



Whole-School Inclusion Policy for Sancta Maria College

1. Introduction

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 which underpins it. It is written in the context of the Education Act (1998) and takes cognisance of The Equal Status Act (2000), The Equality Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004). Further publications have informed the content of this policy – “Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs – Post-Primary Guidelines” (Department of Education and Science [DES] Inspectorate: 2007) and “Exceptionally Able Students – Draft Guidelines for Teachers” (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA]: 2007). Guidelines for Post Primary Schools – Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs (2017), Special Education Circular 0014/2017, 8/19 - Guidelines to Schools SET Allocation and (55/22) Exemptions from Irish (Post-Primary).

‘Effective provision for students with special educational needs is situated within an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all and good collaboration and engagement between schools, parents / guardians and students.

A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all students, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with special educational needs’. (Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs (April 2017)

The new School Inclusion Model of support was rolled out in the school in the academic year 2018-2019.

The policy is the result of a consultative process involving staff, parents and Board of Management.

The document should be read in conjunction with the following policies: (1) Admissions, (2) Pastoral Care, (3) Anti-Bullying and (4) Whole School Guidance and Counselling Policy, (5) Assessment (6) Child Protection, (7) Positive Behaviour Code, (8) Homework

2. Mission

Sancta Maria College is a Catholic Secondary School founded by the Sisters of Mercy and is currently under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education – an Irish Schools Trust). Our aim is the holistic development of young women in a caring, Christian environment.

Our College strives to be a centre of academic excellence where each child is helped to achieve her full spiritual, physical and emotional potential.

We see ourselves as an inclusive community that is welcoming of all. We foster an atmosphere of learning that is holistic in approach and nurtures each individual student's personal growth and development.

Our Additional Education Needs Programme is a tangible sign of our commitment to be an inclusive learning community. It is based directly on the needs of our students and, therefore, must be reviewed regularly to meet needs that may change.

3. Definitions

- (a) Students with additional educational needs are those who are restricted from participating in, and benefiting from, education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition. (EPSEN [Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs] Act 2004).
- (b) Exceptionally able students are those understood to require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students.

4. Access to Additional Education Support

A student may be selected for Learning Support in our school in the following circumstances:

- A student who has had a psychological assessment which recommends Learning Support/Resource Teaching.
- A student who has a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) or a General Learning Disability (GLD).
- A student identified during the entrance assessments.
- A student identified by her teachers as having difficulty with one or more of their subjects.
- A student considered to have emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- A student with physical difficulties.
- A student with English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs.

While every effort is made to meet the needs of students, it must also be noted that this provision is dependent on the extent of the resources made available to the College by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

5. Roles

All of the following are responsible for managing the school response for students with Additional Educational Needs:

(a) Board of Management

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of the Whole School Inclusion Policy..
- Arranges for a periodic review of the range of curriculum provision within the school to ensure that suitable programmes are on offer to all students.
- Provides resources for the professional development of staff in supporting students with special educational needs.
- Ensures adequate accommodation and resources.
- Provides a secure facility for the storage of records.
- Ensures that the rights of parents as prescribed in legislation are upheld in the school.

(b) Principal

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the additional educational needs of students are met.
- Assumes overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies and procedures relating to the inclusion of students with additional educational needs.
- Oversees a whole-school approach to assessment and screening to identify needs and to guide the allocation of appropriate supports.
- Ensures effective engagement with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with additional educational needs.
- In collaboration with the in-school management team, plays a key role in the deployment of staff, allocation of resources, organisation of students and timetabling.
- Works with the Board, staff and parents/guardians in the development of a whole- school plan for inclusion of students with additional educational needs.
- Ensures that mainstream teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with additional needs.
- Monitors implementation of Additional Educational Needs (AEN) programme and selection of students for ATS (Additional Teaching Support).
- Consults and liaises with outside bodies and agencies.
- Ensures that systems are in place for effective sharing of relevant information on students' needs with all subject teachers.
- Facilitates the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of teachers with additional educational needs, and ensures that all school staff (subject teachers, special education teachers, guidance counsellor/s, special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Facilitates and promotes the effective involvement of parents, students and external professionals / agencies.
- Makes application to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for Additional Teaching Support and / or SNA Posts for incoming students with special needs deemed to be over and above those provided for in the General Allocation Model (2017).
- Makes applications for Assistive Technology where appropriate for students with Additional Educational Needs.
- Processes applications for exemptions from Irish.

