



Linn Dara School *Foghlaim don Saol*

Draft Attendance and Participation Statement 2018

Introduction

Linn Dara School is a special school under the patronage of the Health Service Executive (HSE). Linn Dara School caters for young people who have been admitted to the Linn Dara CAMHS Inpatient Unit (IPU), Day Programme (LDADP), Transition Programme (TP) and other associated CAMHS programmes. Students present with a range of mental health difficulties which come under the category of Severe Emotional Behavioural Disturbance (SEBD).

The purpose of this statement is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on student attendance and participation in the educational programme during their time with us in Linn Dara School.

Enrolment of Students in Linn Dara School

Students are enrolled in Linn Dara School on their admission to the Linn Dara CAMHS Inpatient Unit or Day Programme. The majority of students will also be enrolled in another school or educational placement and some may be attending their own school or placement part time during their admission. Some of our students have been out of school for a significant period of time.

For a student to attend the Transition Programme, they must be referred by and be currently attending a CAMHS team due to mental health difficulties affecting their attendance and participation in school.

Attendance

Attendance and participation is an expectation for all students enrolled in Linn Dara School. The School day generally runs between 9.30am and 3pm with a slight variation across the three settings. At times, students may not be able to attend due to having appointments with members of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and school staff will generally know about this in advance. MDT and students are encouraged to arrange appointments outside of school time to allow students to access as much of the school programme as possible. However, we are aware that this is not always possible.

Participation

Student participation is a plays a central role in a students' experience in Linn Dara School as well as their overall educational experience. School staff are aware that participation can be difficult for some of our students at various times during their time with us and staff will

endeavour to support students to participate to the best of their ability at a given time. The ultimate goal for all students is full participation in the school programme of Linn Dara School. We are aware that initially participation can take many forms:

- Visiting the student and their parents in their own home if appropriate
- Talking to school staff about the school programme
- Visiting the school, classrooms or Transition Programme
- Working with school staff individually on the ward, outside the classroom or inside the classroom
- Being present in the classroom but engaging in therapeutic activities
- Engaging with the curricular content in some classes
- Engaging fully in the school programme

Barriers to Attendance and Participation

We are aware that there are many barriers and challenges faced by our students which affect their ability to attend school or participate fully. Listed below are some examples of these barriers:

- Negative school experiences previously
- Bullying or other school issues
- Anxiety
- Mental health difficulties
- Lack of support in school
- Lack of appropriate educational placements
- Family issues
- Financial/transport issues

Strategies Used to Support Attendance and Participation

Linn Dara School staff have supported thousands of students to attend and participate in the school programme. We identify the individual needs of a student and then use a variety of strategies to support the student to attend and participate to the best of their ability. We do this through:

- Having a structured school day
- Weekly timetable provided/displayed
- Development of Individual plan which may include a reduced timetable initially
- Use of variety of teaching methodologies
- Range of educational courses and subjects offered including Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate, LCA, QQI etc.
- Initial conversations to discuss students previous experiences, needs and plans for the future
- Visits to school building/classroom facilitated prior to starting
- Induction questionnaire given to students to give insight into students experience of education
- Home school information sheet sent to home school to gather information
- Regular progress discussion with parents/guardians and student
- Specific objectives for students to work on each subject
- Availability of therapeutic and non-curricular activities
- Input from Multidisciplinary team

- Educational assessment if deemed appropriate
- Advice on supports available in mainstream school
- Assistance in finding alternative educational placements
- Transition planning
- Recommendations on how best to support the student provided to home school/new placement if required
- Planning meetings facilitated with home school/new placement
- Future planning support and advice

Students Who Are Unable To Attend

Occasionally, students who are due to attend Linn Dara School or the Transition Programme are unable to attend for a variety of reasons. In these instances, school staff will liaise with the student and their parents/guardians in the hope of supporting the student to attend in some form through using the strategies mentioned previously.

School staff will visit the student on the ward and provide ward teacher (if appropriate) if the young person is in the Linn Dara CAMHS Inpatient Unit.

Individual classes may be facilitated in Linn Dara Adolescent Day Programme depending on school staff availability and student need.

In the case of a young person who has been referred to the Transition Programme and they are unable to attend, communication will be maintained with the student and their parents/guardians for a period of time and various strategies used to support attendance. However, a student may need to be re-referred to the programme by their CAMHS team at a time when they are more able to attend the programme given the waiting list of referrals at any one time. Likewise, a student who has a place on the programme and is struggling to attend despite supports from school staff may also have to be re-referred by their CAMHS team. This will be considered on an a case by case basis.

Implementation and Review of this Statement

Strategies outlined in this statement have already been implemented in Linn Dara School and will continue do so following ratification by the Board of Management. The statement will be reviewed after two years, or as circumstances may warrant.

October 2018