



*Danu Community Special School
Blanchardstown Road North
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15 P38O
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School Information for Academic Year 2026/2027

Background of our Name ‘Danu’

Danu is the most ancient of the Celtic gods. She was referred to as the mother of the Irish gods, which indicates that she was a mother goddess. Rivers are associated with her and represent fertility and abundance in the land. There is a suggestion that Danu might have had dual characteristics, one being the beneficent, nurturing mother goddess, and another being the strong, malevolent side of the warrior goddess. The root “dan” in ancient Irish means art, skill, poetry, knowledge, and wisdom. She is seen as being a nurturing goddess, the teacher imparting wisdom, as well as the warrior goddess who does not give up.

Introduction

Welcome to Danu Community Special School (Danu CSS). We aim to provide a happy and safe learning environment for everyone who comes to our school each day. Our goal in Danu CSS is to assist each student to work to their potential and to teach them to be as confident and independent as possible when they leave our school. We aim to give the highest quality education to all our students. We work together as a team in partnership, being prepared, being punctual and being professional.

Danu CSS is under the patronage of the DDLETB where we aim to provide high quality education and supports to our students across the Dublin 15 region. ETB ethos and core values are outlined below.

ETB Ethos and Core Values

All ETB schools are State, Co-educational, and Multi Denominational. ETB Ethos is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community.

Core Value: Multi-Denominational

In an ETB school, multi-denominational is about welcoming and celebrating the full range of religions and beliefs in the school community. It is concerned with developing relationships that are respectful and appreciative of such difference, and interactions that embrace, celebrate, and explore such difference.

Core Value: Excellence in Education

The ETB school ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community, and equality.

Core Value: Care

In an ETB school, care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the school community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.

Core Value: Respect

In an ETB school, respect is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the school community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the school community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the school community.

Core Value: Equality

In an ETB school, equality is about treating all members of the school community equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need and prioritising a culture of inclusion.

Core Value: Community

In an ETB school, community encompasses students, staff, parents, and the local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the school community.

Danu CSS Ethos & Vision

Danu Community Special School (Danu CSS) is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality, and partnership in education. The school actively seeks to promote an ethos to provide a safe, warm, welcoming, caring environment where all members of the school community are valued and treated with respect and dignity. We believe that students learn to the best of their ability when they feel happy and secure in school. The school seeks to develop a sense of community and partnership with children, parents, and staff. We believe that every member of the school community has an integral part to play in the overall wellbeing of the school.

Danu CSS is a caring learning environment where each child is welcomed, respected, cherished, and facilitated in reaching their full potential whatever their background, nationality, or faith.

Danu CSS is a learning community where children's learning is paramount. Staff, parents, and community members share in the educational development of the students in ways which are both stimulating and appropriate to the needs of the children in our school.

Danu CSS seeks to ensure that all members of the school community work in partnership, having the best interest of our students at heart and for the development of the whole community.

Please read Danu CSS Vision Statement (Appendix 1).

Staff Details

Please ensure you fill out our next of kin/staff contact details form before you begin your day and that you are aware of where the staff toilets and fire exits are. Please ensure that the office has a copy of your Garda Vetting details, Statutory Declaration and Children First Certificate (PDST online e course) for our records.

Staff Absences

Staff must inform Deputy Principal by **phone call 085 8707734 only** at 7.30am on of their absence or the evening before if known. Texts messages are not acceptable. As per school policy you must inform the Deputy Principal of the type of leave you are taking and when you plan to return. On your return to work, DDLETB require that all staff members complete DDLETB Statement Of Absence. These forms are in the staffroom. Please return to Principal's pigeon hole. In the event that you are late, a phone call to **085 8707734** to Deputy Principal is required.

Staff Meetings & School Community Hours

On the first Wednesday of every month, we have a whole staff meeting (2.50pm -3.50pm). Teacher meetings are monthly. School Croke Park Hours for Academic Year 2026/2027 are circulated at the beginning of each academic schoolyear. On Wednesday's were teacher's meet, SNAs are class based making resources or taking part in training. Sometimes there are Blanchardstown CDNT meetings and class teams may be asked to attend after school. Prior notice will be given when this occurs.

Policies and Procedures

All school policies are kept and updated in each Green Class Policy and Procedure Folder. Key policies that should be read by all staff include Child Safeguarding, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Intimate Care and Healthy Eating. It is the responsibility of each staff member to read and be familiar with all school policies and procedures.

