



# Additional Educational Needs Policy

## Glossary of Key Terms:

**AEN:** Additional Educational Needs

**DES:** Department of Education and Skills

**DARE:** Disability Access Route to Education

**GP:** General Practitioner

**PPP:** Personal Profile Plan (For students with SNA access)

**NCSE:** National Council for Special Education

**NEPS:** National Educational Psychologist Service

**SEN:** Special Education Needs

**SENCO:** Special Education Needs Coordinator

**SFL :** Support For Learning (Ballymakenny College's title for our AEN Department)

**SNA:** Special Needs Assistant

**SS:** Strategic Sheet (Student support sheet detailing interests, strengths, additional needs and strategies)

**SSP:** Student Support Plan

**SST:** Student Support Team

## **1. Introduction**

The fundamental reason for developing a policy within the whole school is to ensure that all students experience a quality education appropriate to their needs including their academic, social and skills needed for living and thriving in the wider world.

This policy aims to outline the additional educational support for students with learning difficulties, special education needs and students with any other support needs.

- *It is written in the context of the current legislation:*

Education Act 1990

Education Act 1998

Education Welfare Act 2000

Equal Status Act 2000 and 2004

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

The policy has been drawn up by the Special Education Needs Coordinator in line with the new allocation model and in consultation with the principal, parents/guardians, students and other staff members.

## **2. School's other policies**

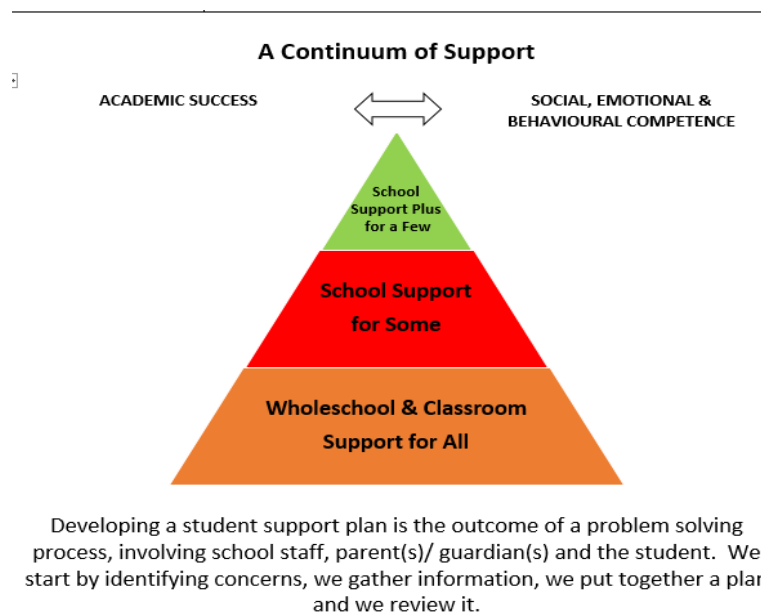
This document has links with and should be read in conjunction with other documents of Ballymakenny College such as:

- The Mission Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Information Technology Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Assessment Policy

## 2.1 Inclusion

The principle aim of this document is to enable students to access their appropriate educational provision, participate and benefit from the education that this school provides in order to maximize their potential. To achieve this principle aim, these students may require additional educational support, which can only be adequately provided where the school is given the necessary additional resources by the DES. This is linked to the Ballymakenny College Mission Statement - it is stated that 'we aim to support inclusion in a transparent and supportive manner for all students - "We aim to create a vibrant, welcoming school community with positive teacher-student relationships, in which every student feels a real sense of belonging. Each student is encouraged to explore their full range of abilities and supported to reach their full academic and social potential, whatever their background and identity."

The continuum of support model is currently being implemented in Ballymakenny College in line with recommendations from the NCSE and NEP's to provide a whole school support system for our students.



## 2.2 Continuum of Support

Students will be supported in Ballymakenny College through the above model. Students with SNA Access and individual needs that require every day assistance will be placed in the *Support Plus* category (Teachers, SNA's and SFL team are to complete PPP and Student Support Plans in combination with the student and parent/guardian). Students who require assistance from in class

support teachers, withdrawal and support across a range of sections will be placed in the *School Support for Some* category (Teachers, SNA's and SFL team are to complete Student Support Plans in combination with the student and parent/guardian). Students who require support within some/one lesson(s) will be placed in the *Support for All* category (classroom teachers are to develop bi-weekly plans that help monitor the student's progress). Students will move up and down the continuum dependent on their progress.

