

Special Needs Assistant / Inclusion Support Assistant Policy

Clonturk Community College



Approved by the Board of Management on 16th November 2023

Signed: A Phelan
Chairperson

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Principal

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Introduction:

Clonturk Community College is a recognised co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the patronage of City of Dublin Education and Training Board and with Educate Together with Educate Together as a trustee partner.

At Clonturk Community College we believe that all students should be valued equally, irrespective of any individual needs. As such, we welcome and provide an inclusive environment for persons with Additional Education Needs (AEN). As per the 'Person's with Special Needs Act, 2004', the school recognises that the 'education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment'. Clonturk Community College seeks to support the full participation of all students in school life as far as it is practical, so that they can access and benefit from its education and activities to the fullest extent possible.

Clonturk Community College seeks to minimise barriers to learning and participation for all students by acknowledging and celebrating differences between students and by actively implementing supports to reduce these barriers wherever practical. Students are encouraged to reach their full potential in a supportive and stimulating environment. Students are prepared to participate as meaningfully and as independently as possible in the community upon completion of their post-primary education. This policy considers the student as a young person and as a learner.

Ethos and Values:

Our vision is one of a vibrant and welcoming school community in which all members will experience a real sense of active participation and belonging. Clonturk Community College is a pluralist community. As such, it embraces inclusion in terms of social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. The principle of inclusion is embedded in the school's ethos and is particularly relevant to the following policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Antibullying Policy
- Assessment, Reporting and Homework
- Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Digital Learning Plan
- Electronic Device and Acceptable Usage Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Irish Exemption Policy
- Inclusion for Learning Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Vision:

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community which will facilitate our students' academic, intellectual, practical, creative and sporting abilities and where each student is valued as a unique human being.

We endeavour to:

- Assist each student to reach their full potential in a calm, caring, creative and supportive environment.
- Provide our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.
- Equip students with the necessary skills to fully participate in life as well-rounded, educated and socially conscious individuals.
- Promote a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff.

Principles

At Clonturk Community College we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our students in an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Our SNAs support our students with their primary care needs to ensure that they can access the learning that takes places in the school - from the classroom (academic) to the playground (social).

Additional educational needs can take a variety of forms, including specific care needs, learning needs, English as an additional language, registered medical needs and behavioural needs. This policy considers the additional needs provision as outlined in the following acts, circulars and guidelines:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Freedom of Information Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Data Protection Acts 1988, 1998, 2003, 2018
- The Disability Act (2005)
- The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) Scheme Circular 0030/2014
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016)
- Special Education Circular 0014/2017
- The Education Admissions to Schools Act (2018)
- NEWB Guidelines (2008)
- The Education (Provision in Respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act (2022)

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. Clonturk Community College is committed to providing a comprehensive and effective support service for students. This will enable students who have additional needs to access their curricula and achieve their full potential.

Some students will permanently or intermittently have greater difficulty in learning than their peers. The Student Support Team, taking into account the experiences of the SNA team, will give these students individual consideration and make special provision for them, working in partnership with others, as necessary. This support follows the Continuum of Support and is provided on the basis of need rather than diagnosis. Support may be short, medium or long-term. The College's intention is that the needs of all students are identified and met as soon as possible.

Scope

This policy statement has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of management, staff, parents and students of Clonturk community college.

Role of SNA

The aim of the SNA in Clonturk Community College is to support and facilitate those pupils with primary care needs, so that they feel happy, valued and supported to enable them to develop to their full potential, and become independent learners within the classroom setting. Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist Clonturk Community College in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with special educational needs. In particular, SNAs play a very important role in the health and safety of the pupils and in his/her/their social and emotional development. The duties of the SNA have been delineated by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management. The student's work is assigned by the subject teacher as directed by their IEP's (Individual Educational Plans) and supervised by the SEN Co-ordinator.

SNA duties include:

1. To provide assistance to access learning, for example, helping SEN pupils with typing, writing, scribing, reading, assistive technology or any other equipment as required.
2. To assist with clothing, feeding, toileting (including catheterisation), and general hygiene and being mindful of the health and safety needs of the pupil. At no time should any SNA enter a bathroom or assist a child with intimate needs without another staff member present.
3. To record how they have met the care needs of the students daily in the notes section on VSWare. Please see appendix for examples of notes to be recorded.
4. To assist on out-of-school activities.
5. To monitor SEN students during arrival at beginning at school day, dispersal at end of day, break times and transition from class to class.