Facilities

There are 8 classrooms, one Deputy Principal/Secretary office and Principal office. Students have access to their own playground twice a day for yard breaks as per timetable. There is a playground for Go Karts and an outdoor courtyard. The photocopier is available in the staff room. There are male and female staff toilets. As the staffroom is small, staffroom is to be left clutter free and the sink left empty from dishes. There is a classroom staffroom rota to assist in replenishment of supplies and cleaning agents.

Class Details

Class Name	Teacher
Daisy	Aishling
Primrose	Angela

Willow	Borja
Apple H O B	Ian & Elaine (AP II)
Apple Seed	Marianna
Oak	Georgina
Juniper	Anthony
Ash	Maeve
Hawthorn	Darragh (AP II)
Birch	Fiona
PE	Jamie

Other Staff

Principal: Pat Doolan (Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Safeguarding)

Deputy Principal: Annie Leddy (Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) for Child Safeguarding)

Secretary: Karen Sutton

Bus Escorts: Stephen, Marian, Linda, Lyndsey, Theresa, Jessica, Eilís, Kelly, Karen, Sinead, Debbie, Omolade

Caretaker: Alan

Cleaner: Christine & Shaki

Professional Support Team (PST): Pat & Annie

In-School Leadership Team (ISLT): Pat, Annie, Elaine & Darragh

School Inspector: Stephanie Ormand

Chairperson of BOM: Paul Mc Evoy

DDLETB Director of Schools: Nichola Spokes

Behaviour Therapist: Noelle Leonard, Blanchardstown Children's Disability Network Team

Occupational Therapist: John Stephens, Blanchardstown Children's Disability Network Team

Speech and Language: Therapist: Suzanne Kirwan, Blanchardstown Children's Disability Network Team

Our School Day

8am School Opens. Daily each staff member signs in. This is for Fire Safety and OLCS.

8.30am The school office opens from 8.30am to 3.30pm daily.

8.40am School staff are in their classroom for Daily Morning Meeting at 8.40am. Discussions and actions agreed are recorded in the Daily Morning Meeting booklet which is kept in the classroom.

8.58am Staff make their way for student arrival from buses/ or drop of by parents/respice.

9am Student arrival. Please see current Morning/Evening Arrangements for Students. Some come by bus, and some are dropped off/picked up by parents/respice. Teachers bring first child of their class to classroom via classroom playground entrance. SNAs are assigned to assist students from the bus. Teachers remain with majority of class at all times.

9.20am Formal class Teaching begins. See daily class timetable. See class Planning folder/ Sub folder.

10am Student roll on Aladdin to be completed. Fire Drill role book to be complete.

See Supervision – Breaktime and Lunch time Procedure. We operate 2 Duty Rota's schedules in the school. The Primary Duty Rota is located in the Staffroom notice board. Any changes to staff members on the Duty Rota must be recorded on this Primary Duty Rota for School Insurance. For Substitute staff please check this Duty Rota on a daily basis to see if you are on duty for the staff member you are replacing.

2.35pm Students leave classroom to walk to bus. Students are picked up by parents/respice.

2.40 pm School finishes for students. Buses cannot go until 2.40pm.

2.40pm Teacher finishes.

2.40- 2.50 All SNAs are class based. This is the time when SNA's set up student's individual schedules for the next day ensure students resources are ready.

2.50pm SNA staff finish for the day.

3.30pm Office closes.

4.30 pm School premises close.

Rules of Our School

The school rules are as follows:

- Be a good friend.
- Be careful.
- Be gentle.
- Good listening
- Do your best.

Responding to Crisis Situations

Students can bring a wide variety of behaviour to school and therefore limits must be set to make them feel safe and secure both in the classroom and as a whole school. Our Code of Behaviour Policy in the Green Class Policy and Procedure Folder outlines how we promote a

positive school environment and the management of behaviours. Building a positive relationship with our students, gathering details of their preferences, and ensuring the class physical environment is organised and laid out to meet the students' needs will assist in promoting a positive school environment that supports learning and teaching.

We use the Studio 3, low arousal approach, with all our students. This approach relies on building positive relationships and knowing our students well and focusing on their specific needs. Some of our students may present with behaviours that concern. Proactive and reactive strategies outlined in all Students All About Me Plan's, are implemented by class staff under the lead from the teacher in consultation with the Behaviour Therapist, Parents, and other professionals where necessary. For some of our students Wellbeing Plans are implemented under the lead of the teacher. These are reviewed regularly with the CDNT and parents.