### **3. Students with Learning Difficulties/Special Educational Needs Defined**

This includes students with a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit fully from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability; or a condition that results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

#### **4.1 Key policies: The following Key roles are defined within the Policy**

- The role of the Class Teacher.
- The role of the Resource/Learning Support Coordinator.
- The role of the Resource/Learning Support Teacher.
- The role of the In Class Support Teacher.
- The role of the Deputy Principal's/Principal.
- The role of the Parents/Guardians.
- The role of the SNA.

*Tiered support system: Class Teacher – In Class Support Teacher – Learning Support Teacher*

#### **4.2 The role of the class teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/her class. It is particularly important that all class teachers strive to create a classroom environment that is inclusive by recognising learning difficulties that are present and takes actions to accommodate these learning difficulties. The class teacher also plays an important role in the early identification of students with AEN. The class teacher should be alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and bring any concerns to the attention of the SFL Department. A key element of AEN provision is that there is a high level of consultation, communication and co-operation between the class teacher and the SFL Department. There should be communication between the class teacher and the in class/learning support teacher about students with additional needs, difficulties, targets and learning strategies. The class teacher should be aware of the needs, targets and strategies for any student with AEN within their classroom. The class teacher is welcome to and should be consulted in the process of setting learning targets and drafting Student Support Plans. The following criteria applies to the Class Teacher:

- Has primary responsibility for the progress of all the students in his/her class.
- Be alert to and refer on any possible students with AEN (via Email to SENCO).
- Facilitate access to the curriculum for students with learning difficulties.

- Be aware of students with AEN and be knowledgeable of the information available regarding students with AEN.
- To read relevant support material provided including information on SharePoint e.g. AEN. register, screening tests results etc. and AEN books in the staff room if required for guidance.
- Exchange information with the Resource/learning support teacher on the student's progress as required.
  - Assist with the provision of accommodation in House and State Examinations
  - Advise students on Options and Subject Levels
  - Partake in a whole school approach to Learning Support

### **4.3 The role of the In Class Support Teacher**

The in class support teacher is primarily concerned with acting in a supporting role in a specific subject. They are there to help students with AEN and other students that have been identified or are seen to be needing extra support within the class. The students with AEN and other needs will be made known to the in class support teacher and those students are to be their primary concern within the classroom. They have a responsibility to help the students access the learning that is going on within the classroom. They also have a role in detecting and reporting any possible concerns of AEN to the SFL department. They engage in consultation and co-operation with the AEN department regarding students with AEN, diagnosed or suspected. They have a good knowledge of the information regarding the student/s with AEN and strategies to help these students. The in class support teacher is welcome to, and should be included in the drafting process of Student Support Plans and/or learning targets for students that are their primary concern in their role as in class support teacher.

*The following criteria applies to the In Class Support Teacher:*

- Has primary responsibility in helping students to access the teaching and learning within the mainstream classroom setting.
- To keep the class teacher up to date with the student's progress and any issues that may arise.
- Prior to taking up the role the In Class Support Teacher needs to be aware of and have accessed the information available on the students that are their responsibility for supporting e.g. using vsware, accessing reports, speaking to the Tutor, Student Support Plans etc.
- To exchange information with the Learning Support teacher on the student's progress
- Advise on Options and Subject levels.
- To be involved in the planning process for the student's learning needs.

- To partake in temporary or full-time withdrawal if deemed necessary for the development of the student.

#### **4.4 The role of the SENCO**

The SENCO is responsible for coordinating the Learning Support and Resource provisions within the school. This role includes:

##### **(A) A teaching role**

- Direct teaching of students with learning difficulties.
- Assist in providing education to meet the needs of students assessed as having learning difficulties.
- Profile and plan for students.
- Set targets and plan for reviews. Preparing students approved for reasonable accommodations in state examinations and for house examinations (where possible dependant on available resources) .

##### **(B) Consultative Role**

- Facilitate a whole school approach to AEN provision.
- Assist and be primarily responsible for the school's policy on AEN and Learning Support.
- Work with and support class and in class support teachers on curriculum strategies.
- Provide information on individual students.
- Consult students, teacher, parents, specialists on specific needs and targets for students with AEN.
- Engage in ongoing CPD and organise staff development in the area of AEN and Learning Support.
- Consult and develop lessons, strategies and targets with all teachers engaging in learning support teaching.
- Advise students on subject options.
- Consult school management and work with organisations such as the NCSE/NEPS/EWO in order to prioritise Learning Support and Resource provisions.

