

24 June 2024

Re: Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope you are all keeping well.

It was great to have an opportunity to meet with you all in person in May 2024. These meetings have greatly assisted us in progressing the planning for the opening of Cara Community Special School in the 2024/2025 academic year.

I am now writing with some exciting updates for you and your son/daughter pertaining to the opening of Cara Community Special School including the appointment of our school Principal, Ms. Katie Callaghan, details on our School Logo/Crest, information on opening times, school uniform, a building update, information on the next steps regarding Transfer and Transition and a Draft Calendar for the Academic Year 2024/2025. We will continue to provide further updates as they become available over the coming weeks.

We are really excited about the opening of Cara Community Special School and we look forward to meeting your son/daughter in the coming weeks.

Hope you have an enjoyable Summer break.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Kindlon, Director of Schools, LMETB

Single Manager/Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath

1. Ms. Katie Callaghan appointed to the position of Principal at Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. Katie Callaghan, as Principal at Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath. Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath is a Community Special School which will open in the 2024/2025 academic year under the patronage of LMETB. Cara Community Special School will provide an appropriate education for students, aged 4 to 18 years old, who have a diagnosis of Autism and complex learning needs, with a professional recommendation for a Special School placement.



Katie holds a Bachelor of Education Degree from Mary Immaculate College Limerick and a Masters in Autism from Queens University Belfast.

Katie joins Cara Community Special School from Scoil an Linbh Iosa, Ballycane, Naas, Co. Kildare where she has worked as a Mainstream Class Teacher, a Special Education Teacher and led the development and opening of the first Special Class for students with autism at the school.

From 2019 to 2023 Katie has worked at a National Level as an Autism Advisor for the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). As part of her responsibilities with the NCSE, Katie has worked with management teams and staff across the country and has been responsible for facilitating training on innovative approaches to supporting students with Autism in teaching, learning and assessment.

Katie has also facilitated delivery of training for school leadership teams and teachers on the Department of Education Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools which has been developed by the Department of Education as a resource for schools and others to help support the wellbeing, learning and participation of young people with autism in education.

Bringing a wealth of experience to the post, Katie recognises the great importance of working with all staff, parents, pupils/students and various agencies in planning, delivering and reviewing supports for all pupils and students to access curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Katie has enjoyed very positive relations with her colleagues in the Department of Education, NCSE, the National Educational Psychological Service of the Department of Education (NEPS), TESS TUSLA, the HSE and the Middleton Centre for Autism in Armagh to name but a few and Katie looks forward to ongoing communication and engagement with all in her new role.

At present Katie is working closely with LMETB's Director of Schools Fiona Kindlon in planning for the start-up of the new school. The main focus of planning at present is centred around engagement with parents/guardians of the students enrolled in Cara Community Special School for the 2024/2025 academic year, engagement with the NCSE, recruitment and induction of school staff, transfer and transition programme for pupils/students to their new school, school buildings and facilities development and policy formulation and development.

As a Principal within the LMETB Schools Directorate, Katie will also have the collegial support of the Senior Management teams in LMETB's eighteen Post Primary schools, four Community National Schools, three PLC colleges and the Centre for European Schooling in Dunshaughlin.

LMETB schools receive considerable support, guidance and direction from the Director of Schools, Ms. Fiona Kindlon and within the Organisation, Support and Development Directorate, LMETB Schools and Colleges avail of a range of supports including Human Resources, Buildings, ICT, Finance and Corporate and Education Services. This network of support at Head Office level supports the work of the LMETB Board in ensuring that all LMETB schools/colleges/centres are compliant in the areas of Corporate Governance. Katie looks forward to engaging with personnel in these sections of LMETB over the coming weeks as she plans for transition to her new leadership role within LMETB.

Further information on Cara Community Special School, Enfield, Co. Meath is available by emailing schooldirectorate@lmetb.ie.

Further information on LMETB is available on www.lmetb.ie or follow us on Twitter @LouthMeath ETB, Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/louthmeathetb/> and Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/louthmeathetb/?hl=en>

2. Introducing our School Logo/Crest

We expect that every pupil and student who attends Cara Community Special School will be provided with a range of opportunities to believe, achieve and succeed.

The Letter C for Cara is implied in the arc of the overall design. The figures placed at the centre are indicative of the student centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment. The reaching hand is a symbol of care and inclusivity. The hand's placement at the bottom of a tree is a nod to the roots set down through learning, which feed into a tree and branches which represents skills and opportunities.



Each colour has its own symbolism - blue is representative of calm, stability, care and wisdom, yellow/gold is representative of optimism, energy and enthusiasm, green is representative of growth, progress and new beginnings and red is representative of passion, courage and motivation.