Data is collected regarding incidents of student behaviours of concern. In Danu CSS, teachers identify the behaviour of concern using the St. John Of God Matrix. Both the teacher and SNAs gather and record accurate data using ABCs and Scatterplots school templates. These are evaluated during the daily morning meeting or at the end of the class day, led by the class teacher with the view to prevent/reduce the behaviour re-occurring. The teacher consults with the Behaviour Therapist when necessary.

Timetable

Each class has a whole class PECS/visual class timetable displayed in their room for teachers to model how each student should check their individualised visual schedules. These are suited to their individualised needs and displayed at eye level for their ease of access with their name and photograph displayed at their schedule. All students use FIRST THEN visuals for transitions, while some students use First/Then as a beginning stage of visual support. Student timetables incorporate times in the day when the student will have opportunity to voice their requests and make choices for their preferred items. Class timetables are submitted to Principal by end of second week in September.

Curriculum, Planning and Preparation & Assessment

We follow the DES NCCA Primary School Curriculum for Children (Curriculum Guidelines for Moderate/Severe& Profound Curriculum), the Primary Language Curriculum, Junior Cycle Programme (for students aged 13-16 years) and Senior Cycle (for students aged 16-18 years).

Danu CSS provides teachers with an outline of requirements necessary for each teacher's planning and written preparation (BLACK folder). Teachers are required to prepare fortnightly curriculum planning and written preparation. Student SSP targets and planning for SIP are required to be included in this planning. A Cúntas Míósúil is emailed to the Principal on the last day of each month and the teacher will also insert a hardcopy into the Cúntas Míósúil 26/27 folder in the office and sign that this has been submitted.

Currently we are using, Senior Cycle, Junior Cycle, SPACE document, curriculum assessments and SSPs as part of academic assessments.

Student SSPs & End of Year Report

Each student has an SSP that reflects their individual strengths and needs. The SSP covers the student's priority areas for learning. Parents are partners in the development of the SSP. Up to date SSPs are found in the classroom in each student individual BLUE (PC students)/ Yellow (JC students)/Red (SC students) assessment folder and on soft copy on Aladdin. A copy of the current SSP/ SSP Review should also be in the teachers Green written planning folder and student targets reflected in teacher bimonthly written preparation. SSPs are reviewed in the first term (October) and third term (April) in consultation with Parents and staff. By Mid-May, End of Year School Reports and SSP Reviews are completed and sent out to parents during the second week in June. Danu CSS provides teachers with an outline of yearly SSP Process.

Incidents & Accident Reports

All student and staff incidents or injuries must be reported to class teacher and Principal/ Deputy Principal. All head injuries are reported to teacher and Principal/ Deputy Principal. Parents will be informed by class teacher of a student head injury. Student/Staff incident reports are completed by staff members if there is an injury to staff member or student. These are completed within 24 hours where possible and returned to the Principal following a class team meeting on how to prevent the incident/accident occurring again.

Feeling Unwell

If a student is unwell and is unable to engage in teaching and learning, consult with Principal/ Deputy Principal and a decision will be made on whether to contact parents of the child. If a staff member is feeling unwell, they must inform the Principal/ Deputy Principal immediately.

Intimate Care

It is very important that everyone feels as comfortable as possible during the school day. Many students require assistance with toileting and personal hygiene. Please refer and adhere to Intimate Care Policy and parental agreement on specific assistances.

Communicating with Staff

All staff members play a vital role in our students' education. We are professionals and we work together in a professional manner. Both Teachers, SNAs and Bus Escort roles and duties are set out by the Department of Education. In addition, Teachers follow the Code of Conduct set out by the Teaching Council. Our Dignity at Work policy is adhered to in our school community. As per DDLETB requirements, all staff have a Danu CSS email work account, and this is the email account that is used by the school regarding contacting staff to inform them of up-to-date housekeeping, training, etc. Each staff member has a pigeon-hole in the staffroom that should be checked daily. Staff also may be contacted via text message. Staff room notice boards: One is for daily formal school business such as duty rotas, daily messages etc and the other notice board is for Teachers and SNA notices as per DE, training opportunities, etc.

Communicating with Students

We fully appreciate how important it is for our students to be able to communicate with each other and staff. We encourage a whole communication approach. These include objects of reference, ISL, Lámh, visual such as photographs, PECS, words, core boards, ACC devices as well as gesture, facial expressions, and spoken words. Student communication audits are assessed in September and then as required.

