

# St. Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

## Additional Educational Needs Policy



**Review Dates:** This policy will be reviewed annually.

Staff		Consultation
Parents' Council		Consultation
Student Council		Consultation
Board Of Management		Ratified

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## Introduction

**School Details:** St. Joseph's Secondary School is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Secondary School is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

## **Mission Statement**

*St. Joseph's Secondary school recognises that each pupil who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and which may contribute to the betterment of society.*

*We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential.*

*We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian community characterised by care and justice.*

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to enact the stated mission and vision of St. Joseph's Secondary School. We value all in the school community and endeavour to develop each member of the school community.

### **1.1 Rationale**

This policy document aims to outline the form that additional educational support for students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) takes in the school and the philosophy that underpins it. This policy is drafted in the context of the specific provisions and definitions with regard to children with disabilities and additional educational needs and the statutory requirements placed on schools, Boards of Management and the DES by the following legislation:

- The Data Protection Acts, 1988-2003/2018
- 2015 Children First
- 2004 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act
- The Freedom of Information Acts, 1997-2003
- 2000 Education Welfare Act

- 2000 & 2004 Equal Status Act
- 1998 Education Act

This policy should be viewed as a working document and be reviewed on a bi-annual basis. This policy bases its rationale on the principles laid out in the EPSEN Act which state that:

“The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs”,

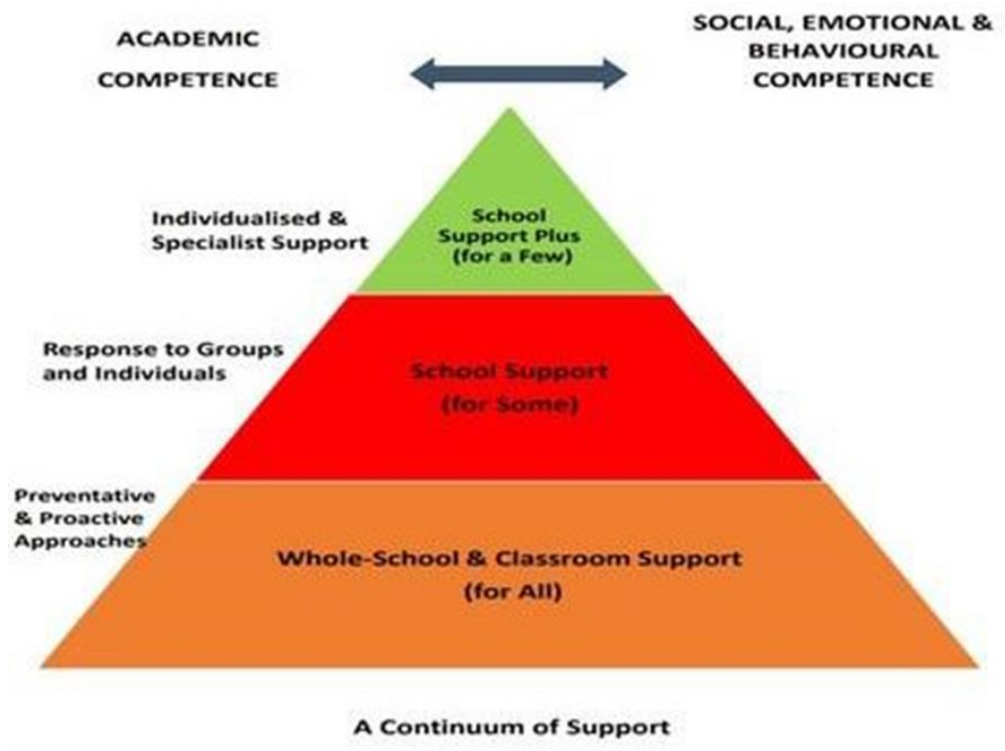
“People with AEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers”, and

“That people with SEN leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.”