##### **(C) Advocacy role**

- Support students in accessing the curriculum and assessment structures.
- Support students transferring from Primary to Secondary School.
- Apply for all supports and accommodations that students are entitled to.

#### **(D) Assessment role**

- Administer testing/ accommodate external testing where necessary.
- Certification for subject exemptions or subject reductions.
- Seek to identify students with specific learning difficulties.
- Organise the continued testing of students as required.
- Determining the suitability for in class support or withdrawal of students (based on a needs basis determined by the SENCO and Principal).

#### **(E) Liaison role**

To liaise with the following:

- SENO.
- NEPS.
- Psychologists, Occupational Therapist and other agencies.
- Parents, internal support groups, the relevant class teachers and external support agencies.
- DES.
- Care Team - Guidance Counselor, House Leaders and the SPHE coordinator.
- Teachers regarding the timetable.

#### **4.5 Members of Student Support Team work together in relation to:**

- Support the running of CAT4E and screening tests for all incoming and existing students.
- Visiting local feeder primary schools to ensure a smooth and successful transition for incoming first years where possible. This enables class lists and early identification of students learning, emotional and social needs.
- Setting up of special centre's for House and State Exams (For House/Mock Examinations we can not guarantee individual shared centre's, scribes, reading assistance etc. to all students due to staffing resources).
- Regularly meet to discuss student's needs.

#### **4.6 Organisations we jointly liaise with:**

- NEPS
- CAMHS
- NCSE
- RACE
- DARE / HEAR

- Local GPS

*Daily collaboration in order to develop overall wellbeing of students:*

- Learning needs
- Social needs
- Emotional needs
- Physical needs
- Resilience

#### **4.7 Administrative Role**

- Engage in the process of drafting the learning support timetable for students and the teachers involved.
- Preparation and assignment of Resource Hours and Additional Technology Support.
- Allocate additional teaching hours to students, as appropriate (and in consultation with the Principal and Deputy Principal).
- Organise subject specific teachers for these hours, where possible.
- Monitor student progress in the area of Learning support/Resource education.
- Source and Purchase of resource materials and the maintenance of stock.
- Applications for Reasonable Accommodation in the State exams for students.
- Read, interpret and disseminate information from psychological reports as appropriate.
- Co-ordinate and draft Student Support Plans.

#### **5. Role of Learning Support Teachers**

- Direct teaching of students with learning difficulties.
- Assist in providing access to education to meet the needs of students assessed as having learning difficulties.
- Profile and plan for students.
- Consult with teachers, students, parents/guardians, SENCO in the planning process.
- Keep records of the student's progress and share this information with relevant persons including the SENCO and /or class teachers and parents.
- Set targets and review these targets. Prepare students for the examination process, school based and state.

#### **6. The role of the Deputy Principal's and Principal:**

- On behalf of the Board of Management the Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy for students with AEN.

- To ensure that procedures exist for the identification, assessment and provision for students with AEN.
- To appoint a SENCO from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the SENCO.
- To keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance to AEN.
- To liaise with the DES, in consultation with the SENCO and other relevant personal.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of hours and funds. This should include equality of access and opportunity for students with AEN in terms of well-equipped rooms and other resources.
- To liaise closely with parents/guardians of students with AEN.

### **7. The role of Parent/Guardians:**

Parent /Guardians have an essential role in relation to their child's education, students can not achieve their full potential if support is not provided in school and at home.

*Parents/Guardians should:*

- Provide information in the form of assessments and Primary school reports in a timely manner such that resources may be engaged.
- Implement agreed strategies at home from the information within a report or from school staff.
- Communicate with the Tutor/House Leader/ SFL team to advise and consult on the nature of their child's needs.
- Offer informal information on the student's needs, strengths and interests.
- Assist with and monitoring their child's program of work at home.
- Make sure that students attend school regularly and punctually.
- Help the student engage as fully as possible in their mainstream and support classes.
- Consulted with and, where appropriate be involved in setting learning targets for the student.
- Inform the school of any information that is relative to helping the student's learning and personal development.
- Be available to meet within a reasonable time frame.
- Check and sign their child's report on a weekly basis.

