Learning and Language Support Policy

Clonturk Community College

Approved by the Board of Management on   10 September 2020

Signed: A Phelan

                 Chairperson

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                 Principal

Date of next review   September 2022

Learning and Language Support Policy

CLONTURK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Mission Statement

To promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative, and responsible members of society.

Introduction

Clonturk Community College is committed to providing a comprehensive and effective learning & language support and resource teaching service for students.

This enables a specific cohort of students who have additional needs, with an appropriate framework of support, to access their curricula and achieve their potential. It is an entitlement for all students to have their needs appropriately identified and met. This policy considers the student as a young person and as a learner.

1. Principles

1.1 At Clonturk Community College we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our students. This policy describes the principles, aims and objectives, by which the College will identify, assess and provide for students with additional needs.

Additional needs can take a variety of forms, including specific learning needs, health related needs and behavioural needs. This policy considers the additional needs provision outlined in the various acts pertaining to the provision of students with Additional needs, notably the Education Act of 1998, EPSEN Act 2004, Learning & Language Support Guidelines 2000, the NCSE (ncse.ie) Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006, guidelines for Inclusion of Students with Additional needs 2007 and NEWB Guidelines 2008 underpin the key elements of this policy.

1.2 The College recognises the right of students with additional needs to be educated in a mainstream College and the importance of genuine communication and partnership with parents and students in planning, delivering and evaluating individual support. The College recognises that provision for Additional needs is an integral part of its overall aim to raise the achievement of all students.

1.3 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 Colleges' intention is that the needs of all students are identified and met as soon as possible.

1.4 All students whether they have additional needs or not, must have equal access to the full curriculum of the College and all activities. Students with additional needs will be encouraged to become independent and take responsibility within the College.

1.5 The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all in the College community: Learning & Language Support Department, management, staff, students and parents who have a positive and active part to play in achieving this aim:

- College Management act on the principle that every member of staff is directly responsible for the needs of all students; by working in partnership with the Learning & Language Support Coordinator, students, parents and other agencies and by participating in appropriate training.

- The class teacher has a primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/her class, including those who access supplementary teaching and/or SNA support. A class teacher should create an environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated. The class teacher is responsible for gathering information on a student's progress through informal observation /assessment. Where concerns arise the class teacher should

complete a Learning & Language Support Referral Form which should include test results, homework proficiency detail. The class teacher should work with the Learning & Language Support teacher giving advice on areas that need support.

- Learning & Language Support Department fulfill their statutory duties to students with additional needs, within the limited resources available, by establishing a policy that has regard to the Code of Practice and additional needs legislation on the identification and assessment of additional needs.

- Tailor individual educational programmes to meet the needs of students with low incidence diagnosis and mild to moderate learning needs. This cohort of student is encouraged to access most mainstream subjects initially. They may continue with these to exam level and/or access junior cycle L2LPs through the Learning & Language Support Department. At Senior Cycle students can access mainstream classes as appropriate whilst support by our Learning & Language Support Department

- Pupil Profiles /Memos: The pupil profile (PP) outlines the diagnosis and list websites for teachers to access information. Prioritised learning needs are outlined and targeted needs set. Memos outline diagnosis, strengths, needs and recommendations for teachers. Pupil profiles and memos are confidential and are emailed to each student's individual teachers. After the parent teacher meeting in first year a review meeting will be held with the parents, SNA, link teacher and student. Following this meeting the reviewed PP will be circulated to all the students' teachers. At the start of the school the following year the link teacher will call the relevant students' parents for a review of the year and outline plans for the following year. A review meeting will be held in January in subsequent years and the PP updated.

- 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 & language support classes while developing 'ownership' of the skills being taught in Learning & Language 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: Parents support the process through consultation and by working in partnership with the College to help meet their child's needs and by encouraging their child to take the support offered them by the Learning & Language Support Department. Parents are invited to give consent where necessary for their child to be tested by the Learning & Language Support Department or outside agencies. Parents are advised to act on the recommendations made in professional assessments in the best interests of their child.

- Special Needs Assistant: 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 in Clonturk

Community College students are encouraged, where appropriate, to become independent of the assigned SNAs.

2. Roles & Responsibilities in Coordinating Special Needs Provision

2.1 The SEN Register lists the names of students with a professional diagnosis, professional assessment, Irish exemption and assistive technology. Those for whom a personal profile has been prepared are indicated on this register. A copy of the register is available in the Learning & Language Support office, and senior management offices for the teaching staff to access.

2.2 The Learning & Language Support Department will ensure that they are fully involved in developing and monitoring the College's SEN policy and that SEN provision is an integral part of the College development plan. The Coordinator's along with College management will ensure that they are fully informed of the College's SEN provision, including how funding, equipment and personnel resources are deployed. They will ensure that the quality of SEN provision is regularly monitored and evaluated.

