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1. Introduction

As stated in our mission statement, we in Coláiste Na hInse, aim to focus on the development of “the whole young person and aspire to develop each as an intellectual, emotional and spiritual individual. We encourage the highest standards in **ár daltaí** (our students) ensuring that they reach their full potential through strong relationships and positive reinforcement.” Our school acknowledges and respects the rights of the daltaí with SEN to be educated in a welcoming, positive and inclusive environment.

Aos Dána

The SEN Department of Coláiste Na hInse is known as Aos Dána. This title reflects the bród (pride) and respect which Coláiste Na hInse has in all of its daltaí. The Aos Dána of ancient Ireland was composed of individuals with unique skills and talents, and so too are our daltaí who have special educational needs. Every individual brings something unique to their own educational experience which Aos (learning support/resource) and the Aos Dána (SEN Department) endeavour to harness to aid Aos Daltaí in ‘aimsigh do réalt eolais’ (reaching their star).

“To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the conditions for the production or construction of knowledge” – Paulo Freire

The Aos Dána room (A26) is divided into three separate workstation (work stations). In this way, Aos (learning support / resource) promotes a culture of learning. Aos Dána promotes a sense of togetherness and clann amongst our Aos Daltaí and indeed our stalwart múinteoirí. In having multiple groups in A26 at one time, we reduce confusion for students, there is greater interaction between daltaí

and indeed, the daltaí will see how amiably the múinteoirí cooperate and interact amidst teaching and learning. This is done to encourage both individual work, but also group work and discussion. Each workstation can work on their own individual piece of work, or the groups can work together on a topic which they all may find tricky (as different year groups could be in the same room with different teachers, this is a good strategy for revision). This not only promotes social skills, but also peer learning and cooperation between year groups. The workstation of Aos Dána harness dearfachas, bród agus ár gcultúr.

1.1 Defining Special Needs Education

A person with Special Needs Education is defined as “a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit 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...”

(Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

This definition is highlighted in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004).

1.2 Education Act 1998 that contributes to the SEN Policy

The Education Act 1998, refers that the school must

“provide for a diversity of needs, values, and traditions. Under the act, schools are required to use their resources to identify and provide for the educational needs of students with disabilities or other special educational needs.”

(Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines, p16)

The act specifies:

“that the school plan shall state the objectives of the school relating to equality of access to and participation in the school and the measures which the school proposes

to take to achieve those objectives including equality of access to and participation in the school by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs.”

(Government of Ireland, 1998a, section 21, sub-section 2)

The Board of Management and the Special Needs Department, else known as Aos Dána, is aware of the Aos Dána daltaí statutory obligations under the Education Act 1998 to publish a SEN policy, this includes the admissions of daltaí with disabilities and other Special Educational Needs that will be accessible to them and the inclusion in all aspects of Coláiste Na hInse by daltaí with SEN to the highest degree feasible.

“that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are identified and provided for.”

(Education Act 1998, Section 9, a.)

The Equal Status Act (2000) and Equality Act (2004) promote equality of opportunity. This act ensures that schools have access to and commit to equality for all daltaí.

EPSEN Act 2004 focuses on the assistance of daltaí with SEN in

“regard to the provision which will need to be made to assist the child to continue his or her education or training on becoming an adult.”

(EPSEN Act 2004, Section 15, p20)

The EPSEN Act also highlights the importance of the parents’ involvement of “children with special education needs in the education of their children.” (EPSEN Act 2004, Section 15, p5)

Coláiste Na hInse is dedicated to successful implementation of the educational legislation, the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal

Status Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004. We are also fully committed to the principles of these Acts.

1.3 Inclusion

Here at Coláiste Na hInse, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive atmosphere for all daltaí, including Aos Dána daltaí (SEN students). Our mission statement aims to create a:

*“happy and secure in a learning atmosphere characterised by **Dearfachas** (positivity) and belonging.”*

This falls into the EPSEN Act 2004 which defines inclusion as:

“A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with— (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

(EPSEN Act 2004, Section 2, p 7)

To promote inclusion in Coláiste Na hInse we will focus on removing all obstacles in learning and promote involvement in the school. To attain these goals we have renamed the SEN Department, Aos Dána (skilled people).