**(EPSEN Act 2004)**

### [1.3 Revised Allocation Model \(2017\)](#)

Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles (including a baseline component). This gives stability to schools’ staffing arrangements over a number of years. It offers schools greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly, based on students’ needs, without the requirement for a diagnosis of disability. A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all students, irrespective of additional educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enroll in their local schools. In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilized in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with additional educational needs.



### Principles to guide the implementation process

- Resources provided to support students with additional educational needs should be used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools.
- Supports provided to students with additional educational needs should be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with additional educational needs.
- Additional education teaching supports provided to schools should be used solely for the support of students with identified additional educational needs, including those students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The additional education teaching supports cannot be used to reduce the student-teacher ratio for general subject

teaching or to provide additional subject options for students who do not have special education needs.

- Students with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these students should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- Schools should establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of students with additional educational needs.

## 2. Areas of AEN Provision

AEN provision must be deployed to address the needs of students. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education teaching resources. St. Joseph's deploys special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet students' needs.

### 2.1 Identified needs

Learning support is provided through in-class support, through small group or one to one teaching where appropriate. Student needs are identified and interventions appropriate to their need are put in place.

The areas of support include:

- Literacy support
- Numeracy support
- Organisational and Social skills support
- English as an additional language (EAL) Support
- Level 2 Learning Programmes are implemented and timetables adjusted for students who are more suited to this level for Junior Certificate.

### 2.2 Special Classes (ASD)

Special classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within mainstream schools.

St Joseph's currently (2021/2022) have two special ASD classes which provide a supportive learning environment to students on the autistic spectrum. Students enrolled in these special classes are included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent in line with their strengths and abilities.

### 2.3 Students of exceptional ability

CPD has been provided to staff to support teaching students of exceptional ability. The SEN department and NEPS are also available to support staff in differentiating work for students in this category. At each Year meeting in term one, teachers are advised of students who have shown exceptional ability in standardized cognitive assessments to help them evaluate and plan for these students in their teaching.

## 3 Resource Team

### 3.1 Roles within Resource Team

#### 3.1(a) Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO has responsibility for assessing and recording students' needs and progress. He/she plans resource provision in consultation with senior management and AEN team. This is revised throughout the school year and resources are redeployed accordingly. All students in the school who present with an educational need are supported to the extent that resources allow. Special Needs Assistant provision is timetabled by the SENCO and this provision is reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. The SENCO also is responsible for liaising with all the educational partners in relation to students on the SEN register. The SENCO works as part of the Care teams for each year group. This involves communicating with Year heads, Guidance department and the Senior Management team on a weekly basis to identify and address care needs that present in each year group. Additional responsibilities of SENCO are outlined in Appendix 4.

#### 3.1(b) Resource/Learning Support Teacher



The role of the Learning Support teacher is to support and remediate the identified additional needs of students. The Learning Support teacher has responsibility for setting learning targets for each student he/she supports. He/she also is responsible for developing appropriate educational materials and interventions for each term and for monitoring and evaluating students' progress.

### **3.1(c) Special Needs Assistant**

SNAs contribute significantly in the drawing up of the Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) required for all students with SNA access. SNAs also supervise lunch-time activities for SEN students and contribute to the Student Support Plans for additional students on an informal basis, i.e. and when students with SNA access are not in school. SNAs contribute to the Student Plans by completing observations on students in mainstream class. A PPP involves individual planning for students with special educational needs and a care needs dimension should be included.

SNAs support a positive transition from primary school initially and the safe movement of such students between classes. They assist students with poor organisational skills at lockers, with school books and planning from the timetable. They help to keep the students they are assigned on task and help to reduce levels of anxiety and frustration in a sensitive, appropriate manner. Additional responsibilities of SNAs are outlined in Appendix 3

## **3.2 Whole school involvement in AEN support**

### **3.2(a) Board of Management (BOM)**

BOM responsibilities in relation to AEN provision are:

- To ensure that the school has a comprehensive AEN policy in place that has been developed collaboratively with all the relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant and progressive curriculum is provided in the school.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with AEN.