(c) Deputy Principal

- Initial point of contact for parents who have concerns in relation to their daughter's learning needs.
- Oversees the liaising with feeder primary schools and the gathering of information about the additional needs of incoming students.
- Works with the Additional Education Needs Co-ordinator (AENCO) in the allocation of Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants to students with additional needs.
- Works with Special Educational Needs Coordinator to create timetables for teachers providing Additional Teaching Support.
- Liaises with the National Council for Special Education, NCSE, in relation to all students with Additional Educational Needs.
- Liaises with National Educational Psychological Services, NEPS, and all other outside agencies involved with children with Additional Educational Needs.
- Makes applications to the appropriate bodies for resources in Special Educational Needs, English as an Additional Language, etc.
- Is a member of the Care Team and attends a weekly timetabled meeting as part of that team
- Oversees the information transfer between parents of students with Additional Educational Needs and teachers.
- Co-ordinates the setting up of separate centres for State Examinations.
- Recruits readers and superintendents locally.
- Meets with the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator on a regular basis.

(d) Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

- Co-ordinates Student Support Files for students with additional educational needs in consultation with parents, student, AEN team, Guidance Counsellor and teachers.
- Co-ordinates the review of Student Support Plans.
- Co-ordinates the work of the Additional Education Teaching Team in devising schemes of work to address specific needs of students.
- Studies the profiles of new 1st year students in liaison with the Guidance Counsellor; Liaises with primary schools and gathers information about the learning needs of incoming students who have been in receipt of Learning Support.
- Studies psychological reports and completed AEN questionnaires from enrolment documentation.
- Identifies additional educational needs and need for Irish language exemptions.
- Is a member of the student care team and attends weekly Care Team meetings.
- Liaises with Care Team for educational/psychological assessments with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Psychologist; liaises with SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) and Deputy Principal re reports and organises feedback to staff on reports.
- Develops timetable for SET's and students with special needs; Develops and co-ordinates timetable for Special Needs Assistants and students and distributes copies appropriately.
- Manages the Special Needs Assistants in terms of their timetable, use of time, documenting, record-keeping, reporting, etc.
- Arranges a weekly meeting for the Special Needs Assistants for their weekly written reports.

- Liaises with parents regarding students' needs; Informs parents if their daughter needs additional supports. Meets and advises parents as required.
- Monitors student progress via teachers' and Special Needs Assistants' written reports.
- Recommends students for applications for Reasonable Accommodations for Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate Examinations to the Care Team.
- Keeps up-to-date records of all Additional Teaching Support timetables and all Special Educational Needs students. Maintains AEN register which is stored on SharePoint.
- Meets with Principal on a regular basis.
- Facilitates communication with the general staff on support issues.
- Co-ordinates Reasonable Accommodations at examinations in consultation with the Guidance and Counselling Department.
- Liaises with the Guidance Counsellor and other staff members in relation to the selection and implementation of tests and other means of assessing students' achievements and progress.
- Co-ordinates Level 2 Learning Programmes.
- Manages applications for RACE.
- Is a member of the decision-making team about the level of support provided to each student on the continuum:
 - Support for all.
 - Support for some.
 - Support for a few (National Educational Psychological Services).

(e) Special Education Teacher (s)

- Supports and remediates the literacy and numeric needs of students.
- Works with the AEN Co-ordinator.
- Attends AEN meetings.
- Involved in co-operative teaching/team teaching and in class support in mainstream classes with Mainstream Teachers.
- Works with students on a withdrawal basis for additional classes in particular subjects.
- Is responsible for the creating the Student Support Plan (SSP) and review of the progress of individual students.
- Liaises and consults with Mainstream Teachers as required.
- Devises schemes of work for their assigned AEN students.

(f) Guidance Counsellor

- Liaises with primary schools and gathers information about the emotional, social, family and learning needs of students.
- Administers diagnostic assessment tests when appropriate.
- Assists with Psychological testing.
- Provides counselling in personal, educational and career development.
- Provides career information and guidance.
- Consults with Additional Educational Needs team, staff and parents.

- Makes referrals to other professionals and agencies.
- Is a member of the Care Team and attends a weekly, timetabled meeting as part of that team.
- Manages Applications for DARE .

(g) Subject Teacher

- Has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in their class.
- Collaborates with the AEN Co-ordinator and Special Education Teachers in identifying pupils who may have General or Specific Learning Disabilities.
- Differentiates the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils, e.g., setting objectives at appropriate levels, modifying presentations & questioning appropriately.
- Provides learning activities and materials that will enable successful outcomes.

(h) Special Needs Assistant

- Makes a valuable contribution to the capacity of the school to provide inclusive education for students with additional educational needs. The duties of the Special Needs Assistant are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management and are outlined in Circular SNA 12/05 (DES).
- Assists in the creation of the Personal Pupil Plan and highlighting the primary and secondary care needs of the student.
- Engages in assisting a student or a group of students in relation to a particular task – this should always take place in accordance with the directions of the teacher who has assigned the task, if this is identified as a care need of the student.
- Attends to the care needs of their assigned students.
- Treats all matters relating to school business and their work in school as strictly confidential.
- Attends weekly meeting with the AENCO.
- Keeps weekly reports on students and highlights any issues/concerns to the AENCO.