Our philosophy is centred on daltaí and how we can benefit their needs. We believe in removing labels that surround SEN students and promote positive reinforcement to benefit our daltaí, such as the renaming to Aos Dána. To achieve this, daltaí with SEN who require additional support, which is provided where the school is given the necessary resources.

2. Aims of Aos Dána (SEN) Policy

The aims of this policy is built on the framework of Coláiste Na hInse's ethos and mission statement, while also including government legislation and the devotion to the Aos Dána students that highlight our school policy in SEN. Our policy aims to:

- Be inclusive and ensure that daltaí with disabilities share in the whole school experience as possible.
- To create a welcoming environment for both daltaí and their families.
- To ensure that the structure of the school is such that all daltaí have access of the school.
- To collaborate with parents, authorities and services to assist to identifying specific needs of all daltaí with special educational need at the soonest possible moment.
- To outline procedures and practices to followed in relation to daltaí with special educational needs.
- Support daltaí through the use of the whole school methodology of Restorative Practice.

Monitoring Procedures:

- The Special Educational Needs department will monitor the procedures as outlined in

the policy on a regular basis.

- The Special Educational Needs Department will provide a written report to the Príomhoide annually.

Review Procedures:

- The procedures are reviewed by the SDP Committee every four years.
- The SDP Committee will refer this policy to all partners in education.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities.

2.2 Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated over time.
- To approve the policy at a meeting of the Board.
- To consider reports from the Príomhoide on the implementation of the policy.

2.3 Príomhoide, Deputy Príomhoide and relevant Post Holders:

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the Special Educational Needs policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that the policy is reviewed after an appropriate length of time.
- To establish lines of communication with the Special Educational Needs Organiser.

2.4 Aos Dána Co-Ordinator

- Liaise with the Special Educational Needs Organiser and distribute resources among relevant daltaí in accordance with circulars 0010/2012, 0010/2013 and 0010/2014.
- Identify all the daltaí in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including daltaí who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.
- Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the daltaí' learning needs. Work in conjunction with parents and teaching staff to decide whether one-to-one or group teaching, or a mixture of both, is the best type of support for each individual dalta, depending on the nature of their needs.
- Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified daltaí (all múinteoirí who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations

of additional múinteoir hours for the support of daltaí with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).

- Allocate the identified staff members to the daltaí, taking account of the learning programme needs of individual daltaí and groups of daltaí, including whether it is short-term focused intervention or long-term, continuing support, the time available to all daltaí and the proportion of time needed by individual daltaí and groups of daltaí, based on identified needs, the expertise and interest of the múinteoirí, and practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class múinteoirí, availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc
- Establish a tracking and recording system to ensure that a record is maintained of all daltaí who are receiving additional teaching support and of their progress in response to the established interventions.
- Work in conjunction with the SNA Coordinator and SNA Team to ensure that the SNA timetable is reviewed weekly to reflect the changing needs of daltaí with SNA access.
- Continually update the shared Aos Dána shared folder, so that all staff are aware of diagnoses and needs of daltaí
- (In line with DES circular 02_05)

2.5 Parents

- Parents are encouraged to support the school policy via the continuum of support (supplied by NEPS).
- Support the daltaí at home
- Communicate concerns or updated report to the school.
- Provide the school with the most up-to-date reports and recommendations, and assessments which their child may have had done.

2.6 Aos Dána Múinteoirí:

- To carry out assessment on daltaí.

- To record the results of assessments. Results are made available to Board of Management, Príomhoide, Réaltóir, Caomhnóir, Subject Múinteoirí and Parents on request.
- To aid daltaí via the continuum of support.
- To develop dalta teaching profiles for daltaí over the course of the academic year.
- Aos Dána (Learning-support/resource) múinteoirí should regularly and actively monitor the progress of the daltaí who receive support under the general allocation model and those who have special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, in consultation with parents, class múinteoirí, and relevant professionals. This is particularly important in cases where support for a dalta has been increased, reduced or discontinued.

