



**LORETO SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
CLONMEL**

**Whole School Inclusion Policy**

**Ratified by  
The Board of Management  
on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

## **Loreto Philosophy of Education**

Loreto Schools are called on to model and promote a philosophy of life based on belief in God, finding God in all things, striving to live out Gospel values, convinced of the dignity and destiny of each individual.

The creation of a dynamic community where every student is valued equally and has a real sense of belonging is a priority in a Loreto School. Inclusivity and the celebration of diversity are the hallmarks of a Loreto school

(Continuing the Journey: A Loreto Education)

## **Loreto Secondary School Clonmel Mission Statement**

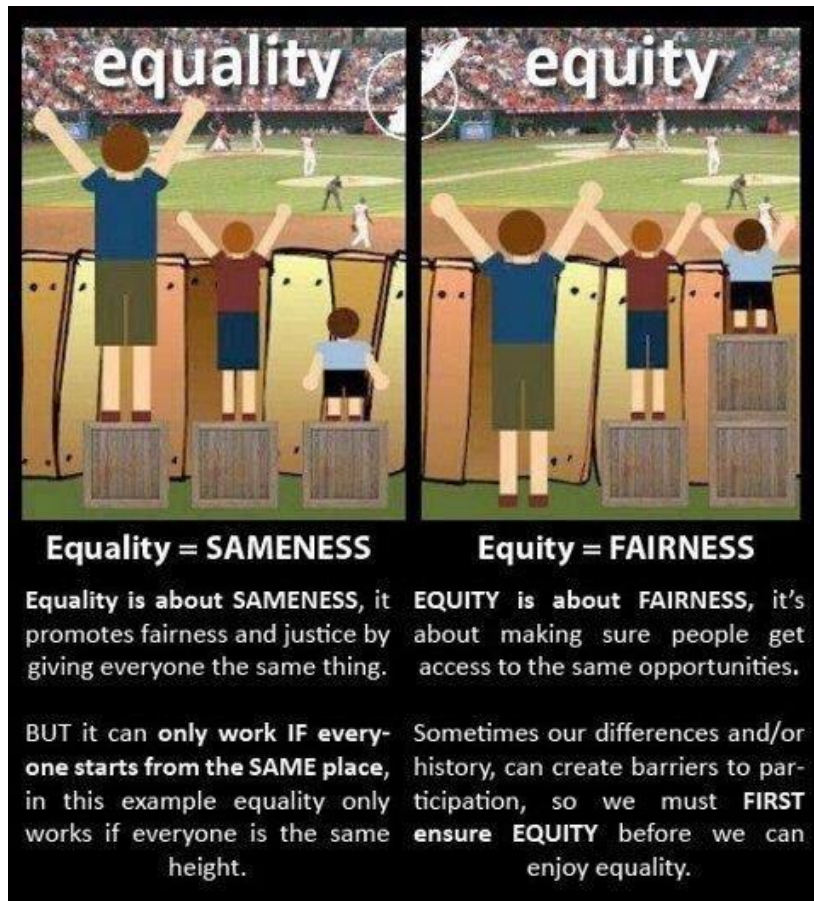
*'Our school is a caring Christian Community in which students have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.'*

## **Aims**

This policy applies to all students attending Loreto Secondary School Clonmel, including those who have additional educational needs.

The aims of our Whole School Inclusion policy are to:

- Remove barriers for students to ensure that all students have equitable access to school life and the curriculum
- Provide, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of holistic education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school, in order that may achieve to their potential
- Ensure that all our students leave school as active, responsible global citizens with the life skills that they need to participate in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives as far as possible
- Enable all students to belong to an educational community without prejudice and within which individual difference is celebrated
- To develop the necessary systems, structures and staff expertise in supporting students with additional educational needs



## Legal Framework

This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and additional educational needs, the statutory requirements placed on schools and Boards of Managements by:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act (2000) and Equality Act (2004)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- Children First Act 2015
- GDPR 2018

and relevant Circular Letters from the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Definition of additional educational needs**

The definition of an additional educational needs student is understood to relate to a student who, for any reason, is unable either to participate fully in, benefit from or reach their full potential, in the standard educational process without support.

### **Provision for students with additional educational needs**

Provision for students is made in consultation with parents whose role as primary educators of the student is recognised and valued. All students, including those with additional needs will be offered the same range and choice of subjects. Students with additional needs may choose to drop a subject or subjects, in consultation with their parents, in order to receive extra tuition in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. The level of support depends on resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills, and their distribution at the discretion of the school, to best meet needs. Our provision map reflects the NEPS Post Primary Continuum of Support; School Support for All, for Some and for Few.

A whole-school approach is critical in supporting students with additional needs. School structures such as the Pastoral Care system (Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Inclusion Co-Ordinators, Deputy Principal and Principal), the Student Support Team, the teaching staff, including Special Education Teachers, the SNAs and the CARA programme all play a vital role in fostering inclusion. The Guidance Counsellor provides a one-to-one counselling service and career guidance advice. The Pastoral Care team and the Student Support team provide links between the school and families of students requiring additional support.

