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## Whole-School Inclusion Policy

### **1. Introduction:**

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) takes in our school and the philosophy which underpins it. It is written in the context of The Education Act (1998) and takes cognisance of The Equal Status Act (2000), The Equality Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004). Two further publications have informed the content of this policy- "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs-Post Primary Guidelines (Department of Education & Science (DES) Inspectorate: 2007) and "Exceptionally Able Students-Draft Guidelines for Teachers" (NCCA: 2007).

The policy is a revision of the existing draft policy and is a work in progress involving a consultative process involving staff, students, parents and Board of Management. The document should be read in conjunction with the following policies: (1) Admissions, (2) Student Support, (3) Anti-Bullying and (4) Guidance and Counselling Plan (draft).

### **2. Mission:**

"Loreto / IBVM education values and respects each student and seeks to educate all irrespective of ability ... in an open learning environment." (Kolkata Guidelines: Page 6)

In Loreto College Foxrock, we endeavour to ensure that our school is experienced "*In the Spirit of Mary Ward, Loreto College Foxrock is a caring, enabling, learning community where staff and students work together with mutual respect to fulfil their God-given potential with integrity, compassion, and a sense of humour in the generous pursuit of a just world.*" Excellence is understood in relation to each girl's potential. We see our school as an inclusive community that is welcoming of all. We foster an atmosphere of learning that is holistic in approach and nurtures each individual student's personal growth and development. Our Special Educational Needs (SEN) Programme is a reflection of our commitment to the ideal of an inclusive learning community. We develop programmes on the basis of students' needs.

### **3. Definitions:**

(a) Students with Special Educational Needs are those who are restricted from participating in and benefiting from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition. (EPSEN Act 2004).



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(b) Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students.

#### **4. Access to Support Teaching:**

A student may be selected for Support Teaching in our school in the following circumstances:

A student who has had an educational psychological assessment which recommends Learning Support / Resource teaching.

- A student who has a Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) or a General Learning Difficulty (GLD).
- A student who chooses to avail of an Irish Exemption.
- A student identified by a subject teacher/ teachers as having difficulty with one or more of their subjects.
- A student with emotional or behavioural difficulties may be given consideration.
- A student with Traveller status.
- A student with physical difficulties.
- A student with English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs.
- A student identified as Exceptionally Able through a full educational psychological assessment.

#### **5. Roles:**

**The following have responsibility for managing the school response for students with Special Educational Needs.**

##### **Board of Management:**

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of a Whole School Inclusion Policy.
- Enables a periodic review of the range of curriculum provision within the school.
- Provides resources for the professional development of staff in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensures adequate accommodation and resources.
- Provides a secure facility for the storage of records.
- Ensures that the rights of parents as prescribed in legislation are upheld in the school.

##### **Principal:**

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met.
- Works with the Board, Staff and Parents/ Guardians in the development of Whole School Inclusion.



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- Ensures that mainstream teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with special needs.
- Monitors implementation of learning support programmes and selection of students for learning support.
- Consults and liaises with outside bodies and agencies.
- Provides for in-service for staff.
- Promotes the involvement of parents of students with special educational needs.
- Is a member of the Care Team and attend a weekly timetabled meeting as part of that team.

**The following work on a day-to-day basis with students with Special Educational Needs:**

**Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-ordinator:**

- Is a member of the Care Team and attend a weekly timetabled meeting as part of that team.
- Co-ordinates Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) or Group Learning Plans (GLP's) for students with Special Educational Needs in consultation with parents, student, SEN team and teachers.
- Co-ordinates the work of the SEN team.
- Liaises with guidance counsellor(s) and other staff members in relation to the selection and implementation of tests and other means for assessing students' achievement and progress.
- Co-ordinates the gathering of information for ILP's or GLP's for students with special educational needs from assessment reports by outside professionals and in-school assessment.
- Co-ordinates Reasonable Accommodations at Examinations in consultation with the Guidance and Counselling Department.
- Makes application to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for resource hours and/or Assistive Technology for incoming students with special needs.
- Organises a Department budget and purchase resources.
- Facilitates communication with the general staff on SEN issues.
- Provides advice to subject teachers as required.
- Communicates with parents/guardians if it is deemed that their daughter is in need of Support Teaching.
- Meets and advises parents as required.
- Liaises with the feeder primary schools and gathers information about the learning needs of students with SEN.



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**Learning Support/ Resource (LS/R) Teacher:**

- Works with the SEN Coordinator and teachers.
- Supports the literacy and numerical needs of students.
- May be involved in co-operative teaching in mainstream classes with mainstream teachers.
- May withdraw students for additional classes in particular subjects.
- Provides specific support for students with special educational needs in social skills etc.
- Assists the SEN Coordinator in the gathering of information for ILP's or GLP's for students with special educational needs from assessment reports by outside professionals and in-school assessment.
- Is involved in the administration of standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Advises on Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations.