2.6 Subject Múinteoirí:

- To facilitate inclusion of daltaí with Special Educational Needs in the classroom.
- To incorporate differentiated methods of teaching and learning.
- To liaise with the Aos Dána to ensure that differentiated strategies relevant to the dalta are incorporated into their teaching methodologies.
- Where necessary to liaise with Aos Dána to implement teaching/behavioural strategies relevant to the dalta's educational needs.
- To aid daltaí via the continuum of support.

2.7 Special Needs Assistant

Coláiste Na hInse recognises the invaluable role of the Special Needs Assistant and their important contribution to the school. As clarified in The Special Needs Assistants Scheme 2007/8-2010:

“Special needs assistants are allocated to assist múinteoirí in meeting the care needs of daltaí.”

(The Special Needs Assistants Scheme 2007/8-2010, p33).

The role of the SNA at all times is to promote the independence and autonomy of the daltaí, and thus reduce the need for their assistance with each dalta in their care. As Coláiste Na hInse empowers daltaí to ‘aimsigh do réalt eolais’ (reach for their star), and where necessary, SNA’s act as a support to assist daltaí in achieving their educational goals and reaching their full potential. The SNA’s timetable is reflective of this as it evolves on a weekly basis based upon recommendations made in weekly meetings between the SNA Team, SNA Coordinator and Aos Dána Coordinator. The SNA’s role in helping daltaí become more able and independent, then allows them to work more closely with other daltaí who are experiencing more difficulty in becoming independent learners.

The type of significant care needs that daltaí may have can be varied, depending on the nature or level of the disability or sensory impairment that a child may have. Given the variety of medical conditions that children may suffer from, it is not possible to list all of the care needs that may arise here.

However, examples of the primary care needs which would be considered significant – and which might require SNA support are:

- **Assistance with feeding:** where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
- **Administration of medicine:** where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
- **Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: (including catheterisation)** where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
- **Assistance with mobility and orientation:** on an on-going basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts

should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school.

(Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)

- **Assisting múinteoirí to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds:** at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for daltaí with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision.
- **Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions:** such as frequent epileptic seizures or for daltaí who have fragile health.
- **Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a dalta from a classroom when essential:** This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.
- **Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.**
- **Assistance with severe communication difficulties** including enabling curriculum access for daltaí with physical disabilities or sensory needs (See also section 9) and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the múinteoir, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

The tasks noted above are the primary care support tasks for which access to SNA support will normally be provided.

The following tasks are the type of **secondary care associated tasks** which SNAs will often perform, but only once they have been allocated on the basis of the primary care support

tasks listed above. The indicative list of secondary associated tasks listed below is not definitive and is reflective of the tasks detailed in Circulars 08/02 and 71/2011.

The associated support tasks which may be carried out, but which would not in themselves normally constitute a reason for the allocation of SNA support include:

Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.

- Assistance with the development of Personal Dalta Plans for children with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the dalta concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assist múinteoirí and/or Príomhoide in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for daltaí including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by daltaí with special needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class múinteoirí and other múinteoirí such as the resource múinteoir and school Príomhoide, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class múinteoir/Príomhoide
- Assistance with enabling a dalta to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class múinteoirí or support múinteoirí.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

2.8 The Role of the Classroom Múinteoir and Resource/Learning Support Múinteoirí and the Role of an SNA to support those múinteoirí

Daltaí with special educational needs can have very complex learning needs and should be taught by qualified and experienced múinteoirí who are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of these daltaí.

SNAs are recruited specifically to assist in the care needs of daltaí with disabilities in an educational context. SNAs therefore do not have a teaching/pedagogical role and it would not be appropriate for daltaí with special needs to be taught by unqualified personnel.

Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the múinteoir in the education and personal development of daltaí in schools. The classroom múinteoir is responsible for educating all daltaí in his/her class, including any dalta with a special educational need. The class múinteoir has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all daltaí in his/her classroom, including daltaí with special educational needs.

It is the responsibility of the classroom múinteoir to ensure that each dalta is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all daltaí feel equal and valued. The múinteoir will have access to all information that is likely to be relevant to teaching or supervising a dalta with special educational needs. The classroom múinteoir also has a central role in identifying and responding to daltaí with additional needs. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist and the local SENO.

The classroom múinteoir will also make specific accommodations for a dalta within the class as a result of concerns about a dalta's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers.