- To ensure that the AEN Policy forms part of the school plan.
- To ensure that the school meets its requirements in relation to students with AEN under relevant legislation as outlined earlier.

### **3.2(b) Senior Management Team**

The Senior Management Team of Principal and Deputy Principals have responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of the policy and provision for students with AEN.

- To appoint AEN coordinator(s) from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the coordinator.
- To keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance to AEN.
- In consultation with the AEN coordinator to liaise with the DES and other outside agencies.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of hours and funds.
- To promote and support CPD of staff involved in AEN provision, and where relevant whole school staff.
- To provide adequate time for planning consultation and review of all aspects of AEN by the AEN team.
- To ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians, students and external professionals/agencies (Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, DES).

### **3.2(c) Parents**

St Joseph's encourages communication with parents and guardians. Parents, through their unique knowledge of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted parents are consulted and their permission sought. The AEN department advocates a partnership of collaboration and co-operation with parents of students with AEN.

### 3.2(d) Students

The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle that underpins effective AEN provision. Students are encouraged to contribute to their own learning targets and to develop ownership of these targets. Students co-operate with the agreed programme and give feedback which will contribute to the monitoring and recording of progress.

### 3.2(e) Mainstream teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class. It is particularly important that all class teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes account of the learning needs of all their students. He/she is expected to differentiate the content, activities and teaching methodologies to take account of the range of abilities and needs of the students they teach. The class teacher is encouraged to contribute to the individual support profile of the AEN student they teach.

### 3.2(f) School Care Team

The purpose of St Joseph's Care Team is to provide for students who have a greater need for a higher level of intervention from the school community. The Care Team is a visible representation of the school's understanding and valuing of each student as an individual. The rationale of the care team is to strive to care in a genuine way to improve the lives of students and thereby ensure access to the curriculum and learning. It aims to coordinate a single transparent response to the care needs of a student and strives to create realistic positive outcomes in relation to the welfare, safety and happiness of students in the school.

The core Care Team is made up of staff that have direct involvement in the care issues of students:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- SENCO
- Year Head

- Chaplain

The work of the Care Team often leads to AEN support being provided to address the care needs of a student. Also students attending learning support or who have additional needs may need the support of the Care Team.

## 4. Model of Organisation

### 4.1 Whole school context

St. Joseph's Secondary School organises its classes in a mixed ability setting. Base classes are a mixed ability unit from first to third year. The school does however bear in mind that some subjects do not lend themselves to being taught as mixed ability and may have different requirements depending on the syllabus being taught. This can result in some classes within a small number of subject areas being banded.

### 4.2 Identification and Screening for AEN

An important role of the AEN department is to establish the procedures necessary for the preliminary screening of pupils and subsequent selection of pupils for more detailed diagnostic screening. Central to this process is the class teacher and the parent.

#### 4.2(a) School based identification

A class teacher, tutor and/or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the AEN department. Any referral made by a class teacher or tutor must be forwarded to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who will begin a broader profile.

This first step in the screening process allows the AEN team, in co-operation with the School Care team to identify the nature of AEN being experienced.

#### 4.2(b) Parent Referral Process

When a parent notifies the school that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, the SENCO, with the parents' approval, may initiate the administration of the preliminary screening process (as outlined above).

#### 4.2(c) Screening

If it is deemed appropriate the SENCO initiates a process of formal and informal screening to be conducted by the AEN department.

#### Informal Screening:

- Observations from mainstream teachers.
- Consultation with parents.
- Student Journal.
- Meeting with pupil.

#### Formal Screening:

- Review of Cognitive assessments in literacy and numeracy.
- Review of in house exams and reports.
- Behavioural record if appropriate.
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellors.
- Review of previous professional assessments
- Initiate preliminary consultation with NEPS psychologist

Following this screening stage decisions are made as to appropriate support warranted.