The Inclusion Team supports students who have:

- Specific learning needs in the lower percentile ranges of ability
- A diagnosed special educational need arising from disability
- General Learning Difficulty
- Ongoing significant illnesses
- Physical disabilities
- Students with social /emotional / behavioural needs
- Any student with an additional need

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

- To ensure that the school has a comprehensive Inclusion Policy in place that has been developed collaboratively with all the relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant and progressive curriculum is provided in the school.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with additional learning needs.
- To support school staff in completing CPD relevant to the inclusion of all students.

### **THE PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- The Principal / Deputy has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with additional needs.
- To appoint an Inclusion Co-ordinator/Co-ordinators from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the co-ordinator(s), facilitating their co-ordination of provision for students with additional needs, including the provision of co-ordination time, a commitment to CPD etc.
- To keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance to student inclusion and additional needs.
- To liaise, in consultation with the Inclusion Co-ordinator(s), with the Department of Education and Skills and other outside agencies.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of hours and funds.
- Developing a climate of confidentiality regarding the sensitive information of all the partners involved in inclusive education provision in line with GDPR
- Reporting any child protection issues / concerns to Tusla in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2015

### **THE INCLUSION CO-ORDINATORS**

The Inclusion Co-Ordinators liaise closely with the Principal, Deputy Principal, the Inclusion Support Team, and the mainstream staff to foster a whole school approach to supporting students with additional needs.

The Inclusion Co-Ordinator's role may include:

- Assisting with arrangements for the successful transfer of students from their primary school to Loreto Secondary School and in gathering information about students, including those with additional needs before this transfer. This includes an input on Open Night, Incoming First Year Assessment Day, New Beginnings and meeting parents / guardians and students prior to entry, and visits to primary schools prior to entry
- Distribution of students into class groups in conjunction with the Guidance Counsellor
- Assisting in the creation of the overall school timetable in order to ensure effective use of resources, i.e. team teaching
- Creation of staff timetables for teachers working with individual / small groups of students with additional needs
- SNA Co-ordination and timetable creation
- Policy review and development, strategic planning, provision mapping and departmental self-evaluation
- Assisting in planning for individual students with additional needs and, as appropriate, providing advice to teacher colleagues on curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, text / E-books and other teaching and learning resources
- The identification of students for whom additional teaching supports are to be provided and organising the provision of those supports
- The sharing of good practice and teaching and learning tools
- Liaising with parents/guardians of students with additional needs
- Liaising with support personnel and external professionals and agencies, including the coordination of applications to the Department of Education and Skills, NCSE, SENO, NEPS, SESS, HSE, RACE, DARE and other education and health agencies, as appropriate, for teacher training, resources and support services for students with additional needs
- The storage of relevant reports and records on students with additional needs
- Communicating essential information to staff members regarding students, as relevant and appropriate

- Referring students, in consultation with parents / guardians, to external agencies for assessment / further support
- Assessing students and preparation of applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Examinations and Disability Access Route to Education for third level colleges with the guidance counsellor
- Arranging for the provision of Reasonable Accommodations in the house exams and mocks where relevant and appropriate in line with available resources
- Facilitates and chairs Inclusion department meetings
- Liaises with the SENO in relation to provision, SNA access, Assistive Technology and other applications to the NCSE
- Maintains and updates Student Support plans as well as the yearly Inclusion Register
- Administers and maintains records of assessment tests carried out throughout the school year with the guidance counsellor
- Engaging in personal CPD, and the organization and delivery of CPD for the wider staff
- Developing a climate of confidentiality regarding the sensitive information of all the partners involved in inclusive education provision in line with GDPR
- Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2015

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

- Special Education Teachers work closely with individual students / small groups of students with additional needs to reinforce and support the learning taking place in the mainstream classroom.
- Special Education Teachers test students with additional needs, plan to meet these needs, monitor their progress and advise teachers, students and parents / guardians
- Special Education Teachers are involved in the development, organisation, delivery and review of Student Support Plans. This is a collaborative process, where Inclusion Co-ordinators, SETs, the mainstream staff, and where appropriate, external professionals work together to develop, implement, monitor and review such plans.
- The SETs shall be seen to teach senior and exam classes – at both higher and ordinary level.
- Engage with CPD as appropriate
- Ensure that all sensitive information is stored, accessed and shared in line with GDPR.
- Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection

## **TEACHERS**

- Mainstream teachers have a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with additional needs
- Mainstream teachers consult data such as CAT scores, reading ages, Inclusion Register, reports carried out by external professional and Student Support Plans as relevant.
- Teachers have a central role in identifying students who may have previously unidentified additional needs and drawing the attention of the Inclusion Team to such students.
- Teachers implement Student Support Plans and monitor the progress of students with additional needs. As part of this process, teachers liaise with the Inclusion Team.
- Teaching is differentiated, in so far as is possible, in order to meet individual needs. Differentiated instruction is a means by which teachers can establish in their classrooms an inclusive and supported learning environment for all students.
- In planning differentiation, the teacher collaborates with and seeks advice and assistance from the Inclusion Co-ordinators and other members of the Inclusion Team, as appropriate. Teachers should make themselves aware of the additional needs of students in their classes.
- Teachers can contribute to school development planning for students with additional needs through strategic planning at the subject department level within the school.
- Engage with CPD as appropriate
- Ensure that all sensitive information is stored, accessed and shared in line with GDPR.
- Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2015

## **SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS (SNA)**

- SNAs may be appointed to meet care needs of students with assessed additional needs who have, for example, a significant medical need for assistance or a significant impairment of physical or sensory function, or on behalf of students whose behaviour is such that they are a danger to themselves or to other students. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.
- The SNAs work closely with the teachers in providing assistance to students with additional needs, for example in the areas of personal care, behavior and emotional support, assistance



with mobility and organisation, administration of medication, supervision beyond which the mainstream teacher can provide etc.

- SNAs normally carry out their work in the school premises. However, on occasions when students with special needs are required to attend a venue outside the school, a SNA may be assigned to provide assistance to the students in the other setting and to accompany them while they are travelling to and from the school.
- The SNA plays an important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development. It is important that the Special Needs Assistant supports student participation in school life without developing a culture of dependency.
- The duties of the Special Needs Assistants involve tasks of a non-teaching nature (refer to Circular SNA 12/05)
- Engage with CPD as appropriate
- Ensure that all sensitive information is stored, accessed and shared in line with GDPR.
- Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2015

### **Parents / Guardians**

- The role of parents / guardians is critical in supporting their child's learning. Parents / guardians remain the primary educators of their children and must ensure that their children arrive at school best equipped to learn.
- Parents can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child's learning, learning differences and learning preferences.
- Parents are required to provide any information relating to their child's learning, e.g. reports, assessments etc. prior to entry. This information enables the school to begin to plan for the inclusive education of the child.
- Appointments may be made through the main office to meet with the Guidance Counsellor, SEN Co-Ordinator, Tutor, Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress, or the difficulties, they observe in their child's learning as they progress through the various stages of post-primary school.
- Parents also assist their child by showing an interest in their school work and by arranging an appropriate place at home for them in which to do homework. By familiarising themselves with the approaches taken in school, parents provide more effective support for their children at home and can assist them in the practice and reinforcement of new skills.

## **The Guidance Counsellor**

- The Guidance Counsellor is a key member of our Student Support Team. The Guidance Counsellor assists in facilitating the provision of education for students with additional learning needs and their inclusion in the school.
- The Guidance Counsellor ensures that counselling and guidance for students based on their individual needs are included in the school guidance plan.
- The role of the Guidance Counsellor for students with additional needs is two-fold.
  - The Guidance Counsellor works closely with students with additional needs to assist, in conjunction with the student and the parent, in determining the most appropriate route to further education / training.
  - Additional needs often arise from / co-exist with mental health difficulties. The Guidance Counsellor plays a key role in supporting students with such needs.
- Engage with CPD as appropriate
- Ensure that all sensitive information is stored, accessed and shared in line with GDPR.
- Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2015

## **Student Support Plans**

A student support plan (SSP) for an individual student is developed through a process of consultation and collaboration between teachers, students, parents and external professionals. The SSP is a collaborative document which assists all staff in supporting students with additional needs, as the student is provided with an inclusive education to the greatest extent practicable.

Student support plans are drawn up, implemented and reviewed using the following steps:

Step 1 Gathering information

Step 2 Statement of student's strengths and interests

Step 3 Identification of priority learning needs and time frame for attainment of targets

Step 4 Setting targets that are SMART

Step 5 Identification of the strategies and resources required

Step 6 Setting date for review of SSP

The first stage in the planning process is an assessment of the student's current needs. Consultation with both students and parents / guardians is often the initial step in this process. Assessing current

needs may include an assessment that is carried out by a professional from outside the school such as a psychologist or speech and language therapist. If these assessments are not available, but deemed necessary, the Inclusion Co-Ordinator(s) will make the relevant referrals in consultation with the parents / guardians. It may mean the transfer of psychological report, passports etc. from the primary school with parental permission.

Formal and informal methods of assessment are used during a student's lifetime in the school. The formal methods include the use of standardised tests, criterion referenced tests and diagnostic tests. Informal methods of testing include classroom tests, informal observation by the teacher, evaluation of homework and informal analysis of students' language and social development. All information gathered is combined to form the SSP, which is reviewed periodically.

This Whole School Inclusion Policy was agreed on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date for review, 3 years from now:** March 2022