When a dalta with significant and complex care needs has access to support from a SNA the classroom múinteoir will work closely with the SNA. However the class múinteoir continues

to have primary responsibility for teaching and learning and for the social and emotional development and progress of the dalta.

Though the SNA can provide valuable assistance to the múinteoir in ensuring that the dalta is able to access education, the role of the SNA is not to provide additional tuition, as this is the role of qualified learning support/resource múinteoirí who may assist the múinteoir to provide additional teaching to daltaí with special educational needs.

2.9 Support for Daltaí with Behaviour Related Care Needs

Daltaí with behavioural related care needs receive appropriate interventions in school through individualised planning, whole-school dalta management strategies (including the promotion of positive relationships between and among staff and daltaí), and additional psycho-educational programmes (such as anger management or social skills classes) and psychiatric/medical interventions, as required. Daltaí with challenging behaviour needs, in the first instance, should be supported by their class múinteoirí, other school staff members, and by whole school policies on the management of behaviour in schools. The responsibility for the overall progress of daltaí with behavioural difficulties lies with the classroom múinteoir. The emphasis in the school situation should be on the development of well co-ordinated interventions in response to the child's identified needs. The provision of appropriate teaching and health supports, as required, should result in improved behaviours, leading to improved educational outcomes for children with Emotional Behavioural Disorder (EBD) or Severe Emotional Behavioural Disorder (SEBD).

SNA support is only provided where it is clear that behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date and where it is demonstrated how access to such support can assist with on-going planning and intervention for the child

Thus, SNA support is not a substitute for the normal behavioural management and disciplinary practices that a school is required to have in place.

The care role of the SNA, in instances where SNA support is sanctioned to assist with behavioural related care needs, is concerned with assisting the múinteoir to meet the care needs of the child by:

- preserving the safety of the dalta and others with whom the dalta is in contact
- assisting to ensure the prevention of self-injurious or destructive behaviour
- reinforcing good behaviour on the child's part and acting as a positive role model for the child
- Assisting with recording data in relation to dalta behaviour and behavioural development

(Department of Education Circular, 0030_2014)

2.9 Gifted Daltaí in Coláiste Na hInse

- We have Mixed Ability settings (Reference: Dr. Emer Smyth's Educational Research indicates that a Mixed Ability setting is the most advantageous for very able daltaí)
- Our entrance test is up to-date and gives very detailed information which is used to support differentiated teaching in a Mixed Ability setting
- The Academic Monitoring System ensures that daltaí at all levels are tracked regularly during the year to support them to achieve their level of ability (whatever that may be).
- Intervention is organised for any daltaí who is not achieving their potential (as detailed in Entrance Test).
- Regular feed-back to parents (4 formal reporting periods)
- Caomhnóir (tutor) system which is founded on the basis of strong relationships where Caomhnóir knows their daltaí very well socially, personally and academically and follows up with them to ensure that they are achieving their potential. The Caomhnóir is actively involved in Academic Monitoring
- High academic standards (“honours norm”) where all daltaí are expected to sit higher level papers, in particular the Junior Certificate

- Guidance and Counselling Support help focus all daltaí on careers and help deal with socio-personal issues that develop over the period of time daltaí are in second level. This department also focuses on study skills and good homework practices to maximise academic achievement
- Encourage the participation of gifted daltaí into the CTYI (Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland) and the Summer Programme in Dublin City University to enrich and develop their high academic ability
- Wide variety of Extra and Co-Curricular activities that support academic life. For example, a strong involvement in debating in English and Irish
- School commitment to Continuous Professional Development for all múinteoirí and staff.
- Excellent teaching staff and commitment to hiring múinteoirí who are progressive in terms of teaching methodology.
- Focus on ICT integration in all classes
- Assessment for Learning as a baseline teaching methodology
- Strong positive discipline structure that does not tolerate class disruptions

Gifted Daltaí in Coláiste Na hInse

- We do not have a written policy on gifted education
- We have a Mixed Ability settings (Reference: Dr. Emer Smyth's Educational Research indicates that a Mixed Ability setting is the most advantageous for very able daltaí)
- Our entrance test is most up to date and gives very detailed information which is used to support differentiated teaching in a Mixed Ability setting