2.3 The Learning & Language Support Department Coordinator is assigned to each year group and together they have the overall responsibility for management of the policy, for assessment and provision for students with additional needs and for keeping College management informed on additional needs policy and provision. The Learning & Language Support Coordinator has oversight of all matters regarding the day-to-day management of all aspects of additional needs policy and provision, for leading the Learning & Language Support Team and coordinating the involvement of outside agencies.

Specific responsibilities of the role and its application to the students they are assigned include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the College's SEN policy.
- Coordinating provision for students with SEN and the set-up of the Department time table
- Ensuring that students who have being referred by class teachers as they are not performing are screened for learning difficulties
- Attending / Chairing a weekly meeting with the core Learning & Language Support Team
- Overseeing the development of Memos for students with NCSE resources
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers
- Meeting with parents of students with SEN
- Managing Learning & Language Support Team
- Overseeing the records on all students with SEN
- Contributing to the training of staff
- Liaising and advising Special Needs Assistants
- Overseeing SNA access for students and SNA timetables done in conjunction with the Senior Management Team
- Assisting the team of SNAs in establishing 'targets' for students with SNA access
- Identification of students for reasonable accommodation in house exams
- Overseeing the Learning & Language Support house exam timetable and liaising with the Parents Association who provide volunteer readers.
- Applying for additional teaching support and resources including RACE
- Liaising with external agencies including the DESS, NCSE, NEPS, CDETB PSS, health and social services, psychologists and other relevant voluntary bodies.
- If assigned by college management, the overseeing the transition of First Years from Primary to Secondary School including: College visits, meeting with parents and partaking in care team meeting following completion of visits.

- Liaising with CDETB for EAL Testing

2.4 Career Guidance, Tutors and Class Teachers general responsibility for monitoring the academic and social progress of students, notably through the tracking system. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Liaising with the Learning & Language Support Coordinator
- Working with their Learning & Language Support link teacher
- Monitoring and reviewing the progress of students with SEN

2.5 Subject Department Facilitators have responsibility for all aspects of curriculum content and learning opportunities in their subject area. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Maintaining and monitoring a Subject Department Policy on Special Needs.
- Ensuring that the subject content has been differentiated to meet the needs of all students
- Designating a member of staff to liaise between the Department and Learning & Language Support Facilitator. Depending on the size of the Department this may be the Subject Department Facilitator.

2.6 The Subject Teacher has the following specific responsibilities in terms of this policy:

- Planning what each student should learn
- Ensuring that the subject content has been differentiated to meet the needs of all students
- Monitoring, assessing and reviewing the learning that has occurred
- Working in partnership with In-class support teachers, learning & language support teachers and special needs assistants.
- Referring students who they may suspect as having a particular difficulty
- Promoting inclusion
- Applying College policies including the College's Code of Behaviour equally to all students.

3. Arrangements for Students with Special Needs

3.1 Clonturk Community College will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or additional needs. These students are free to participate in the life of the College in so far as is reasonably practicable.

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

3.2 The Learning & Language Support 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 when accepting a place in the College:

Has the student had access to any of the following?

1. Special needs assistant or classroom teacher.
2. Special classes.
3. Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher.
4. Assistance with behavioural modification.
5. Psychological and/or professional assessment/report. Report to be provided in strict confidence to the College.
6. Evidence of treatment in relation to EBD diagnosis.
7. Any additional resources to help with their special needs.
    a. Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, intimate care, sensory issues, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
    b. Any resource(s) in relation to travel or mobility.

3.3 SNA Access

Applications for SNA access must include up to date professional recommendation outlining the care needs of the student. Applications are submitted to the NCSE as per their deadline. Note: It may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the College as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making application

3.4 The Learning & Language Support Department is committed to providing a comprehensive and effective learning & language support service for students. This will enable students who have additional needs to access their curricula and achieve their full potential.

3.5 Where possible the Learning & Language Support link teacher will visit feeder schools, arrange tours for particular students and make arrangement s for SNAs to visit and liaise with SNAs from the feeder schools.

4. Facilities & Resources

4.1 The Learning & Language Support Department will allocate all designated additional teaching support hours appropriately, to the students who the school identifies as needing support as per the NCSE guidelines (2017)- support for all, support for some and support for a few. This can be in the format of team- teaching, small groups and/or 1-1 depending on the needs of the students at the given time.

4.2 Any additional funding will be used to purchase suitable resources for the department which will enhance the learning of all students.

4.3 Owing to limited classroom facilities in the school, the Learning & Language Support Department will use free classrooms to provide support for students.