- No need for further action.
- Needs for monitoring/support in mainstream setting.
- Purposeful Withdrawal.
- SNA support

All information / data gathered is kept in the student's support file.

#### 4.3 Model of AEN provision

St Joseph's use a continuum-based assessment and intervention process in deciding the supports for students with AEN (see NEPS guidelines). The following options are considered:

- Team Teaching
- SNA support in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Curricular reduction

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is reviewed at regular intervals. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular

curriculum. All decisions in this regard are made in consultation with senior management, parents/guardians, class teachers, resource teacher and student.

#### 4.4 Programme Planning

The objectives of the assessments conducted by the AEN department are to identify the student's specific needs. As a result of the information gathered by this assessment process it may be necessary to put in place targeted interventions to address the needs identified. For students presenting with challenging behaviours an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) is created in consultation with NEPS psychologist, School Care team, class teachers, resource teachers, parents and pupil to best enable the student to progress in school.

##### 4.4(a) Personal Pupil Plan (PPP)

All students with access to SNA support have a PPP.

PPPs include:

- Priority learning needs
- Relevant information about student's AEN
- Appropriate teaching approaches
- Short/medium term Learning goals
- Curricular needs

The AEN partners including the Principal, NEPS psychologist, Year head, Guidance department, resource teacher, class teachers, SNA, parents and the student himself have input into these plans.

#### 4.5 Review and Evaluation

The progress of each pupil with AEN is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the term. These evaluations help to form the basis of future planning. The primary purpose of this process is to determine the extent to which the interventions have been successful and to decide the nature and level of resource support, if any, to be provided in the following term.

#### 4.6 Timetabling of Resource Provision

##### ***Individual Withdrawals***

The AEN department is fully supported by senior management in relation to timetable provision for students with AEN. Students may be individually

withdrawn for support. This is done in consultation with the respective subject teacher and with parental permission. In some cases students with AEN may be on reduced timetables to facilitate their individual education needs. These students may attend resource during the freed times on their timetable. If appropriate this support will be on a one-to-one basis.

### ***Small Group support***

When AEN students have similar needs small group support is provided to maximize the benefit of the resource hours allocated to the school. Currently small group support is provided in Numeracy and Literacy. Provision is reviewed on an annual basis. Students with Irish exemptions on the basis of being below the 10<sup>th</sup> %ile in standardized literacy/numeracy assessments receive resource support during Irish.

### ***Team Teaching***

Team teaching is encouraged and seen as a preferred model of resource provision as it allows for inclusion of AEN students in mainstream classes. This model of provision is expanding across subjects such as Mathematics, English Irish and Science .

### ***Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)***

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is recommended for students whose learning needs would not be met by the demands of the traditional Leaving Certificate. In instances where a student with AEN chooses LCA it is generally accepted that the curriculum itself supports the student. However where it is apparent that additional support is necessary for a student, this will be provided.

## **5. Communication**

### **5.1 AEN Pupil Register and Support files**

The details of all students with AEN are kept on school VSware and on School Google drive database. This provides all relevant staff with access to the supports provided to all students on the AEN register, their priority needs, their standardized scores, their wellbeing, engagement and SNA observations where applicable.

### **5.2 AEN briefing of staff**

The SENCO briefs staff bi-annually at staff meetings of each year group regarding the profile of students with AEN in the year.

### 5.3 Record Keeping

- A record is kept of all meetings of the AEN department.
- The AEN department maintains an up to date record of all student referrals.
- All professional reports are kept in the SENCO's office.

### 5.4 Induction of new staff

New staff are advised of students with AEN in the school and how to access information in relation to each student. Newly qualified teachers who have resource teaching are timetabled for mentoring by the SENCO/Senior management.

## 6. Enrolment and Assessment

***(Please see Appendix 5 for Enrolment Policy)***

### 6.1 Transition from Primary to Secondary school

St. Joseph's Secondary School seeks to foster a climate of support for incoming students that is flexible and allows for creative responses to individual needs. In making provision for students with AEN, with parental permission, important information relating to each student is obtained from feeder primary schools. A student profile is then prepared for incoming students with AEN and appropriate supports are planned.