(i) Parents

- Sancta Maria College recognises the rights of parents/guardians of students with special educational needs to be involved in, and consulted about, the programme of education available for their daughter.
- Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the school if they observe any learning or related difficulties at home.
- Where screening, assessment and profiling are conducted, parents are consulted and their permission sought.
- When a Student Support Plan is being developed, parents will be consulted. This plan will be reviewed bi-annually.

(j) Students:

- We welcome the involvement of students with additional educational needs in planning for their own learning.
- A student, for whom an SSP is being developed, is consulted as an essential part of the development process.

- Students are encouraged to contribute to the learning targets as set out in the SSP.

6. Procedures for Identifying a Student with SEN:

- (a) Parents may indicate on the student information form, upon enrolling in the College, that special needs were identified in primary school. The AENCO consults with parents when necessary – prior to entry – to review educational reports.
- (b) The Guidance Counsellor and AENCO consult with primary teachers when visiting feeder primary schools during the spring of the year of entry.
- (c) An analysis of standardised test results received from primary schools is undertaken.
- (d) Standardised tests are administered to all incoming First Year students in February, and the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support or further assessment.
- (e) A Class Teacher, Tutor and/or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the AEN Department. Referral forms are available in the staffroom and on SharePoint. This allows the AEN team to consult with the Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, etc. as necessary, to ascertain the nature of the AEN and to design a response strategy.
- (f) When a parent notifies the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head/Tutor/Guidance Counsellor or Subject Teacher that a student is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school, a process of formal and informal assessment is initiated by the AEN team.

Informal assessment may involve all or some of the following:

- Observations from Mainstream Teachers.
- Consultations with parents.
- Use of Student Journal.
- Meeting with student.

Formal assessment may involve some or all of the following:

- Review of entrance tests.
 - Review of in-house examinations and reports.
 - Behavioural record if appropriate.
 - Consultation with the Guidance Counsellor.
 - Referral to outside agencies.
 - Some further testing may be required.
- (g) Following this profiling stage, decisions are made as to the appropriate support warranted. It may be decided that:
 - There is no need for further action.
 - There is a need for monitoring and support in a mainstream setting.
 - Support is desirable – in class support is much more beneficial than withdrawal.
 - Further investigation is required and parents will be advised in relation to assessments.

7. When a student is identified with Additional Educational Needs

- (a) In a situation where a student is identified as needing additional support, a Student Support Plan is drawn up in consultation with parents, staff and the student herself. Priority learning needs are identified, and a timeframe for the attainment of targets is included. Targets are set for each priority learning need, and strategies and resources required are identified. A date is set for the review of the SSP.
- (b) The format of this plan is listed in **Appendix A**.
- (c) A scheme of work is developed, and a review of progress with the student takes place once every term. This review may take into account the perspectives of both parents and staff.
- (d) All records pertaining to the student will be retained in the student support file.

8. Organisation of Class Groups

In First Year, a mixed-ability policy is in place. In Second and Third Year, classes are banded for Irish and Maths; in Third Year, classes are also banded for English with regular reviews taking place. Transition Year operates a mixed-ability policy, except in Irish where classes are divided into Higher and Ordinary Levels. The Senior Cycle also operates on a mixed-ability basis for all subjects, with the exceptions of Irish, English and Maths.

9. Organisation of Learning Support

Currently, we have a mixed model of Learning Support in operation, i.e.

- In class support is the most desirable method.
- Individual Withdrawal.
- Small-Group Withdrawal .
- Group Withdrawal.
- Team Teaching/Co-teaching.

10. Other Issues

(a) Irish Language Exemptions:

Irish language exemptions will only be granted when the criteria outlined in Circular 0055/2022 are met. Students who have been granted an Irish Exemption will be offered additional withdrawal support at this time (as much as our resources allow).

(b) Information:

In September, teachers receive details of all pupils with Additional Educational Needs. The information includes:

- Name of student.
- Category of disability.
- Level of support being provided.
- Potential areas of difficulty.
- Potential provision at State Exams.

If an educational assessment is available, a summary of the needs and recommendations is made available to all relevant staff.

(c) Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)

The State Examinations Commission provides a scheme of reasonable accommodations in the state exams, for students with specific learning needs who meet certain criteria.

The reasonable accommodations are intended to:

- a. Remove, as far as possible, the impact of the condition on the candidate's performance and thus enable the candidate to demonstrate her level of attainment
And
- b. Ensure that, whilst giving candidates every opportunity to demonstrate their level of attainment, the special arrangements will not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates in the same examination.