Parents

We recognise and value parents as the most important educators of their children and are always welcome to visit the school. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet with class teacher/ Principal via contacting the school office. Parents must inform the school if they are taking their child out of school early and must sign their child out in the book provided in the office. Parents also are required to inform the class teacher if their child is absent from school and the reason why in written form (email or note). The teacher records this reason in Aladdin. In the event that a student is absent from school for 15 days or more the teacher should inform the Deputy Principal.

Communicating with Parents

Teachers contact parents via Aladdin email, daily communication book or telephone call via school office. Parents can at any time request to meet with the class teacher and principal via contacting the office. If a teacher needs to contact a parent, they will inform the Principal/ Deputy Principal beforehand. The teacher will make a written record of verbal conversation/ or face to face meeting on Alladin

Evacuations and Fire Drills

All staff should make themselves familiar with the support a child needs in the event of an evacuation. The fire warden for each class will put on their orange fire warden vest in the event of an evacuation sounding. Staff and students evacuate the school building via the nearest door exit which can be from another classroom. Usually, staff and students will exit via the classroom playground exit and walk towards the designated Fire Assembly area per class/ visitors in the Playground for Go Karts. We wait there until we are given all clear to return back inside by the Principal/ Deputy Principal.

In the event that the school needs to evacuate the Playground for Go Karts this will be via student entrance gate. The first person at the student entrance gate will open the gate lock. Classes will walk to the Fire Assembly area which is towards the Danu CSS car park on the left-hand side. We wait there until we are given all clear to return back inside. Some of our students may need to go for a walk instead of waiting. Inform the teacher in your class if you need to do this.

On any evacuation, the class teacher will bring the fire roll book with them.

An evacuation risk assessment form for each child will be completed after the first evacuation practice by the teacher in consultation with class team and a copy will be displayed on the back of each classroom door and a copy submitted to the office.

Class Outings & Walks

In the event of organising a class outing teachers need to inform the Principal prior to planning. A robust risk assessment using school template must be completed a week in advance before the outing, liaising with parents, BT, and previous teachers etc and submitted to Principal for approval of outing.

Before embarking on going out for daily walk, weekly trip to the shop etc a robust risk assessment using school template must be completed. Once approved by Principal students can go for a walk. Teachers will inform the office and class teacher next door when they are leaving /returning to the building when they go for a walk.

Parties

We celebrate birthday parties in consultation with Parents. We would ask parents to send in some party food and cake. It is customary to invite the class next door to celebrate this social occasion.

School Equipment & Broken Equipment

There is a class budget for the year. They will notify Principal of resources that are required. Teachers can order resources using school Order Form. Teachers take an inventory of equipment in each classroom at the beginning of the year (September) and at the end of the year (June).

Broken equipment will be recorded in the designated broken BLACK equipment book in the secretary pigeon hole.

Staff wear Bite Pro equipment that is the responsibility of the staff member signed out to. If lost this must be reported to the Principal and replaced by the staff member.

Laptops, iPads, PC's & Clever Touch

Teachers are responsible for Laptops, iPads, class PC's and Clever Touch equipment and will sign the DDLETB Loan Equipment Agreement. Any damages to be reported. At the end of the day, teachers are responsible for the class laptop, iPad, clever touch remote control are safely locked away.

Staff Purchases

Staff making purchases that are approved by the Principal will be reimbursed provided they fill out school-based receipt reimbursement forms. Receipts should be signed by staff member, totalled, and signed off before handing them into the office.

School Calendar

A copy of school calendar is available from the office.

School Office

During the school day the office is open from 8.30am to 9am and from 2.40pm to 3.30pm. the Office is closed for lunch from 12 to 12.30 pm daily.

Staff can email Karen for their request for stationary, ordering resources or place a request in her pigeonhole. Supplies can be collected between office opening hours.

First Aid

All 2025.2026 SNAs are First Aid trained. These persons are identified on the notice board in the staff room. There is one Defibrillator in our staffroom and one in Rathdara Community College Staffroom (the school attached to Danu CSS). There is a first aid box in each classroom and staffroom. It is the responsibility of the class staff to replenish resources of the first aid box and liaise with designated staff member to do so.

Sub Teacher Report of the Day

Sub teachers are given the class sub folder when they arrive in the school at 8.30am. They are asked to provide a note how the day went for the return of the class teacher. This can be left on the teacher's desk. The sub teacher must return the class sub folders to the school office at the end of their day.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in and out of the visitors' book when the enter/exit the school.

