

Midleton College



POLICY FOR INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

This Policy is drawn up in compliance with the Post-Primary Guidelines for Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs & informed by The Education Act (1998) & The Equal Status Act 2002.

Context:

Midleton College is a co-educational boarding and day school with a Church of Ireland Ethos, (The Ethos Statement of the College is attached to this document). The process of Application to, and Enrolment in, Midleton College is set out in The Enrolment Policy, also attached to this document. Both The Ethos Statement & The Enrolment Policy are informed by the Post Primary guidelines and The Education Act, The Equal Status Act and are subject to further and future revision in light of legislation and/or DES Circular and/or good practice development, as may occur from time to time.

- **The school enrolment policy, including the enrolment of students with special educational needs**

In the context of the Application & Enrolment Policy, Midleton College does not undertake any form of entrance examination and makes no prior categorization of applicant based on previous educational attainment. Midleton College is valued as a familial school within a Church of Ireland Ethos, and exists to serve the local and regional Protestant community in the first instance and the wider local and regional community of East & North Cork of those families in sympathy with and supportive of the Ethos Statement of the College.

Midleton College has had an Ex-Quota Learning Support position since 1982. In more recent years this position has been extended to include the provision of resource teaching hours on a year-to-year basis, following the allocation of such class contact hours to the College by the regional Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), on a year-to-year basis.

- **The school attendance policy and procedures for encouraging the attendance of students with special educational needs who may have poor attendance**

All applicant families are invited to meet with the Principal on an individual family basis as part of the Application process. The school year commences with an Induction Day for all new 1st Form pupils. Pupils in all year groups are allocated a Form Teacher. The provision of Form Teachers for each class group within each year is a core component of the pastoral care network within the College. All parents/guardians meet with the child's Form Teacher at the 1st Form Induction Day. Each 6th Form pupil undertakes the role of Mentor to a 1st Form pupil.

The Attendance & Absence Policy for Midleton College is attached to this document. The attendance of all pupils is monitored on a daily basis.

➤ **The promotion of a school ethos, values and climate and the acceptance of diversity**

The Board of Management of Midleton College has ratified The Ethos Statement & The Enrolment Policy of the College which support a policy of inclusion within the enrolment process and in the day-to-day operation and life of the College.

Pupils in Junior Cycle are divided into mixed-ability Form groups. Access to all subjects and all extra-curricular activities is available to all pupils, with reference to the College's duty of care in all activities.

The College actively promotes inclusiveness, tolerance and acceptance of diversity in its day-to-day activities. Some examples of inclusion within the formal activities of the College are as follows:

In 1st Form, the Welcome Ceremony, in the 7th week of the term, involves all members of 1st Form.

In 4th Form, the Transition Year Awards ceremony involves all members of 4th Form.

At the Annual Academic Prize Day, the past pupils association, The Midleton College Association, awards prizes for those pupils from within Learning Support whose efforts have led to them attaining grades that are a reflection of the academic achievement.

➤ **The procedures for arranging the transfer of students from primary schools**

Pupils transfer from Primary school occurs following their parents/guardians accepting the offer of a place in the December of the year prior to entry.

The Learning Support Coordinator, having received parental consent, discusses with the Primary Principal and / or relevant teachers of those pupils entering the College with identified Special Needs, in the month of March or April prior to entry, such matters as may be relevant for the successful integration, educational and social progress upon commencement of schooling. Relevant information is communicated to the 1st Form Form Teachers and Principal / Deputy Principal.

1st Form Form Teachers and the Principal, Deputy Principal & Learning Support Coordinator meet to divide up the 1st Form pupil into 3 mixed and mixed ability groups during August.

All new pupils in 1st Form and the incoming 6th Form are invited to attend an Induction Day which occurs on the day prior to the return of all other year groups. The schedule for this Day is attached to this document.

6th Form pupils are allocated a 1st Form pupil for whom they act as Mentor.

Form Teachers are available to discuss matters relevant to the pupils in their Form groups with parents/guardians by mutual arrangement. This can be done via phone contact or email / fax with the College office, (021-4631146, office@midletoncollege.ie, 021-4632249). Where appropriate a meeting at the College can be arranged with Form Teachers.

Form Teachers receive a Weekly report compiled by subject teachers each Tuesday pm / Wednesday am, prior to the weekly Form Meeting @ 8.50am on a Wednesday morning.

➤ **The arrangements for facilitating the transfer of students to post-school settings following their completion of post-primary education**

Pupils typically leave Midleton College having completed the Leaving certificate. The process of planning for transfer to post-second level is co-ordinated by the Guidance Counsellor in consultation with the pupils, parents/guardians, Principal & Deputy, Form teachers and relevant subject teachers.

The Guidance Programme at senior cycle commences in 4th Form. The programme aims to inform, stimulate, challenge & support each student within each senior cycle group. The objective of the programme is to ensure that as each pupil passes through senior cycle, they come to an understanding of their personal interests and abilities and the means by which they may best use these in the next phase of their lives, when they complete their education at Midleton College.

While for many this will be at the end of 6th Form, in circumstances where this is not the case or the most appropriate pathway, guidance and support will be provided with equal concern to ensure that the best future pathway is put in place for the pupil concerned.

A programme of external visits, visiting speakers, presentations, career aptitude testing & online research underpins the guidance programme at senior cycle, *as per* the College Guidance Plan.

