



St. Mac Dara's Community College

Special Needs Assistant Policy

St. Mac Dara's Community College, through a comprehensive education programme, provides as far as possible, educational opportunities to meet the needs of each individual student. It is a multi-denominational, co-educational college. The following is the Mission Statement of St. Mac Dara's CC.

Mission Statement

"We, the community of this College, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad-based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their potential."

School Ethos

As part of the DDLETB schools we also proudly endorse our school ethos which is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community. St Mac Dara's is a multi-denominational, co-educational school under the aegis of the Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education Training Board. The college recognises its obligation to all its students and its positive ethos is based on the quality of its relationships, both the professional relationships between teachers, the relationships between teachers and students and the relationships between teachers and parents/guardian(s). This collaborative approach is reflected in the college's mission statement.

Introduction and Legislative Framework

Through cooperation and mutual respect between the partners in education, the students, teaching staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management, we strive to ensure that each student achieves his/her full potential. The school reserves the right to adapt or modify this policy in response to emerging patterns of behaviour among students reflective of society

This policy relates to the following legislation:

- The Disability Act 2005
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The EPSEN Act 2004
- Equal Status Act 2000

- D.E.S Circulars 07/02 09/09 30/14, 0014/17, 51/19, 30/20, 0072/25

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- Child Protection Policy
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Inclusion Policy

This is not an exhaustive list of related policies.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice (RP) is about building positive relationships and taking a positive and solution-focused approach. St. Mac Dara's CC have engaged at whole-staff level in an RP professional learning programme, in association with NUIM

2021 – 2024 and new members to the team are supported to develop the skills of RP. At all times the school, as a community endeavours to employ a restorative approach to promote positive behaviour and restore relationships when the need arises. RP is at the core of our school's Code of Positive Behaviour. It creates an ethos of respect and inclusion in line with our core values and presents an opportunity for all involved to be accountable and responsible for their behaviour.

Inclusion of all students

St. Mac Dara's Community College places a high value on respect and on embracing diversity which is central to the practices in the school. Our activities endeavour to meet the diverse needs of all our students.

Aims

- To outline the role of the SNA in a whole college context
- To ensure the effective deployment of SNAS to meet the identified needs of students with additional needs
- To enable the SNA to be an effective support to the children in his/her care
- To enable the SNA to be an effective support to the class teacher in matters relating to AEN students.
- All SNA staff have clear guidelines on procedures within the college.
- Each SNA can see him/herself as contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children and the overall efficiency of the college
- We endeavour to provide a culture of fairness, transparency and equality throughout the college
- The college promotes a policy of Inclusion for all stakeholders.
- To provide optimum learning experiences for all AEN students through judicious use of the skills and talents of the SNA.
- To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the SNA.

Staff Roles

The Principal, through the AEN Coordinator has:

- Responsibility for assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA.
- Responsibility for co-ordinating the timetable of the SNA
- Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the SNAs' contribution to the needs of the students.
- Responsibility for managing areas of conflict, which may arise.
- Responsibility for co-ordinating meetings with SNAs. Minutes of these will be held by the AEN Coordinator
- Assume responsibility for the Personalised Pupil Profile (PPP) for students with SNA access in consultation with all the relevant people including SNAs.

The Teachers

- The subject teacher has a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream class.
- Collaborate with the SNAs to ensure that the PPP is put into practise.
- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the educational progress of all students in his/her class.
- To acknowledge the SNA's role in supporting the Care needs of the student in class.

The Special Needs Assistant

- The SNAs are considered an intrinsic part of the college team
- The SNA always works under the direction of the AEN Coordinator.
- Each SNA has a duty to maintain confidentiality.
- Each SNA has a duty of care to the student who has access, supporting the care needs of the student.
- The teacher is responsible for planning lessons, setting educational targets and outcomes and directs learning. The SNA provides support to the teacher and the AEN students thereby facilitating the teaching of the curriculum.

The role and responsibilities of the SNA in St. Mac Dara's Community College are as follows:

- Assistance with clothing, feeding, intimate care, toileting, general hygiene, general care and observation and the administration of medication, mobility and orientation around the school building.
- To foster the participation of assigned students in the social and academic processes of the college. This is done through supervising and assisting AEN students in activities set by the teacher and promoting the inclusion of these students in work and keeping them on task. It may also include tasks such as:
- Accompanying teachers and AEN students to activities outside the classroom,

- Assisting students boarding and alighting from buses when required
- Assisting AEN students in P.E and all practical classes.
- The SNA will help supervise AEN students during break times, where care needs require this and when a teacher is present
- The SNA may bring any observations to the attention of either the class teacher or the Tutor.
- The SNA can also play an important part by supporting the work of other agencies and professionals such as the Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Behaviour Therapist, Facilitators of Peer Programmes such as W.A.L.K. and Occupational Therapists under the guidance of the AEN Co-ordinator.
- The SNA will also assist teachers in the supervision of students during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods, college visits, walks and similar activities.
- To fully participate in the life of St. Mac Dara's Community College, the SNA will participate in further training.

Classroom Procedure

- Recording sheets may be required by the Principal on individual children on a case by case basis.
- Information received on children, and observations made in classrooms need to be handled sensitively, carefully and with the utmost confidentiality as per college policy.
- Parents with questions or issues about college policy or practice should be referred directly to the class teacher, Tutor, Year Head, Principal or AEN Coordinator. This applies to direct face- to face communication, home/college communication or indirect telephone communication.

Staff Meetings

The SNA team will meet regularly during college arranged subject meetings. The minutes of the meetings are given to the Principal and the AEN Coordinator.

Reporting Procedures

1. All SNAs are expected to report directly to the AEN Coordinator. If the AEN Coordinator is absent then to the Principal or in his/her absence the Deputy Principals.
2. All SNA's must inform the teacher on duty of incidents/accident/injury/observed bruises immediately. An incident report form must then be completed by the appropriate teacher /staff member.
3. The exception to this reporting procedure is in the case of concerns re Child Protection. In this instance report directly to the Designated Liaison Person who is the Principal and in his/her absence the Deputy Designated Liaison Person - the Deputy Principals. These positions have been authorised by the Board of Management. SNA's can also report to Tusla themselves.

Training

Induction of new SNAs is the role of the AEN Coordinator and the Principal. A member of the AEN team will assist induction of a new SNA for familiarisation following commencement of employment.

Success Criteria

This Policy is focused on making a difference to the inclusion of and teaching and learning of students with additional needs in our college. We will know that the Policy is achieving its aims when:

- Students are experiencing a safe and stimulating environment
- The students with AEN are becoming more independent learners and acquiring life skills
- The student with AEN is reaching the targets set out in the Personalised Pupil Profile
- All staff experience teamwork and support.

Ratification of SNA Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 10, 09, '26

Signed: Ms. Marie Collins (Chair)

Signed: RS (Principal)

Date of Review: _____