If there are any other details you require, please liaise with class teacher or Deputy Principal. We hope that you will be happy working here and that you find this helps you settle in. Enjoy our wonderful students and staff.

Kindest Regards.

Pat

Reviewed: 24.8.26

Appendix 1



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Vision Statement

Background of our name 'Danu'

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Our Patron is Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. (DDLETB). In its Statement of Strategy, 2017 — 2021. "Learn Achieve Succeed" the Board outlines five core values underpinning its statement:

1. Equality
2. Professionalism
3. Integrity
4. Collaboration
5. Innovation

The report further sets high level objectives under four strategic goals:

1. High quality and training programmes
2. High quality experience for learners
3. Organisational and staff development
4. Effective communication and collaboration

These values and goals will guide Danu CSS in its remit to provide real, realistic, and relevant educational programmes to meet the needs of its pupils.

Danu CSS is a community based special school that provides an appropriate education for students aged between four- to eighteen-year-old with a wide range of disabilities and complex needs in the Dublin 15 area. In their remit, DDLETB, and its management and staff put the learner at the heart of everything they do. They will continuously strive to ensure that their work will be characterised by the operational values of equality, collaboration, professionalism, and integrity.

Forging meaningful relationships with the pupils, their parents and all involved in their care and education is essential to ensure high quality education and experience for our learners. Effective communication, meaningful collaboration, openness, and transparency are critical in this regard.

Our school is a community school, a comfort zone, where everyone feels a sense of belonging, shares meaningfully, participates actively, and is accepted for what he/she is. That sense of community is continually fostered by generating a warm welcome, communal celebration and personal freedom, ever mindful of the dignity and respect accorded to our common humanity and giving choice and space to its learners in an inclusive, safe, learning environment.

In our school we want everybody — learners, carers, parents and teachers — to gain in confidence and self-esteem, through helping each other to reach their full potential, enjoying each other's successes, and allowing all to express themselves and feel heard. Students that are happy and content, supported by staff, and safe in the familiarity of their environs will blossom to reach their full potential and function in the community.

Their parents are central to all that we do. They are our students' first educators and so must be involved in all major decisions pertaining to their care and education. From the very initial meeting it is our objective to build a relationship of trust with parents, by listening and respecting their views, eliciting their necessary support in implementing our teaching programmes, and gaining their assistance in our task to educate their children. Our school is a support system for our parents, and we will be active listeners, acknowledging concerns and worries, welcoming suggestions, developing a team approach, and working together. We endeavour to work closely with parents and make them always feel at ease.

Danu CSS is fortunate, mainly through its parents and stakeholders, to have in a very short space of time forged excellent relationships with the Patron, Management, Staff, Professional and Supportive Organisations, Clinical and Supportive Staff, and Government Agencies and Departments. This is an enormous tribute to the small but energetic group of stakeholders who have resolutely pursued in a sustained and unified way their dream for a much-needed special school for Dublin 15. It is essential that this group remain together not only to guide the beginnings of this exciting endeavour, but also to influence its direction and operations. Danu CSS values the importance of the connections made by this grouping and now more than ever wants its help in ensuring that together we move forward together with a common purpose rooted in what is only best — not second best — for our pupils. Danu CSS will continue to build on the relationships that the stakeholders have formed. Danu CSS will continue to be dependent on this grouping and the different agencies they represent. In thanking you, Danu CSS requests that you continue to assist us and give us your much appreciated direction as we head into the future.

Let us, as we move forward together promise to do our best, always striving to be professional, keeping the children at the centre of all we plan and do. Let us acknowledge that we all have much to learn and that we will help each other in our individual and collective journeys as we move forward to a promising future. This is the beginning of a unique journey. Let us hold hands and move forward urgently and yet gently, being professional and also compassionate, sensitive and kind at all times. Let us mind each other as we work as a part of a team, fortunate in the leadership that the Patron, Management and Principal provide, and help them by ensuring that our dealings with them will be open, trusting, caring and honest at all times. We need as we move forward to look out for each other, be understanding, non-judgemental and have the ability to say 'I am sorry' when, inevitably we will at times make some mistakes.

Most important of all, let us pledge to give each other hope as we embrace the challenges in the realisation that we now are no longer on our own.

Éamon O 'Murchu

23/09/2019