➤ **Procedures leading to the implementation of a staged approach to identifying and responding to students who have low achievement or special educational needs**

The parents/guardians of all incoming pupils are required to provide copies of prior documentation which may be of relevance to the provision of Learning Support or resource teaching supports for their child/ren, in the year prior to entry of their child/ren. This information is treated with confidence. The documentation is used by the college in application for Learning Support / Resource teaching hours, made each year to the Regional SENO. In circumstances where the SENO allocates hours for the educational support of pupils, these are allocated by the Principal in consultation with

the Learning Support Coordinator and deputy principal. Parents/guardians are provided with written confirmation that their child/ren has/have been allocated such hours and also when these will be taught within the weekly timetable.

All new 1st form pupils sit the DATS test during the first week of the school term in September. The results of this test are used to identify:

- ❖ Pupils at the Gifted End of the academic spectrum
- ❖ Pupils whose academic ability displays a particular weakness in the linguistic and / or mathematical sphere.

Pupils emerging within either of the above categories are noted and identified to all subject teachers. Teachers are provided with specific reinforcement of teaching methodologies which have proven successful in supporting pupils within these domains. Subject teachers are requested to liaise with Form Teachers re the progress of pupils so identified.

In the event of a Form Teacher bringing ongoing concerns to the attention of the Learning Support Coordinator, a meeting may be arranged with the parents/guardians of the pupil concerned. Following this discussion parents/guardians may agree to their child undertaking an Educational Psychological Assessment or a local arrangement may be put in place to provide additional supports for the child which will be reviewed on an ongoing basis through mutual contact.

Whole-school planning and organization

➤ The support structures for facilitating the involvement of parents and communication with parents

Parents/guardians are welcome at all times to make contact with teachers regarding the daughter/sons(s) education in the manner set out above. Teachers welcome the input of parents/guardians and seek to work with them to support their role as the primary educators of their children.

One formal Parent-Teacher consultation meeting per year takes place as per the College calendar.

➤ The arrangements for making accommodations in the physical environment of the school

Where the individual needs of a pupil are not immediately facilitated by the College, the parents/guardians of a pupil or applicant pupil should bring this to the attention of the Principal, Deputy, Form Teacher or Learning Support Coordinator. Should it be appropriate, the Principal will bring this matter to the attention of the Board of Management. The College will endeavour to procure such resources as may be required to ensure that all pupils or applicant pupils experience the same level of access and participation in College activities within and beyond the curriculum.

➤ The models of organisation for providing special interventions, including additional teaching support for individual students with special

educational needs

At Junior & Senior Cycle, the majority of pupils who are in receipt of Learning Support hours will be exempt from the study of Irish. Therefore Learning Support and Resource Teaching hours are tagged to Irish in the weekly timetable. Learning Support & resource hours are also tagged to Mathematics and, where appropriate, a modern language, to ensure that pupils may access the necessary teachers at times when subject/subjects which they are not studying occur.

➤ The procedures for identifying students who may have special educational needs and their referral for psychological assessment

This process occurs as part of the pastoral care programme of the College. Where a referral may be appropriate, the written permission of parents/guardians is sought. A referral may be to the regional NEPS psychologist or through a private educational Psychologist, at the discretion of the parents/guardians concerned.

➤ The links with external support agencies and services

Midleton College maintains links with a range of local and regional organizations in support of its pupils with Special Educational Needs. The following are given by way of example:

The Regional SENO's office
NEPS
CAHMS
COPE

➤ The assessment policy and procedures

These are as set out above.

➤ The development, implementation and review of individual education plans

The Learning Support coordinator, in consultation with the Principal, facilitates the provision of individual education plans for pupils within the Learning Support Programme. Each such plan is drawn up utilizing the 'Six Steps' set out in *'Inclusion of Pupils with Special Needs: A guide for Post-Primary Schools'*:

- ❖ Gathering Information
- ❖ Statement of the level of pupil performance
- ❖ Identification of priority learning needs and a time frame for attainment
- ❖ Setting targets for priority learning
- ❖ Identification of strategies and resources which may be required
- ❖ Setting review date

➤ The provision of opportunities for students with special educational needs to gain access to learning in the school alongside students without special educational needs

It is the objective of Midleton College that all pupils have the opportunity to gain the greatest amount from their personal journey through the College during their education. Therefore, within and beyond the academic curriculum, it is College policy

to seek to structure all activities on an inclusive basis.

➤ **The clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the various members of the teaching staff in relation to the education and inclusion of students with special educational needs**

All members of staff have a role in ensuring that all pupils receive the most beneficial and fulfilling educational experience while at Midleton College.

It is the role of the Board of Management to ensure that policies which recognize the requirement provide for inclusion, (such as The Ethos Statement, The Enrolment Policy, The Anti-Bullying Policy), are in place and reviewed as may be appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that such policies are implemented effectively. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that pupils with identified Special Educational needs are provided with Learning Support / Resource teaching hours as may be allocated to them via the Regional SENO. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that parents/guardians of pupils who may require external assessment by an educational psychologist or other educational or psychological expert are provided with this information and the necessary guidance and support to ensure that this is undertaken where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that staff are provided with such ongoing professional training as may be required to ensure that they may provide the best educational experience for each pupil whom they teach.

It is the responsibility of the Learning Support Coordinator to ensure that individual plans for pupils within the Learning Support programme are drawn up, implemented and reviewed.

It is the responsibility of the Learning Support Coordinator or resource teacher to ensure that all relevant teachers are aware of the particular needs of a pupil and the methodologies most likely to support a successful educational experience for such pupils.

It is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure that they teach all pupils in the most effective manner, having regard to the particular needs of the pupils in their class groups.

It is the responsibility of all parents/guardians to support the educational policies and procedures of the College as provided to them at the commencement of each year.

It is the responsibility of each pupil to work to fulfill their potential, academic and personal, during their education at Midleton College.

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