- The Academic Monitoring system ensures that daltaí at all levels are tracked regularly during the year to support them to achieve their level of ability (whatever that may be). Intervention is organised for any daltaí who is not achieving their potential (as detailed in Entrance Test).
- Regular feed-back to parents (4 formal reporting periods)
- Caomhnóir (tutor) system which is founded on basis of strong relationships where Caomhnóir knows their daltaí very well socially, personally and academically and follows up with them to ensure that they are achieving their potential. Caomhnóir is actively involved in Academic Monitoring
- High academic standards (“honours norm”) where all daltaí are expected to sit higher level papers, in particular the Junior Certificate
- Guidance and Counselling support to help focus all daltaí on careers and help deal with socio-personal issues that develop over the period of time daltaí are in second level. This department also focuses on study skills and good homework practices to maximise academic achievement
- Encourage the participation of gifted daltaí into the CTYI (Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland) Summer Programme in Dublin City University to enrich and develop their high academic ability
- Wide variety of Extra and Co-Curricular activities that support academic life. For example, a strong involvement in debating in English and Irish
- School commitment to Continuous Professional Development for all múinteoirí.
- Excellent teaching staff and commitment to hiring múinteoirí who are progressive in terms of teaching methodology. Strong probation system for new múinteoirí.
- Focus in ICT integration in all classes

- Assessment for Learning as a baseline teaching methodology
 - Strong positive discipline structure that does not tolerate class disruptions
- INCE 2012-13 A Dalta Enrichment Programme has operated in CNI for daltaí on the highest end of the spectrum in Applied Mata (Mathematics), Eolíocht (Science) and Béarla (English) Philosophy. Ma. Hopkins coordinates this programme and is an invite only programme. Daltaí are enrolled based from entrance exam at first year and then in consultation with múinteoirí after this. This programme is only available in 1st and 2nd year at the moment 2015-16.

2.9 Daltaí with Assistive Technology

The Aos Dána encourage and support daltaí who for physical or educational purposes have been granted assistive technology by the SENO. The school's cloud computing system, OneDrive is used to save, store and share all work of daltaí completed both in school and at home. Subject to the provisions of Section 14 of Circular 2010/2013 regarding the transfer of equipment between schools, the equipment will remain the property of the school.

The school's management authority have responsibility for maintenance, repair, insurance etc. of the equipment. The management authority will ensure safe custody and careful handling of the equipment. A

designated Aos Dána múinteoir in cooperation with the SNA Team have responsibility for the management of the equipment and for monitoring its effective use within the school. Equipment purchased should normally be kept in the school. However, the pupil in question may, with the consent of the management authority, use the equipment at home.

Although the equipment will be sanctioned for a particular pupil the equipment will, as a rule, remain the property of the school and will be available for allocation to subsequent pupils with similar disabilities. Where the school has no further requirement for the equipment or where a pupil transfers to a different school, the SENO may allocate it to another school in the interests of meeting needs to the greatest extent possible.

3 Procedures

3.1 Internal Referral

The Aos Dána team highlight the importance of identifying a SEN daltaí. The importance lies in arranging assessment and diagnosis for a daltaí with Special Needs Education. As emphasised in the EPSEN Act parents are essential in this role. Parents and múinteoirí can identify, early on, learning difficulties that the daltaí may have. The Aos Daná team may refer a daltaí for assessment, while consulting with parents and Réaltóir.

The entrance exam for Coláiste Na hInse can also identify daltaí who may need extra support. These results are reviewed by the Aos Daná team and may lead to the daltaí being referred for assessment.

3.2 Múinteoir Referral

The daltaí class múinteoir can refer any daltaí they may have concern for to the Aos Daná team or to the daltaí Réaltóir. These referral forms are readily available to all staff on our One Drive system or a hard copy is displayed on the Aos Daná notice board in the staff room.

Once this form is complete the class múinteoir will be asked to complete a snapshot form of the student. This gives the Aos Daná team a well rounded view of the student within the classroom. Once

all the information is gathered the Aos Daná team and Réaltóir will review the need for the daltaí referral for assessment.

If, in collaboration, the Príomhoide and SEN co-ordinator form the view that the daltaí may have Special Educational Needs, they will inform the parent of any further action that will be taken.