**Guidance Counsellor:**

- Administers diagnostic assessment tests to incoming First Year students.
- Counsels in personal, educational and career development.
- Provides career information management.
- Consults with the SEN team, staff and parents.
- Provides referrals to other professionals and agencies.
- Is a member of the Care Team and attend a weekly timetabled meeting as part of that team

**Subject Teacher:**

- Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/ her class.
- Collaborates with the SEN Coordinator and/or LS/R teacher in identifying pupils who may have general or specific learning difficulties.
- Attempts, as far as possible, to differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils, e.g. setting objectives at appropriate levels, modifying presentations, questioning appropriately.
- Provides learning activities and materials that will enable success.
- May be involved in providing Curricular Support to students identified in the identification procedures outlined in Section 6 of this policy.



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### **Special Needs Assistant (SNA):**

- Special Needs Assistants make a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with Special Educational Needs. The duties of the SNA are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management and are outlined in Circular SNA 12/05.
- When the SNA is engaged in assisting a student or a group of students in relation to a particular learning task, this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task.
- An SNA is expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential.

### **Parents/Guardians:**

- Loreto College Foxrock recognises the right of parents / guardians of students with Special Educational Needs to be involved in and consulted about the programme of education available to their child.
- Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties at home.
- In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling are conducted, parents are consulted and their permission sought.
- When an Individual or Group Learning Plan is being developed, parents will be consulted.

### **Student:**

- An ILP or GLP is student-centred.
- A student for whom an ILP is being developed is consulted as an essential part of the development process.
- Students are encouraged to approach the SEN Coordinator if they have concerns about their learning.
- Students are encouraged to contribute to the learning targets as set out in an ILP or GLP.



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## **6. Identification Procedures for identifying students with SEN.**

- (a) Parents may indicate on the student information form on enrolling in the school of special needs that were identified in Primary school. The Principal meets parents in the Spring of the year of entry to request information regarding any special educational needs.
- (b) The Learning Support & Resource Coordinator and the Guidance Counsellor consult with Primary teachers when visiting feeder Primary schools in the Spring.
- (c) A class teacher, tutor and /or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the Care Team (SEN and Guidance Departments). Referral forms are available in the marked tray in the staff room, and on the Teacher drive on the server.

When a parent notifies the Principal/ Year Head/ Tutor or Subject Teacher that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the Principal/ Year Head/ Tutor/ Subject Teacher initiates a process of formal and informal assessment to be conducted by the SEN team.

Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:

- Observations from mainstream teachers.
- Consultations with parents.
- Meeting with student.

Formal assessment may involve some or all of the following:

- Review of entrance tests.
- Review of in-house exams and reports.
- Standardised assessment.
- Behavioural record if appropriate.
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellors.
- Referral to outside agency/ agencies.

Following this profiling stage, decisions are made as to the appropriate support warranted:

- There is no need for further action.
- There is a need for monitoring and support in a mainstream setting.
- Purposeful withdrawal is desirable.
- It may be decided that further investigation is required, and parents will be advised in relation to assessments.



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### **7. When a student is identified with Special Educational Needs:**

- (a) In a situation where a student is identified as needing additional support, an ILP or GLP is drawn up in consultation with stakeholders. Priority learning needs are identified and a time frame for the attainment of targets is included. Targets are set for each priority learning need and strategies and resources required are identified. An ILP or GLP is a working document and may change according to needs, resources and/or other unforeseen circumstances.
- (b) An ILP or GLP is developed and reviewed periodically. This review may take into account the perspectives of both parents and staff.
- (c) All records pertaining to the student will be retained on the student file.

### **8. Organisation of Class Groups:**

In First Year, classes are mixed ability. In Second and Third Year, classes are banded for Irish and Maths. Transition Year is mixed ability. Senior Cycle operates a mixed ability for all subjects with the exception of Irish, English and Maths, except where specific needs arise.

### **9. Organisation of Support:**

Currently, we have a mixed model of Support in operation:

- Team Teaching.
- Small Group Withdrawal.
- Individual Withdrawal

Students may be on a reduced timetable with the agreement of the student and parents/guardians.

### **10. Other Issues:**

- (a) Withdrawals:

The SEN Department may withdraw students from subjects in consultation with the respective teachers and with parents. In some cases, a student with SEN may be on reduced timetables to facilitate her individual needs.



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(b) Irish Exemptions:

Irish exemptions will only be granted when the criteria outlined in Circular M 10/94 are met. All students who have an Irish exemption will be offered as much support teaching at this time as our resources allow. This may vary from year to year.

Parental permission is sought in advance for the transfer of any information to subject teachers. If an educational psychological assessment is available, a summary of the needs and recommendations is forwarded to all relevant staff.

**11. The Exceptionally Able Student:**

Students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students are deemed to be exceptionally able.

Students may excel in various areas and the school will do what it can as an inclusive learning community to support them and encourage the development of their special abilities.

**12. Students with Physical Difficulties:**

Students with physical difficulties (permanent or temporary) may require additional support. This support may take the form of:

1. SNA support
2. Assistive Technology
3. Modified assessment procedures
4. Support Teaching

**13. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year by the Principal and Deputy Principal, SEN Coordinator and Support Teacher.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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