The following steps are followed to help the transition from Primary to Secondary School:

- AEN team meet with parents at Open Day and again at incoming 1st Year parents' evening.
- A subject sampling day occurs where all intending entrants come to the school, meet staff and see classes in progress.
- A transition meeting is attended by SENCO for students with more complex needs. The Primary school teacher, SNA and NEPS psychologist are also in attendance.
- A visit to the school by the parents and student is arranged to familiarize the student with the school and prepare him for the change.
- Where specific concerns regarding AEN students are in evidence, phone contact is made by SENCO with parents and needs/resources



available discussed. If necessary a meeting is arranged for further consultation.

## 6.2 Assessment

The AEN department reviews results of Drumcondra cognitive assessments. Class groups are formed in consultation with the school senior management. The Drumcondra assessments are the basis on which class groups are formed. The purpose of these assessments is to identify learning needs that have not yet come to light, to ensure a true mixed ability class setting and to facilitate option choice where appropriate.

Further testing may be done to find out more data regarding the student's AEN to enable the resource department to put in place appropriate supports.

Where a concern arises, parents are contacted and student's individual needs are discussed. All screening occurs with parents' permission.

## 6.3 Monitoring of Progress and Support

The progress of each student is monitored on an on-going basis throughout the term. At the end of each half term a review is conducted to observe, record and evaluate progress made. Literacy is supported through a timetabled library class for all First Years. Literacy support for all is provided during this time through engagement with the Accelerated Reader, the Vocabulary Enrichment and the Rapid Reading Programmes. Important information in relation to each student's reading ability is gathered and disseminated to all staff. The PPad-E assessment and diagnosis of literacy skills is done at the end of First Year and provide reports for staff and parents and specifically targeted recommendations for each student.

## 7. Liaison with Other Professional Agencies

The SENCO collaborates and liaises closely with a number of out-of-school agencies such as those listed below.

### 7.1 National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The National Council for Special Education has been established as an independent statutory body. The council has authority to:

- Carry out research and provide expert advice to the Minister for Education and Science on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services.
- Provide for a range of services at local and national level in order that the educational needs of children with disabilities are identified and provided for.
- Co-ordinate, with health authorities, schools and other relevant bodies, the provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities.

### 7.2 Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)

The SENO represents the local delivery aspect of the work of the NCSE. There are approximately 70 SENO's employed nationally and all have a qualification and work experience relating to service delivery to children with AEN. SENO's have responsibility for:

- Co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of educational services to children with SEN.
- Processing applications for resources for children with SEN.
- Regular and detailed engagement with organisations such as health authorities, the DES, the Inspectorate and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

### 7.3 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

St. Joseph's Secondary School is provided with a senior psychologist from NEPS. The service that is delivered by NEPS operates under the following framework:

- Consultation about individual students
- Recommendations and advice on individual students needs
- Advice on classroom strategies and resources
- Advisory work in relation to AEN policy and practice
- Consultation and recommendations in relation to R.A.C.E. (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations)
- Full psychological assessments as needed.

Student's cases are presented to the NEPS psychologist and each case prioritised for assessment on its merits by the psychologist in consultation with the SENCO and school Principal.

### 7.4 Health Service Executive

A number of students are under the supervision of the social services section of the HSE. Case conferences are held periodically to plan and decide measures to be put in place to support these students. All key partners in the student's welfare attend these conferences.

### Appendices

1. Circular 08/02
2. Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools - Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017)
3. The Role of the Special Needs Assistant
4. Duties and Responsibilities of SENCO
5. St Joseph's Enrolment Policy

This policy was ratified on :22/06/21

Signature: Chairperson of the Board Of Management

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Date: 22/06/21

Signature: Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

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Date: 22/06/21