3.3 Parent/ Guardian Referral

Coláiste Na hInse greatly values the parents'/ guardians' involvement in their child's education. Therefore, if a parent/ guardian are concerned about their child's education or feel that the child is not benefitting from their education. With approval from parents'/ guardians' the school will begin the referral process that has been outlined.

3.4 External Referral

When it is agreed that a daltaí may have Special Educational Needs, a referral to an outside agency is made for assessment (i.e. CRC, HSE, NEPS).

Coláiste Na hInse is provided with a NEPS psychologist for approximately ten days a year. The Aos Daná team presents cases of students who may need assessment to the NEPS psychologist and priority is agreed upon by the severity of need.

Parents may decide to have their child assessed privately by a qualified educational psychologist. An Aos Daná member will be assigned to liaise with the outside agency with this case.

4 Maintaining Records.

4.1 Maintaining Records

To ensure that the Aos Daná department runs smoothly, we pride ourselves on maintaining accurate and confidential record keeping. Each daltaí who receives learning support in the department has an individual record. In accords to legislation record keeping is also taken during meeting with outside agencies, staff and parents.

4.2 Cinn Lae

Daltaí who have access to the Aos Daná department receive a log sheet of aims, targets and subjects they may find difficult. The sheet is stapled into their Cinn Lae to ensure that the daltaí are always trying to complete their aims and targets or, as the school motto reads, **Aimsigh do Réalt Eolais** (Reach for Your Star).

This log sheet also assists SEN múinteoirí, class múinteoirí and SNA to assist the daltaí further in their learning and to help better understand the daltaí needs.

4.3 Student Files

Each Aos Daná daltaí will receive their own individual file, which is kept in the SEN co-ordinators office. Any member of the Coláiste staff can access this file, with the permission of the SEN co-ordinator, to teach their daltaí. If a parent/ guardian wish to discuss the progress of their child and their concerns they may also view the file, with the SEN co-ordinator.

Confidentiality is at the forefront of the Aos Daná department, therefore daltaí information is the highest importance.

Each file consists of the following:

1. Results of assessment.
2. School reports, reading, writing and spelling assessment.
3. Exceptions from languages (if applicable)

4. Psychological and medical reports.

4.5 Minutes of Meetings.

A folder is dedicated to minutes of meetings that involve the Aos Daná team or discussion of Aos Daná daltaí.

5. Provisions

5.1 Timetabling

All Aos Daná daltaí who have an exemption from Irish at Junior and Senior level will be timetabled for learning support at this time. Aos Daná daltaí who wish to be exempt (after consultation with parents) from a modern language can also access learning support at this time.

The Aos Daná team, while collaborating with parents and class múinteoirí, may decide to withdraw a daltaí from a particular subject to receive learning support.

5.2 Models

Aos Daná daltaí may receive support through:

- Team teaching.
- Reduced timetable.
- Individual teaching or small group teaching.
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes.

Intervention recommended to each daltaí depends on the extent of their Special Educational Needs. All provisions are reviewed at the end of the school year.

5.3 Educational Plans

Each Aos Daná group will have an education plan prepared for them. The SEN múinteoir is responsible for the education plan for each group.

6. Assessment

6.1 Entrance Exam

All daltaí entering the Coláiste partake an entrance test in the spring prior to the academic year. The results of said test are used to identify students with Special Educational Needs by the Aos Dána Co-ordinator.

The Aos Dána Co-ordinator will also visit national schools in the area and gather relevant information needed for incoming daltaí.

6.2 Ongoing Assessment

The Aos Daná Department uses a variety of methods to conduct assessments for Aos Daná daltaí. These methods are both formal and informal and are used to create and review the individual targets.

6.3 External Assessment

The Aos Dána Co-ordinator in collaboration with the Principal may deem it necessary to contact an external educational assessment by an educational psychologist. Prior to this an assessment referral is assembled by an Aos Daná team member, which includes múinteoir reports and assessment within the Coláiste.

7. Communication

7.1 Aos Daná Meetings

The Aos Daná (SEN) Department meets every week to discuss any issues with daltaí with Special Needs Education. As mentioned, in Meeting Minutes, minutes are recorded for each meeting and made available to all members of Aos Dána as well as any relevant teaching staff who need to be made aware of matters arising.