## **8. The role of the SNA:**

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist Ballymakenny College. They provide the necessary care needs to students with assessed special educational needs or difficulties in accessing the curriculum. In particular, SNA's play a very important role in the health and safety of the student/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development. The duties of the SNA have been delineated by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management. Their duties are assigned and supervised by the AEN Coordinator & Special Class Coordinator. *The SNA's are part of the SFL team.*

*\*See the SNA duties and functions policy for further information on pg 15-16 (Appendix A).*

## **9.Role of the Guidance Team**

The Guidance and Counselling Department work collaboratively with the SFL Department in a number of ways:

- Collaborate with the SFL Department in the organisation of mixed ability classes for incoming 1st Years. This is done using available CAT4 Level E data and SFL needs.
- The Guidance and Counselling Department test all incoming 1st Years using the CAT4 Level E. The test scores are colour coded. This makes the data user friendly for the class teacher and SFL Department. Students are given a colour code on their Verbal, Quantitative, Non Verbal, Spatial and Mean SAS. The following band descriptors are uniquely colour coded: Very Low; Below Average; Average; Above Average; or Very High. This allows class teachers and the SFL Department to identify students who may have difficulties in certain areas and who also may be exceptional students.
- Attend Transition Meeting with 6th Class Primary School Teachers where possible.
- Share data with the SFL Department and identify students who may need targeted literacy interventions.
- Test students, from other year groups, identified by the SFL Department who may have literacy difficulties using the NGRT
- A member from the SFL Department attend all Student Support Team (SST) Meetings.
- A Guidance Counsellor liaises with the SFL Department at key points in the year to review Standardised Data, discuss potential DARE applicants etc.
- The SFL and Guidance Department work collaboratively completing the DARE Educational Impact Statement (EIS) for 6th Year Students completing the DARE Form as part of their CAO Application

- Students who may benefit from a reduced curriculum at Senior Cycle are identified collaboratively by the SFL and Guidance Department.
- Alternative Progression Pathways Options are discussed for students flagged by the SFL Department. Pathways such as the National Learning Network (NLN), Youthreach, HSE Transitions Team etc.
- In the Student Destination Survey progression trends for those in the SFL Register are examined and monitored.
- Counselling support is offered to students who may be struggling with an aspect or dimension of their SFL needs.
- Discussion around NEPs referrals for students who may be presenting with difficulties.

## **10. Communication**

The need for effective communication will require opportunities to convey and exchange information among all the partners.

10.1 Taking considerations for confidentiality into account, the first staff meeting will be used as the opportunity to identify students with additional needs and to convey information about these students' learning needs. This will be updated as required throughout the year.

10.2. Staff meetings throughout the year will also be used as an opportunity to highlight students with a new diagnosis or to raise concerns about other students. They are also an opportunity to discuss and informally review progress of students with AEN.

10.3 The school will endeavor through contact with parents/guardians inform them of the supports and resources available for their child.

10.4 Ongoing staff development in the area of AEN in order for all teachers to be up to date.

10.5. Identification of students with AEN to be shared among relative staff.

10.6 The procedures for the identification of students with AEN include the following:

### *(A) Information from parents / guardians*

Parents/ guardians have an obligation on enrolment, to make known to the school authorities details of any previous diagnosed disability, special educational need or

previous learning support received. On the application form for incoming first years, there is a section for these details to be disclosed. Reports of examinations or assessment tests should also be provided to the school.

Consultation with individual parents/guardians who express concern is an important way to gather information to assist in the identification process.

(B) Liaison with the Primary School/other second level school

- Parents /guardians are required to sanction the release of any relevant information from the primary school on transfer.
- The SFL department will make contact with the primary schools, after reviewing the application forms and identifying the students with AEN to discuss the learning needs of students with AEN and students identified during the entrance examination.
- Students transferring from another second level school are required to sanction the release of any relevant information from this school on transfer. The SFL department may also contact the previous schools where required.

(C) Enrolling students are required to take initial screening assessments for the purpose of profiling students. These group tests will be supplemented by individual diagnostic tests where deemed necessary.

(D) Staff referrals are an important means of identification. The professional judgement of staff members working on a daily basis with students is an essential method of identification. Emails should be used to communicate their concerns to the SFL department. Additionally, information from the care team can assist in identifying students.

(E) Consultation with appropriate support agencies. Relevant information might be available from other sources that will assist the school in identifying learning needs and making appropriate provision.

(F) Requests for information or for documentation to be completed from external agencies (e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, HSE, Private Consultants/Psychologists etc.) will be forwarded by the school directly to the relevant agencies. A copy of the information can be provided to parents/guardians on request.

