



## *THE COMMONS NATIONAL SCHOOL*

### *Inclusion Policy*

*The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.*

#### *Aims:*

*This policy applies to all students attending The Commons National School, 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 they may achieve to their potential*
- Ensure that all our students leave school as active, responsible 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.*

### ***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 keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance to student inclusion and additional needs.*
- *To liaise 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*

**SEN CO-ORDINATOR** • *co-ordinates the work of the SEN (Special Education Needs) Team*

- *liaises with staff members in relation to selection and implementation of tests and other means of assessing student's achievements and progress*
- *facilitates communication with staff on SEN issues*
- *ensures student confidentiality is upheld*

### **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, SETS, the mainstream staff, and where appropriate, external professionals work together to develop, implement, monitor and review such plans.*
- *The SETS shall be seen all classes*
- *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 2025*

### **TEACHERS**

- *Mainstream teachers have a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with additional needs*

- *Mainstream teachers consult data such as reading ages, 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 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.*
- *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 2025*

#### **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, behaviour and emotional support, 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.*

- *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 non-teaching nature (refer to Circular SNA 30/2014*
- *Engage with CPD as appropriate*
- *Ensure that all sensitive information is stored, accessed and shared in line with GDPR. SNA book records kept in locked cabinet.*
- *Referring any child protection issues / concerns to the DLP / DDLP in line with Child Protection Guidelines 2025*

### *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 Principal, Teacher, SEN staff.*
- *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 schoolwork 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.*

### Student Support Plans/PPP

*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 twice yearly. (School Support review at year end/school Support Plus review twice yearly)*

### ASSESSMENT

#### *Informal Assessment:*

- *observations by mainstream teachers*
- *consultation with parents*
- *Meeting with student*

#### *Formal Assessment:*

*All classes are screened annually using standardized testing.*

- *Junior Infants - Phonics Test, BIAP. (partly admin by Learning Support Teacher).*
- *Senior Infants - MIST, Reading Recovery Assessment (admin by SET).*
- *First - Sixth Class — Drumcondra English/Micra T, Sigma Math Standardised Tests and Drumcondra Spelling.*
- *First & 4th Classes (Annually) - NNRIIT (New Non-Reading Intelligence Test)*

*The first stage in the planning process is an assessment of the student's current needs. Consultation with both students and parents / guardians are 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 SET/Principal/Class Teacher will make the relevant referrals in consultation with the parents/guardians.*

### ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT:

- *In-class Station Teaching Support*
- *Team Teaching*
- *Small Group Withdrawal*
- *Individual Withdrawal*

**IRISH EXEMPTIONS:**

- *granted when criteria are met*

**EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE:**

- *support and encourage the development of special abilities - provide opportunities for enrichment and extension*

**STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES:**

- *these pupils may require additional supports to ensure inclusive education such as:*
- *SNA support*
- *Assistive Technology*
- *Modified Assessment*
- *Support Teaching*

**Ratification and Implementation**

*This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/09/2025*

**Colm Ó Gallcháoir**

*Chairperson, Board of Management*

*11/09/2025*

**Joseph Cannon**

*Principal*

*11/09/2025*