7.2 Transition

Before daltaí enter Coláite Na hInse, the Aos Dána Co-ordinator meets with class múinteoirí and resource múinteoirí of the feeder Primary school, to discuss the needs of ar daltaí with special needs.

7.3 Parents

As mentioned on numerous occasions, communication with parents/ guardians is essential. Every new parent/guardian of a daltaí with SEN will be invited to Coláiste to meet with the co-ordinator, to discuss the daltaí needs.

7.4 Staff

Both Múinteoirí and SNAs play an important role in the education of ar daltaí. This is especially true to daltaí with SEN. Staff who teach daltaí with SEN are emailed a shared file on One Drive. Due to the vital need for confidentiality ár daltaí names are coded.

This file includes:

- List of daltaí names are coded.
- SEN diagnoses.

- Strengths and weakness of the daltaí.
- Certain resources or methods that worked for particular daltaí.

7.5 bhFoireann Nua

Any bhFoireann Nua teaching Aos Daná daltaí will be spoken to prior to teaching. bhFoireann Nua will be informed of practices within Aos Daná and of the resources and materials used for teaching Aos Daná daltaí.

8 Autism Spectrum Disorder Class (An Cuan)

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a term used to describe variety of Autism. Autism Ireland identifies three main categories (while also including a fourth) with people diagnosed with Autism.

“The 3 main areas of difficulty for people with autism are referred to as the ‘triad of impairments’.

- Social communication
- Social interaction
- Social imagination

There is a fourth area which has been identified as presenting people with autism with significant difficulties and that is the area of sensory processing. Sensory processing difficulties are indicated by either an over or under sensitivity across any or all of the senses.”

(Autism Ireland, About Autism, What is Autism?)

Coláiste Na hInse opened its ASD unit (An Cuan) in 2013, for ar daltaí with ASD. Now in 2015, the school has three classrooms, a

sensory room, computer room, kitchen and garden area. An Cuan currently caters for eighteen daltaí diagnosed with ASD.

8.2 Aims of An Cuan

The aim of An Cuan is to promote the independence of our daltaí on the autistic spectrum, and the inclusion of these daltaí in the mainstream where possible. Daltaí diagnosed with ASD will be placed in age appropriate mainstream classrooms. The rate of integration will be decided by professionals assigned to the class, while also collaborating with parents.

8.3 Staff

We have two classrooms in operation. Each classroom has one full time ASD múinteoir and two full time SNAs.

8.4 ASD Unit Co-Ordinator

- Liaise with the Special Educational Needs Organiser and distribute resources among relevant daltaí in accordance with circulars 0010/2012, 0010/2013 and 0010/2014.
- Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the daltaí' learning needs and nature of ASD.
- To meet with parents/guardians and external agencies (Eg; NEPS, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologists, Social workers etc) to create and review Individual Education Plans for all An Cuan daltaí.
- Visit primary schools and meet staff in regards to incoming daltaí
- Make applications to NCSE in relation to Special Class, Assistive Technology, Transport and SNA Access.
- Meet the parents/guardians of incoming daltaí and carry out our An Cuan Passport Transition Process

- Ensure the sensory needs of daltaí are met in school, especially full time daltaí in An Cuan.
- Administer medication (upon request of parents/guardians) to daltaí daily
- Establish a tracking and recording system to ensure that a record is maintained of all daltaí
- Work in conjunction with the Aos Dána Co-ordinator and SNA Team to ensure that the needs of daltaí are being met
- Continually update the shared An Cuan shared folder, so that all staff are aware of diagnoses and needs of daltaí

8.5 Curriculum

Daltaí diagnosed with Autism differ in their intellectual ability. This can range from severe learning difficulties to average/above average ability. Due to the wide range of intelligences present in the classroom a broad curriculum must be adopted.

The curriculum may include the following:

- Primary School Curriculum.
- Junior Cycle Programme.
- The NCCA guideline for Special Education.
- Transition Year (Idirbhliain).
- Leaving Certificate Applied.

This will depend on daltaí ability, where one or more curriculums may be applied.