3. Our School Uniform

For the academic year 2024/2025 our school uniform will consist of the following:

- Navy round neck sweatshirt with iron on school logo*
- Navy jogpants/track suit bottoms
- White poloshirt
- Navy socks
- Footwear - we would appreciate parent/guardian co-operation with regard to sensible footwear. Although there is no specific type of school shoe required for the 2024/2025 academic year, please adhere to the following guidelines: Junior and Senior Infants must have shoes with Velcro or must be easy to manage independently, no laces please. Shoes must be comfortable and suitable for play and physical education (PE). Shoes with wheels, lights or high heels are not permitted.



Our School Uniform is readily available, comfortable and perfect for child-centred learning. School Uniform items can be purchased from a variety of stores including Penneys, Dunnes Stores, Tesco, Next or Marks and Spencer.

***Our school crest will be available from the school before start up and the school Principal will contact you regarding same.** The crest should be ironed/sewn onto the sweatshirt. The crest should always be positioned on the upper left-hand section of the sweatshirt. A useful tip is to mark the position of crest while your child has the jumper on, then remove it to iron/sew the crest on.

During winter it is important that the children come to school with suitable coats.

Wheeled school bags are not permitted for health and safety reasons.

All pupils and students children are expected to present in full correct uniform with the school crest.

4. Our School Day

For Junior Infants and Senior Infants school opening hours will be from 9am to 13.40pm.

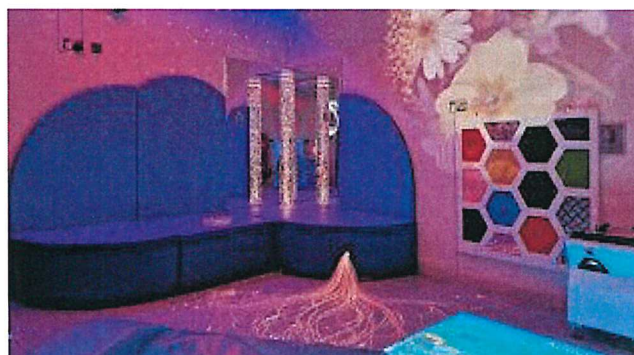
For all other pupils/students school opening hours will be 9am to 14.40pm.

**OPENING
HOURS**

5. Cara Community Special School Facilities

We are delighted to advise that the contractors have commenced onsite and are currently working on delivering the following accommodation for our pupils/students and staff at Cara CSS:

- Spacious Teaching and Learning Spaces (4 Classrooms)
- Daily Living Skills area
- Central Activities Space
- Multi-sensory rooms
- Quiet spaces in each Classroom
- Occupational Therapy room (OT)
- Meeting room
- Soft Play area
- Hard Play area
- Staffroom
- Administration Office



6. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships with Enfield Community College

At Cara CSS, pupils and students will have many opportunities to link with Enfield Community College, LMETB's Post Primary School in Enfield. As Director of Schools I have had meetings with the Principal and Deputy Principal at Enfield Community College to progress the following proposed initiatives:

1. **Reverse Inclusion Projects:** This is where Enfield Community College students will work with the Students and Staff in Cara CSS on a range of curricular, co-curricular and extra – curricular activities
2. **Co-operation Hours:** Teachers from Enfield Community College will work in partnership with the Students and Staff in Cara CSS in facilitating teaching, learning and assessment in a range of curricular areas at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle

7. Recruitment of Staff

LMETB are continuing their recruitment for Cara Community Special School including the appointment of a Deputy Principal, Classroom Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. Further information will issue to parents/guardians once all staff are in place.

8. Planning for Transfer and Transition of our pupils and students to Cara Community Special School

The newly appointed Principal, Ms. Callaghan is currently familiarising herself with each of the student files including the notes from our meetings with you all in May 2024. Ms. Callaghan will be in contact with parents/guardians regarding the transfer programme in the coming weeks. Ms. Callaghan will also liaise with you all regarding contact with your son's/daughter's previous school over the coming weeks.

9. School Transport

Bus Eireann have confirmed they are in receipt of 16 transport application forms from parents/guardians for Cara Community Special School. These applications are currently being reviewed by the local bus Inspector. We will be advising Bus Eireann that once routes are finalised, LMETB needs to be notified so that we can advertise for Bus Escorts.

10. School Calendar for the Academic Year 2024/2025

As you will be aware the Department of Education announced the opening of four new Community Special Schools across the country for the academic year 2024/2025. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) have advised that a comprehensive Continuous Professional Development Programme for all staff in the new Special Schools will form part of the start up for all four schools. We therefore cannot finalise the academic year Calendar for 2024/2025 until we have received those dates from NCSE. We expect that the school will open however the week beginning 2 September 2024.