## **11 The organisation of the provision for Special Education.**

### **11.1 The Curriculum**

Ballymakenny College endeavor to offer the students a broad range of subject options within the school curriculum. If required the curriculum will be altered, customised and/or differentiated to meet the specific requirements of a child with learning difficulties. Any such alterations shall be done in consultation with the student, parent/guardian, teachers, SFL department and management where possible. Once identified the student will be supported in their learning to the greatest extent possible with the resources available in the school. Withdrawal may be used for the subjects which the student has an exemption in or has a severe need of support. When students are withdrawn from a class period it will be used to offer extra Learning Support in areas relevant to the student's needs.

### **11.2 Participation in School Programs**

Students with AEN are actively encouraged to take a full part in extracurricular activities. The health and safety of all students and staff dictates that the individual needs of the student concerned be considered in each situation. Inclusion in school activities is seen as a key element in fostering self-esteem, personal growth and development.

### **11.3 The following provisions may be used to support students**

- A reduced curriculum with additional support in the core subjects.
- Additional support may be given during subject exemption times or during reduced subject times. In some cases students may be withdrawn from other subjects.
- Support in examination techniques for students approved for Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Examinations. Also, support and exam techniques may be provided to students with a learning difficulty.
- Choosing Options - It is very important that all students make informed subject choices. This is especially important for students who have learning difficulties. The SST, SFL department and mainstream teachers may consult and advise students and parents in relation to this process.
- Team teaching. Where possible a collaborative team-teaching approach to learning support will be actively encouraged.

## **12: Student Support Plans**

Student Support Plans will be prepared for students where it is deemed necessary. The Student Support Plan is a collaborative document and requires that all teachers work with a student and parent/guardian to meet and consider the following:

- The student's abilities, skills and talents.
- The nature of the degree of the students additional education needs.
- An agreement on the goals which the child is to achieve over a specified period of time.
- A copy of the plan can be given to all involved in the interest of the student's education and welfare.

## **13: Record Keeping of Students Data/Files**

Any files submitted by parents/guardians will be stored in the school front office, under lock key. They are contained within the application form submitted to the school. The SFL Team can use details including recommended strategies on reports to advise staff on supporting students in school.

An SEN Register is kept in the SEN Area on Sharepoint. This details the students name, diagnosis/difficulty, tutor/year group, information regarding subject exemptions, RACE, Assistive Technology and SNA Access.

## **14. Success Criteria & Monitoring**

The Additional Educational Needs Policy was devised in consultation with the students, parents, staff, management and Board of Management of Ballymakenny College.

It will be reviewed regularly as part of the normal Whole School Development Planning review cycle. If necessary, it may be reviewed at any time considering changing circumstances and/or changing legislation. Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of the school. Any suggested amendments/improvements will be communicated to the Principal or Deputy Principals who will consult with all partners.

Approved by the BOM of Ballymakenny College on 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 2024

Signed by Chairperson: *Máire Ní Bhróithe*

## Appendices

### **The role of the SNA**

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist Ballymakenny College. They provide the necessary care needs to students with assessed special educational needs or difficulties in accessing the curriculum. In particular, SNA's play a very important role in the health and safety of the student/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development. The duties of the SNA have been delineated by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management. Their duties are assigned and supervised by the AEN Coordinator & Special Class Coordinator. The SNA's are part of the SFL team.

#### **SNA duties include:**

- To provide special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties, for example, helping AEN students with typing, writing, computers or any other equipment as required.
- To assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of the health and safety needs of the student.
- To assist on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.
- To assist the teachers in the supervision of students during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
- To accompany individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- To provide general assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. The SNA will not act as either substitute or temporary teachers.
- To participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- To engage with parents of AEN students in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.

- To assist school children to board and alight from school buses and where necessary travel as an escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
- To keep a record of contact with parents/guardian if necessary.
- To assist with other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the students and the school from time to time. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade when students with AEN are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.

**Function of the SNA:**

- To assist the students assigned to them in accessing as much of the normal curriculum as possible.
- To assist the class teacher in implementing the curriculum.
- To help students carry out assigned tasks.
- To help students learn and adopt new skills.
- To praise, support and encourage students and to be a positive influence in the class.
- To facilitate periods of time-out for students where appropriate.
- To encourage and support students to be as independent as possible.
- To foster co-operative learning and facilitate development of friendships.
- Liaise with teachers to enable students to access the curriculum.