The approaches to teaching ar daltaí with Autism are as follow:

- To ensure our daltaí learn about the essentials in life a broad curriculum is facilitated. These subjects include Social Skills, Life Skills, Home Economics, Maths for Life, PE, Art, SPHE and Vocational Skills.
- In Coláiste Na hInse, we cater for the holistic needs of all our daltaí

2.8 Gifted Daltaí in Coláiste Na hInse

- We have Mixed Ability settings (Reference: Dr. Emer Smyth's Educational Research indicates that a Mixed Ability setting is the most advantageous for very able students)
- Our entrance test is most up to date and gives very detailed information which is used to support differentiated teaching in a Mixed Ability setting
- Academic Monitoring system ensures that students at all levels are tracked regularly during the year to support them to achieve their level of ability (whatever that may be). Intervention is organised for any daltaí who is not achieving their potential (as detailed in Entrance Test).
- Regular feed-back to parents (4 formal reporting periods)
- Caomhnóir (tutor) system which is founded on basis of strong relationships where Caomhnóir knows their daltaí very well socially, academically and follows up with them to ensure that they are achieving their potential. Caomhnóir is actively involved in Academic Monitoring
- High academic standards (“honours norm”) where all daltaí are encouraged to sit higher level papers, in particular the Junior Certificate
- Guidance and Counselling support to help focus all daltaí on careers and help deal with socio-personal issues that develop over the period of time students are in second level. This department also focuses on study skills and good homework practices to maximise academic achievement
- Encourage the participation of gifted students into the CTYI (Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland) Summer Programme in Dublin City University to enrich and develop their high academic ability
- Wide variety of Extra and Co-Curricular activities that support

academic life. For example, a strong involvement in debating in English and Irish

- School commitment to Continuous Professional Development for all staff, including múinteoirí and snas.
 - Excellent teaching staff and commitment to hiring múinteoirí who are progressive in terms of teaching methodology.
 - Focus in ICT integration in all classes
 - Assessment for Learning as a baseline teaching methodology
 - Strong positive discipline structure that does not tolerate class disruptions
-
- **Gifted Daltaí in Coláiste Na hInse**
 - We do not have a written policy on gifted education
 - We have a Mixed Ability settings (Reference: Dr. Emer Smyth's Educational Research indicates that a Mixed Ability setting is the most advantageous for very able students)
 - Our entrance test is most up to date and gives very detailed information which is used to support differentiated teaching in a Mixed Ability setting
 - Academic Monitoring system ensures that students at all levels are tracked regularly during the year to support them to achieve their level of ability (whatever that may be). Intervention is organised for any daltaí who is not achieving their potential (as detailed in Entrance Test).
 - Regular feed-back to parents (4 formal reporting periods)
 - Caomhnóir (tutor) system which is founded on basis of strong relationships where Caomhnóir knows their daltaí very well socially, personally and academically and follows up with them to ensure that they are achieving their potential. Caomhnóir is actively involved in Academic Monitoring
 - High academic standards (“honours norm”) where all daltaí are expected to sit higher level papers, in particular the Junior Certificate

- Guidance and Counselling support to help focus all daltaí on careers and help deal with socio-personal issues that develop over the period of time students are in second level. This department also focuses on study skills and good homework practices to maximise academic achievement
 - Encourage the participation of gifted students into the CTYI (Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland) Summer Programme in Dublin City University to enrich and develop their high academic ability
 - Wide variety of Extra and Co-Curricular activities that support academic life. For example, a strong involvement in debating in English and Irish
 - School commitment to Continuous Professional Development for all múinteoirí.
 - Excellent teaching staff and commitment to hiring múinteoirí who are progressive in terms of teaching methodology. Strong probation system for new múinteoirí.
 - Focus in ICT integration in all classes
 - Assessment for Learning as a baseline teaching methodology
 - Strong positive discipline structure that does not tolerate class disruptions
- INCE 2012-13 A Student Enrichment Programme has operated in CNI for students on the highest end of the spectrum in Applied **Mathematics** /Science and English Philosophy. Ma. Hopkins coordinates this programme and is an invite only programme. Daltaí are chosen from entrance exam at first year and then in consultation with múinteoirí after this. This programme is only available in 1st and 2nd year at the moment 2013-14.

Ratified BOM 16TH November 2015