6. To accompany SEN pupils on sensory breaks, which should be recorded so that this need can be monitored.
7. To assist students in practical classes as their need arises example woodwork, home economics, art, physical education.
8. To participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and to co-operate with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
9. All engagement with parents should be of a non-academic nature and SNAs should not give parents their personal contact details as per our communication policy. The ladder of referral should be used by SNAs for any parental contact.
10. SNAs are not mandated members of staff, therefore they should inform the student that they have to refer on to the DLP or DDLP any child protection issues that are disclosed to them.
11. To support students with socialising, reminders of personal space, implement given behavioural strategies, recognise triggers and implement strategies, assist with organisational skills.
12. SNAs should be aware of students' diagnosed medical conditions with the understanding that some additional care needs may arise as a result of diagnoses.
13. SNAs should be aware of students' restricted interests which may affect health and safety or teaching and learning.
14. To supervise students taking medication. This must be logged on the appropriate register and logged on VShare Notes.
15. To assist with other duties appropriate to the role as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. SNAs may be reassigned to another SEN pupil if their timetabled pupil is absent as per the Continuum of Support. If an SNA is absent, other members of the SNA team may be reassigned as per the Continuum of Support.

The college recognises that often students will approach an SNA for non-SNA related issues. For example, when a student feels unwell, is feeling anxious or has forgotten equipment. In these situations, the SNA should, in the first instance, direct to the class/supervising teacher or if not available, can email the tutor and CC the year head.

Student Behaviour

The college recognises that SNAs often see and hear more than other staff members due to their proximity to students.

Positive Behaviour

SNAs may wish to award positive VShare points to students in recognition of good behaviour, effort and kindness that they have witnessed. The college recognises the benefit of this practice in building confidence and maintaining good relationships.

Negative Behaviour

It does not come under the remit of SNAs to deal with poor behaviour or discipline. Where an SNA witnesses negative behaviour, they should report to the class or supervising teacher. The SNA can also create a written record of the incident by emailing the tutor and or year head.

Confidentiality

It is an SNA's duty to carry out their role in a caring, professional and confidential manner. Information on SEN pupils should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis to the relevant people, and should not be discussed in the staff room in open conversation. All students deserve discretion.

While supporting the pupil's development in ways that will foster security and confidence, SNAs must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with school management in order to safeguard children.

SNA/ISA Meetings

Where possible, the school's complement of SNAs will meet, on a termly basis with the SEN Co-ordinator, to discuss and develop any SEN related matters. These meetings aim to encourage commitment, team spirit and provide an opportunity for the SNAs to pool their skills, to the overall benefit of the pupils and the school. A record of these meetings is kept.

Team Spirit

At all times SNAs should endeavour to create a professional and respectful working environment, which is conducive to achieving the aims of Clonturk Community College and recognising that the aims of the SNAs are best achieved in a caring, mutually supportive and respectful manner. As with all members of the school community, SNAs share the responsibility of upholding the school ethos and pillars of Kindness, Respect, Pride and Ambition.

School Policies

SNAs should be aware of all Clonturk Community College policies.

Hours of work

All SNAs are contracted to work bell to bell with a further ten minutes in the morning and ten minutes at the end of the day, to assist with the arrival and dispersal of SEN students.

In addition, there may be times when the DES prescribes additional hours to be performed by SNAs (for example, Haddington Road Agreement). These hours and the duties to be performed will follow recommendations from the DES and Forsa guidelines.

Breaks

Breaks should be taken as per the timetable the SNA is following. This is to ensure there are always the required supports in place for students on the Continuum of Support. Where an SNA feels a student may need additional support while they are away on break, that cannot be managed by the class teachers, the SNA should communicate this with the Student Support Team via Teams.

Appendix I

Examples for recording assistance on VSware Notes

- Toilet break
- Sensory Break
- Movement Break
- Assistive Technology
- Assisted with Organisation
- Assisted with scribing
- Assisted with reading
- Supervised X taking medication. Time, Location, witnessed by [insert Initials of 2nd staff member]