



Additional Educational Needs Policy

Mission statement

St. Mary's is a Mercy school which is concerned with developing the whole person within a Christian atmosphere. By providing a balance of educational activities, we foster growth in self-esteem and respect for others. We take pride in encouraging high standards of teaching and learning.

St. Mary's is committed to creating a learning environment which is inclusive and supportive of all students in accordance with our mission statement. With that in mind we strive to identify students with additional educational needs and to provide support in as far as possible and practicable for those students at St Mary's Secondary School.

Purpose of Policy

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to make:

- An accurate and appropriate assessment of all Additional Needs students
- To provide for the needs identified in as far as resources allocated to the school permit.
- The policy has been prepared with reference to the following legalisation: The Education Act 1998 (EA), The Education Welfare Act 2000 (EWA), The Equal Status Act 2000 (ESA), The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (ESPEN) and the DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Current provision for AEN students

- St. Mary's currently has quite extensive resources including a sensory room and an AEN designated support room and has also developed processes to ensure provision is appropriate and properly targeted.
- Students with AEN are catered for in small group classes and an AEN student who is experiencing difficulty in coping with the breadth of the curriculum is permitted to drop a subject after consultation with her parents/guardian, the relevant subject teacher, the Deputy Principal and the AEN co-ordinator. If at all possible then the student will receive extra tuition time in her other subjects.



- One-to-one classes will be supplied on a very limited basis for AEN students and only where a need exists which cannot be catered for in any other manner.
- Resource teaching may be in the form of co-operative teaching. The term “co-operative teaching” is used here to denote any arrangement whereby two or more teachers work together in a collaborative manner with a class of students who have diverse learning needs.
- The school will seek an exemption from Irish for individual students in accordance with the criteria as set out by the Department of Education and Science.
- Where a student has been granted access to a Special Needs Assistant, a care programme will be drawn up to meet the individual’s needs, following the guidelines as laid out by the Department of Education and Science and in agreement the student, the school and the parents.
- Each Subject teacher strives to create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes cognisance of AEN students. This will involve differentiating his/ her teaching practice. Subject teachers are also encouraged to bring concerns to members of the AEN Team. Each teacher has been provided with a book on Additional Education Needs with definitions and strategies. CPD in AEN is provided where possible to whole staff. Staff are given regular updates at staff meetings by the AEN coordinator.
- The Principal and/or Deputy Principal meet the AEN team every week. The aim of the Team is to strive to provide an effective and holistic response to those students who have AEN. Thus the members of this team work closely with mainstream teachers and, as appropriate, with other specialist teachers, such as those involved in Pastoral care roles, the School chaplain, Special Needs assistants and other relevant staff members in providing inclusive education for students with AEN. Members of the team strive to keep abreast of all developments in the area of AEN and monitor and evaluate AEN students as appropriate.
- The school also has an AEN Coordinator who is responsible for co-ordinating the AEN Needs Team in the school and who will read, interpret and disseminate information from Psychological reports as appropriate to relevant staff. The coordinator will also liaise with staff, management, parents and outside bodies such as NEPS, SENO and DES as appropriate and keep all records regarding students of AEN.
- The AEN coordinator in conjunction the AEN team and the Principal/Deputy Principal will apply for Reasonable Accommodation for Certificate examinations (R.A.C.E.). It should be noted that accommodation approved at Junior Certificate does not automatically guarantee approval at leaving Certificate level.



Identifying students with Special needs:

At enrolment, parents are asked to complete an enrolment form which has a question regarding additional educational needs. If there has been an assessment report on a student then parents are asked to make a copy of this available. Such reports will only be accessed by the Principal, Deputy principal, AEN co-ordinator and other relevant staff members as necessary such as for example the school Counsellor. The AEN coordinator will ensure that the recommendations of such reports will be made available to the relevant staff. The AEN coordinator will also liaise with relevant personnel in National Schools.

First years also sit the CAT standardised Educational Tests and this is usually in the first term. All the information from this testing along with teacher observations will be used to determine if a student has AEN that needs to be addressed. Relevant staff will also be informed of the CAT results on E Portal in special files which are only accessible by staff.

Signed: Michael Breen (on behalf of the Board of Management)

Date Ratified: 22nd June 2017