encouraged to choose the programme that best suits their educational and personal needs.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes encourage all students to use and further their competencies in a broad range of activities. These activities are open to all students, including our Gifted and Talented and SEN students.

Educational Plans:

The school is committed to initiating the process through which a structured teaching and learning plan will be prepared for students with SEN.

In-School Supports:

The in-school supports available are as follows:

- Placement in a mainstream class;
- Provision for students who do not study Irish or a continental language (due to special educational needs) to work in small groups when Irish/language classes are timetabled. This is essential for additional literacy/numeracy support;
- Individual tuition: This occurs when the student's basic skills require

intensive support;

- In class support: Team teaching. In some classes the resource teacher/subject specific teacher/other teacher acts as a support to classroom teaching;
- Subject support: An SEN group may be timetabled for an extra class in some subjects e.g. Mathematics, English or LCA tasks;
- Students are provided with small group interviews with the Guidance Department as part of this ongoing support.

Please note that the school recognises that no one model of provision is fully effective and different methodologies and approaches are required. The wish to prioritise those most in need of support is the determining factor here.

Moreover, this level of support can only be provided if the appropriate resources are granted by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE):

If the resource department considers that an SEN student is entitled to reasonable accommodation, application will be made to the DES. This accommodation generally involves:

- (a) The assistance of a scribe or reader.
- (b) The use of a tape recorder/ word processor.
- (c) A waiver in spelling or grammar.
- (d) Use of a separate centre due to a physical/medical condition which warrants RACE.

In the case of (a), (b) and (d) above, the candidate will have the use of a special centre with individual supervision. Parents should recognise that separate applications are required for Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate with no automatic entitlement. Any accommodations allowed are indicated on the certificate of results. Members of staff are qualified to administer/score the relevant tests to students and these tests are recognized by the DES.

Psychological Support Service: (Co. Dublin VEC)

Among the services provided are:

- Offering advice to students, parents, teachers
- Providing counselling to students and teachers.
- Providing in-service support to staff.
- Undertaking psychological assessments if requested by the school.
- Facilitating working with groups/ individuals with emotional/behavioural difficulties.

Other Relevant Agencies:

The college will maintain strong links with other relevant agencies including:

- Special Education Support Service and Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)
- DES visiting teacher service
- National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)
- Health boards
- Child and adolescent services
- Various medical and educational specialists.

The school has also maintained strong links with local community groups and employers which assist in the placements of SEN students on work experience programmes.

8. Role of Parents

Through our mission statement, Lucan Community College acknowledges the primary positive and central role of parents in the education of their children, in providing valuable information on learning needs, and styles, as set out in the Irish Constitution (1937) and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The school has a tradition of fostering excellent parent-teacher relationships. Parents are encouraged to contact the school formally and informally to maintain awareness of their children's progress. The resource department aim to develop these links to include assisting with homework, out of school visits, work experience, exam preparation and LCA tasks.

9. Role of the School

School Staff:

We aim to provide the relevant information to staff members dealing with any student who has a special educational need entering our school. Students are monitored and some mobility between classes can occur if the student's needs are not adequately met in a particular class.

Students who may be struggling in literacy or numeracy are brought to the attention of the resource department by subject teachers, class tutors or year heads. The resource department can assess if the student requires the need for additional support in these areas and will consult with parents.

Support Team:

The SEN department consists of a number of fully qualified teachers who hold Diplomas in Special Educational Needs. A larger team of teachers liaise with the SEN

coordinator. The work of the department is also supported by the principal, the guidance counsellors, special needs assistants and the pastoral care team.

The SEN department is conscious of the importance of the whole staff involvement in its day to day work. To this end staff members are kept up to date on all issues. At present the school has seven full-time SNA's who are involved in supporting the needs of students with physical disabilities, Asperger's Syndrome and Emotional/ Behavioural difficulties. They also support the work of the resource department in other ways (e.g. photocopying resources, assisting with classroom materials etc.)

The school is committed to a system of rotation for SNA's to ensure that while a high quality of care is provided for students a culture of independence is also encouraged.

As the school favours a whole school approach to SEN the SNA's are valuable members of the SEN department. Their role will primarily be used to assist with the school experiences of the students in their charge and to support the work of resource teachers.

(Appendix 1 - Guidelines for working with SNA's)

Role of Students with SEN:

Students with SEN are encouraged to adopt an active approach to their education. Where appropriate, the needs and supports required are discussed with the students. Thus the student is involved in a practical way in learning plans and programmes and in assessing progress. Generally, SEN students in Lucan Community College are very open to discussing their ongoing educational development.

9. Links with External Agencies:

The resource department is in regular contact with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO). This body is responsible for allocating resource teaching hours, SNA support hours, assistive technology and special transport, with the SENO as the point of contact.

10. Evaluation:

Despite inherent complexities, evaluation of SEN provision is an important element of school policy. We attempt to monitor and review our services regularly. While accepting the importance of good examination results and the validity of standardised testing, the school emphasises that these are not the only measurements of a student's progress and development.

11. Conclusion:

The staff of Lucan Community College is committed to providing an inclusive, accessible meaningful learning experience for all students, including our gifted and talented students and those with SEN.

This document will be reviewed regularly to comply with this aspiration.

WORKING WITH Special Needs Assistants (SNA's): GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

- The role of the SNA is to support the student in school. A good working relationship between the SNA and the teacher means that the student will be given clear boundaries and guidelines. This takes practice and work between all three parties but can benefit all.
- Before your first lesson with an SNA it is good to have a discussion about classroom discipline and rules.
- As a courtesy it helps the SNA to have an idea of the general content of the lesson or group of lessons. This can be discussed at a time that suits both the SNA and the teacher.
- It is a good idea for the teacher to give guidelines to the SNA as to what they would like the SNA to do in the classroom.
- A SNA is primarily responsible for a designated student in a classroom.
- A SNA may assist other students or the teacher with classroom activities.
- A SNA **is never involved in the discipline of a classroom**. This remains the responsibility of the teacher. The SNA may ask their student to behave and remind them of the consequences if they don't. The SNA will then call the teachers attention to the bad behaviour and the teacher will decide on a course of action.
- If the student is to be removed appropriate work must be provided by the teacher for the student to do under the supervision of the SNA.
- The SNA may be involved in a behaviour programme with their student and may advise on appropriate action if the student disrupts the class.
- A SNA may withdraw a student immediately without telling the teacher if they feel they need to.
- Should a teacher leave a class, the SNA **will not mind** the class and is not responsible for the discipline in the classroom in the absence of the teacher.
- A SNA may accompany a student on trips/tours out of school.
- A SNA may check if homework is done.