4.4 The Learning & Language Support Department encourages Learning & Language Support teachers to use as many resources in supporting the students. As an iPad school our primary resources will be those available on the students iPad. However, additional resources will be used.

5. Provision

5.1 Our role is to provide a proficient and responsive Learning & Language 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.

5.2 How the Learning & Language Support Department operates

We function mainly on a cooperative teaching and withdrawal basis. Cooperative Teaching is being used across appropriate subjects at both junior and senior level based on the needs of individual or groups of students in a particular class.

Withdrawal means that the students attend support sessions either on a one to one basis or in small group situations with their assigned tutor. (The NCSE recommends that Colleges minimise the use of one to one sessions as these place significant demands on limited resources).

5.3 Individual provision

Individual provision and its outcomes will be kept constantly under review and amended as necessary. Termly reviews and records of work for students in receipt of Learning & Language Support /resource teaching will be completed as required by the Learning & Language Support teachers. This allows the Learning & Language Support Department to appropriately monitor and review student progress.

5.4 Learning & Language Support Teacher's Folder.

The Learning & Language Department provides a comprehensives folder for all Learning & Language Support teachers. On their timetables teachers are provided with a list of students for each Learning & Language Support class and the subject area to cover for each class. Work record must be completed for each class. These are returned to the Learning & Language Support Office at the end of each term and filed in student files.

5.5 Assessment on Entry

All students complete Entrance Assessments (CAT 4) which screen for basic skills in literacy, numeracy, special awareness and problem-solving competencies. (Students within the moderate GLD range are invited to attend during the assessment testing. The College will do its best to provide smaller settings for these students however there will be no access to one to one support.) This information, coupled with the informal information obtained from the feeder primary schools, results on professional assessments and reports and meetings with parents of students with NCSE resources assists in identifying those students with additional needs. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should forward any relevant information on their child's learning that may assist the Learning & Language Support Department.

5.5.1 Other Assessments.

The department also uses the WRAT 4

5.6 Review on Progress

From information gathered from the initial assessments, meetings with primary school personnel, meetings with parents and reviewing professional reports where appropriate, an individualised negotiated pupil profile (PP) is put in place students with low-incident diagnosis, SNA access and those who have attended a reading school. A memo is prepared for students with an SLD. The PP outlines the diagnosis and list websites for teachers to access information. Prioritised learning needs and outlined and targeted needs set. Memos outline diagnosis, strengths, needs and recommendations for teachers. Pupil profiles and memos are confidential and are emailed to each student's individual teachers.

After the parent teacher meeting in first year a review meeting will be held with the parents, SNA, link teacher and student. Following this meeting the reviewed PP will be circulated to all the students' teachers. At the start of the school next year the link teacher will call the relevant students' parents for a review of the year and outline plans for the following year. A review meeting will be held in January in subsequent years and the PP updated.

6. Whole School Assessment

The Learning & Language Support Department use a variety of testing scores to assess students' progress:

- Sten scores accessed from Primary Schools Student Passport
- CAT Scores achieved in the Entrance Scores
- All students are tested in their Literacy & Mathematics Skills in Second Year.

Results are analysed and distributed to appropriate staff. The DATS test is administered by the Guidance Department at the end of the first term of transition year.

The Learning & Language Support Department analyse these results to identify students who have not come to our attention previously who may be struggling in the areas of reading and spelling. Further WRAT testing may be carried out with a view to applying for RACE in the Junior Certificate Examination.

7. Assistive Technology

Students of the College may use Assistive Technology (AT) in class to enable them to reach their full potential and have full access to the curriculum. AT devices may be provided through the NCSE or by parents. These devices include laptops, notebooks and tablets. Students and their parents/guardians are provided with guidelines for the usage of AT which they both sign Teachers are also provided with these guidelines. These guidelines will allow students to fully benefit from the use of assistive technology in the College. Furthermore, it will encourage them to take responsibility for all work done on their laptop/tablet/notebook in the same way that other students must be responsible for their subject copies. The guidelines should ensure that the laptop/ tablet/ notebook is the responsibility of the student not the teacher.

CPEN - An Exam Reading Pen which can be used by the candidate to scan the examination paper. It converts the text to speech; which candidates can listen to using ear-phones. Candidates may have a Reader or Reading Assistant for any subject that is not compatible with an exam reading pen.

8. Training of Staff & Management

8.1 The management at Clonturk Community College is committed to the training of staff members in the area of Additional needs. The core Learning & Language Support Department team members have all completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Learning & Language Support and Additional needs. In drawing up the staff development plan and training programmes, it is envisaged that College management will continue to give consideration and appropriate priority to the needs of all teachers

with regard to additional needs. The department's in-service training plans for additional needs will be reported to management and will include details of training as appropriate for subject teachers, Learning & Language Support teachers, the Learning & Language Support Coordinator, special needs assistants and other ancillary staff.

