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Junior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the structure, implementation, and assessment of the Junior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (L1LP) for students with moderate, severe to profound general learning disabilities. This policy ensures that each student has access to a meaningful, individualised education that promotes independence, social inclusion, and the development of life skills in line with their abilities and needs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Junior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme at St. Nicholas' Special School who meet the criteria of moderate, severe or profound general learning disabilities. It also pertains to all staff involved in the planning, teaching, and assessment of the L1LP.

3. Programme Objectives

The objectives of the Level 1 Learning Programme at St. Nicholas' are to:

- Foster personal and social skills that enable students to interact with their environment.
- Develop practical life skills that support students' independence in daily activities.
- Promote self-awareness, communication, and active engagement in the school and wider community.
- Prepare students for a fulfilling life after school, focusing on key areas like personal care, literacy, numeracy, and well-being.

4. Programme Structure

The Junior Cycle L1LP is organised into six **Priority Learning Units (PLUs)**:

1. **Communication, Language, and Literacy** – Activities focus on basic communication skills, comprehension, and literacy.
2. **Numeracy** – Develops basic mathematical skills for everyday life.
3. **Personal Care and Wellbeing** – Promotes self-care, health, safety, and emotional well-being.
4. **Being Part of a Community** – Encourages social skills, environmental awareness, and responsible citizenship.
5. **Arts** – Offers sensory engagement through creative activities, such as art, music, and drama.
6. **Physical Education** – Focuses on motor skills, physical activity, and overall health.

Each unit is tailored to the individual student's needs and abilities, allowing for modifications to content and delivery. Each student does two short courses.

5. Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Each student enrolled in the L1LP has an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**. The IEP:

- Details specific learning objectives, activities, and supports required for each student.
- Is collaboratively developed with input from teachers, parents/guardians, therapists, and, where possible, the student.
- Includes measurable targets that are reviewed annually to ensure the programme continues to meet each student's evolving needs.

6. Teaching Approaches

Instructional strategies in the L1LP are designed to maximize student engagement and independence. Approaches include:

- **Differentiated Instruction** – Tailoring learning activities to accommodate each student's unique learning style and needs.
- **Multisensory Learning** – Using visual, auditory, and tactile methods to enhance comprehension and engagement.
- **Task Analysis and Scaffolding** – Breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps and gradually increasing independence.

- **Assistive Technology** – Utilising communication devices, apps, and other tools to aid learning and communication.

7. Assessment and Reporting

The L1LP includes a structured but flexible assessment system that aligns with the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Assessment methods include:

- **Continuous Observation** – Teachers record observations on skill acquisition and behavioral progress.
- **Portfolio-Based Assessment** – Each student maintains a portfolio showcasing their work, progress, and achievements in various PLUs.
- **Class based assessment and progression continuum.**
- **End-of-Cycle Reporting** – At the end of Junior Cycle, students receive a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) documenting their development in the programme. The JCPA includes comments on each student's strengths, areas for development, and a summary of skills learned across PLUs.

8. Staff Development

Ongoing professional development is provided to ensure staff are equipped to implement the L1LP effectively. This includes:

- Training on inclusive teaching strategies and curriculum adaptation.
- Workshops on assistive technology and communication tools.
- Opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices among staff.

9. Partnerships and Collaboration

Parent and Guardian Involvement: Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in IEP meetings and provide feedback on their child's progress.

Community Engagement: St. Nicholas' collaborates with local organisations to enhance students' learning experiences, such as arranging visits, and community-based activities where appropriate.

10. Review Process

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current NCCA guidelines, best practices, and the evolving needs of the student population. Feedback from staff, students (where possible), and families will inform updates.

Approved by:

Date: 05/11/2025

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This policy ensures that students in the Level 1 Learning Programme have a structured, supportive, and inclusive learning experience, fostering growth in essential life skills and independence. For further information on L1LP, please consult the NCCA guidelines on Level 1 and Level 2 Programmes