A short summary of some of the main accommodations are listed below:

- Reader/Reading Assistance/An Exam Reading Pen (all without offering any interpretations or explanations)
- A waiver from the assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation in language subjects only, where marks are awarded for content alone rather than spelling and grammar.
- Assistive Technology- for students with a physical disability who use assistive technology in their everyday school work. A word processor or recording device to record the candidate's responses or, in very exceptional circumstances, access to a scribe.
- Breaks – for students with a physical difficulty (including medical, sensory, behavioural and mental health difficulties), to allow them have a rest break (up to 10 minutes per scheduled hour) during which no writing is allowed.
- A separate centre to carry out their state examinations - for students with a physical difficulty (including medical, sensory, behavioural and mental health difficulties). Please note that a letter from your child's specialist must confirm that a medical condition is present and that the reasonable accommodations are recommended).

In order to qualify for any of the above, a student **must meet a strict set of criteria**. Psychological assessments are no longer required and the school must still carry out its own investigations even if a psychological report recommends any of the above accommodations. The school will need to perform some assessment tests in order to see if the criteria are met.

Schools are not allowed to apply for accommodations unless the **full set of criteria** are met.

Further information on the full list of accommodations available and the criteria necessary to apply can be found on the www.examinations.ie under the heading Reasonable Accommodations.

If accommodations are granted for the Junior Cycle Examinations, the same accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Certificate once the school can confirm the same needs exist.

Every effort is made to offer Reasonable Accommodations to students in receipt of them for school examinations. However, we cannot implement any accommodations until they have been granted by the State Examinations Commission.

11. The Exceptionally Able Student

Students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for in the general cohort of students are deemed to be exceptionally able.

A small, but significant percentage, of students may excel in various areas and Sancta Maria College encourages the development of these special abilities and talents.

Sancta Maria College offers extension activities in all subjects through the differentiated curriculum on subject plans.

We also offer further opportunities for the exceptionally able student through many co-curricular activities.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Education Needs Co-ordinator, Special Education Teacher- Core team.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

The Policy was then signed by:

Signed: Mr. PJ Gannon
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Mr. Tom O' Meara
(Principal)

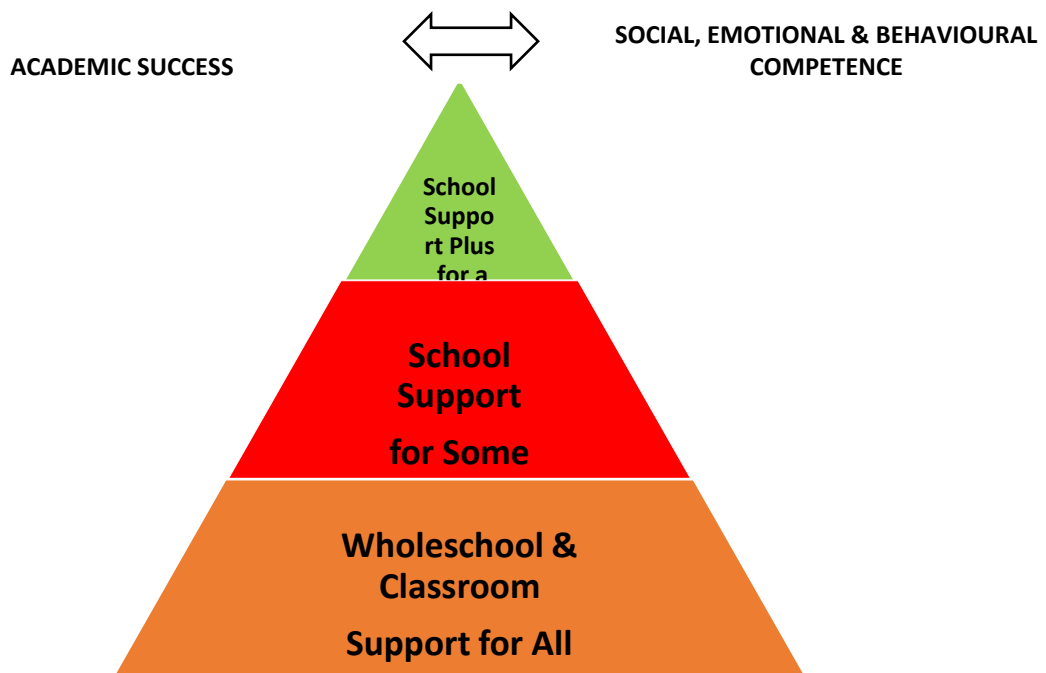
Date: January 30th 2023

Date: January 30th 2023

Appendix 1:

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	SANCTA MARIA COLLEGE
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	

A Continuum of Support



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Support Checklist

Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
1. Parents/ Guardians Consulted		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
3. Hearing		
4. Vision		
5. Medical Needs		
6. Basic Needs Checklist completed		
7. Assessment of learning- screening		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning		
9. Observation of behaviour		
10. Interview with pupil		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		
<p><i>Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20</i></p>		

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s).

For help, see *SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers*; *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers*, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed – subject teachers, resource teachers.			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.