8.2 The Learning & Language Support Coordinator will assist in the provision of training for teaching and non-teaching staff.

9. Involvement of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) & Students

9.1 The College recognises the importance of the involvement of students and their parents/guardians in planning and reviewing special needs support. We encourage the informed participation of both in achieving the aims of this policy.

9.2 We are committed to working in genuine partnership with parents/guardians by:

- Having a positive attitude towards parents/guardians, respecting the validity of differing perspectives
- Providing user-friendly information and procedures and being aware of communication barriers
- Recognising the pressure a parent/guardian may be under because of their child's need
- Acknowledging the importance of parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their own child
- Gaining parental consent for referrals
- Ensuring parents/guardians are aware of support groups and relevant outside agencies who can assist them
- Encouraging regular communication between College staff and parents/guardians so that any concern's regarding their child's learning or provision can be addressed.

9.3 The College recognises that students have a right to receive information about plans and outcomes for their learning and to have their opinion considered in any matter affecting them.

9.4 All students are increasingly encouraged and helped to participate in the planning and evaluation of their learning and in setting targets for the future. This is achieved through the development of personal learning planning with their Learning & Language Support teacher, target setting and monitoring as well as more informal approaches.

10. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

Students with Special Educational Needs who wish to apply for the Disability Access. Route to Education (DARE) must tick the disability box on their CAO application.

There are deadlines set by the CAO for -completion of an online statement from the student outlining how their disability affects their learning, submission of a downloaded form which the College must complete and submission of professional reports outlining a diagnosis.

The Learning & Language Support Department works closely with the Guidance Department to advise parents on professional reports required by the CAO. The Learning & Language Support Department assists the student in completing their statement and they complete the College form for these students.

Students with physical and medical disabilities and students with a mental health illness may also qualify for DARE. New Educational assessments are not required for students with a diagnosis of dyslexia, but up to date scores for word reading and word spelling must be submitted. The Learning & Language Support Department will test students for this purpose. To qualify the two scores must be at or below a standard score of 85. Scores from professional reports that are no older than 2 years may be used instead of school scores. (Please see DARE guidelines in this regard).

11. Special Arrangements for sitting State Examinations

The Department of Education & Skills may grant special arrangements to students with learning difficulties. This is called Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examinations (RACE). Each application is assessed on an individual basis. The Learning & Language Support Department is responsible for the submission of these applications to the Department. An up to date psycho-educational assessment is not necessary. The options of provision granted by the Department of Education & Skills are:

- To have question papers and answers read to the candidate individually or as a group, or for the candidate to use reading software or a reading pen.
- To permit candidates to record their answers on tape recorder or word processor or scribe
- To make provision for candidates who qualify for exemption from spellings and grammatical components in language subjects. (If a student avails of one of the afore-mentioned provisions in the course of a language subject, then this will be indicated on the examination certificate. An asterisk will appear next to the subject and a supplementary report will accompany this.)
- To provide for the use of a Shared Special Centre or an Individual Centre in exceptional circumstances. The college must have evidence of need for this accommodation.

To qualify for RACE the Learning & Language Support Department must test students within a year of their junior cycle examinations. The SEC have strict criteria for qualification. Result of testing must be included in the application and evidence of testing stored in the college.

Applications are made based on the results of testing carried out by the Learning & Language Support Department. The SEC do not consider results and/or recommendations from professional reports, The Learning & Language Support Department applies on behalf of students. The SEC will not accept scores and/or recommendations from educational assessments for RACE. Should a student not meet the qualifying criteria, the college may forward all evidence to the SEC for them to decide. In general accommodations granted at junior cycle can be reactivated for leaving certificate. New applications can also be made for LC. Parents can appeal decisions not to grant accommodation.

The Learning & Language Support Department can not guarantee that it can offer these accommodations during the house/mock examinations to students who may qualify for RACE.

If a student avails of one of the afore-mentioned provisions during a language subject, then this will be indicated on the examination certificate. An asterisk will appear next to the subject and a supplementary report will accompany this.

Procedure for acquiring an exemption from Irish is set out in our Irish Exemption Policy.

12. Monitoring & Evaluating

12.1 The work of the Learning & Language Support Department in implementing this policy and the general effectiveness of additional needs provision in the College will be subject to the normal College self-evaluation policy and an annual department review process. The review process will involve evaluating all elements of the day-today running of the Learning & Language Support Department which will allow us to identify key strengths and weaknesses in the provision of SEN in the College.

12.2 The progress of students on the SEN Register will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the Learning & Language Support Team and also through the normal College assessment and reporting procedure. Progress will be checked against targets (bi-annually) and the outcomes of tests and examinations will be analysed for students receiving special needs support.