Additional Educational Support Policy

School Information:

Coláiste Muire is under the patronage of CEIST. The school endeavours to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere that respects all students.

Relationship to school's mission/vision/aims and other policies

In the spirit of the mission statement the policy seeks to respect the unique potential of every student. The school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system that meets the needs of all students in accordance with our mission statement and resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management. This policy is also linked to our Code of Behaviour, Pastoral Care, Admissions, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Child Protection and Guidance & Counselling policies.

Mission Statement

Coláiste Muire seeks to foster the personal development and pastoral care of each individual and to:

- Maintain a balance between academic, technical and artistic achievement
- Value each individual, recognising his/her uniqueness and dignity
- Affirm the Catholic ethos and develop an appreciation and pride in his/her cultural heritage and environment
- Develop a co-operative caring environment between parents, teachers and home
- Maintain a policy of openness to all, regardless of class, creed or culture.

Additional Educational Needs Mission Statement

Our school is fully committed to the principle of inclusion. We strive to ensure that all students feel that they are a valued part of our school community. The school will foster a school culture where diverse needs and learning differences of all students are accommodated where possible and that the appropriate structures and arrangements are adopted to enable each student to achieve the maximum benefit from their attendance at school. This will be achieved in line with the Education for Persons with Additional Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPAEN) where it recognises 'the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall where ever possible take place in an inclusive environment'. The NCSE (2011) also refers to the need to remove barriers so to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling.

Rationale

The policy is necessary to ensure equal recognition of and to cater for all abilities and talents in an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of all. The policy aims to outline the additional support provided to students with AEN in this school. The policy is written in the context of the Education Act 1998, the EPAEN Act 2004, Guidelines for Post Primary School Supporting Students with Additional Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools' and Circular 13/2017.

Aims

As set out in the Education ACT 1998, EPAEN Act 2004, The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 and Circular 13/2017, the purpose of the policy is to:

- Outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- Comply with legislation, (Education ACT 1998, EPAEN Act 2004, The Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.)
- Comply with Circular 0013/2017.
- Provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our AEN practices and procedures.
- Communicate information between the AEN team, Principal, Staff, Parents/Guardians.
- Identify additional needs in our students through formal assessments, diagnosis and recording.
- Allocate resources effectively to meet the needs of students with additional needs.
- Track, monitor, review and report on student progress.
- Ensure that students with AEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Enable each student to achieve his/her full potential.
- Provide conditions which ensure that all students learn successfully.
- Promote self-confidence through experiencing success.
- Involve parents and students as partners.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with additional educational needs.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with AEN, lies with the Board of Management. In this regard the Board should:

- Ensure that the school has an appropriate AEN policy; approve and monitor the implementation of the policy.
- Ensure that the AEN Policy forms part of the School Plan.
- Ensure the necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with AEN.
- Secure appropriate storage space for records in respect of AEN students.
- Secure an adequate classroom accommodation for students with AEN.

Principal

The Learning Support Guidelines outline that the Principal has, as delegated by the Board of Management, the overall responsibility for AEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states that the Principal's leadership role is central and includes the following:

- Ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the school's AEN policy on an on-going basis.
- Assign staff to teaching roles including the AEN Team roles.
- Liaise regularly with the additional educational needs team and class teachers thus ensuring that provision is made for the effective inclusion of all students with Additional Educational Needs.
- Ensure whole school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils, staff and external professional agencies.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with AEN.
- Ensure that effective systems of identifying pupils' needs are implemented.
- Facilitate meetings with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update parents in relation to their child's progress using the school's regular reporting mechanisms and other communication methods.

Subject Teachers

Subject teachers have a primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all students in their classes. They should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom including those selected for additional support. Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to their developmental level.

- All teachers should be familiar with the AEN policy and the principles of inclusion.
- Teachers should assist in the identification of students in need of additional support and bring any concerns to the AEN department.
- All teachers should implement teaching methodologies that facilitate the inclusion of students with AEN.
- Teachers should regularly differentiate their lessons to accommodate all students' educational needs.
- Support students following alternative programmes such as L2LP.
- Create a positive learning environment in the classroom.

AEN Co-ordinator

- Communicates with the Principal in relation to AEN matters on an ongoing basis.
- Communicate with outside professional agencies.
- Liaise with NEPS psychologist, the AEN team and class teachers.
- Liaise with AEN class co-ordinator to identify, support and monitor students with AEN.
- Co-ordinate regular AEN planning meetings.
- Maintain minutes of meetings held.
- Collaborate with AEN team in creating timetables for additional support.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns they may have about their children.
- Co-ordinate the whole school standardised testing at 1st year, 3rd year and 5th year.
- Oversee applications made for Reasonable Accommodations.
- Ensure that members of staff are aware of the additional needs of students.

AEN Class Co-Ordinator/ SET

- Regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs of students.
- Communicate with the AENO.

- Ensure administration correspondence with NCSE are carried out. (leavers Forms)
- Communicate with outside professional agencies.
- Liaise with the NEPS Psychologist.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs.
- Oversee student passports from all Primary school pupils enrolling.
- Select students for external diagnostic assessment with parental permission sought and granted.
- Oversee results of standardised formal tests.
- Circulate CTYI information to High Achieving students.
- Co-ordinate students that are selected for additional support based on formal tests carried out.
- Draw up a student register of AEN students.
- Create and oversee a tracking system by creating a student profile for all students.
- Liaise with SET in drawing up 'school support for some' plans.
- Carry out WRAT4 Tests with 1st, 3rd and 6th year students.
- Carry out necessary assessments required for Reasonable Accommodations.
- Carry out diagnostic tests as required.
- Meet with class teachers informally.
- Update and maintain AEN support plans.
- Update and maintain PPP plans.
- Co-ordinate PLUs for L2LP students.
- Communicate with parents.

Additional Educational Needs Team

Parents will be consulted with regularly via open lines of communication relating to their child's progress, difficulties encountered, strategies, and overall support available. The name of the Additional Educational Needs Team members will be circulated to staff, students and parents.

The specific role of the AEN Team includes:

- The day-to-day operation of the school's AEN policy.
- Assessment of in-coming students in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Co-ordinating the provision for students with AEN.
- Planning Individual Education Programmes (IEP) and/or Group Programmes.
- Direct teaching of students with AEN.
- Monitoring progress and record keeping for students with AEN.
- Maintaining the school's AEN register and overseeing the records of students with AEN.
- Linking with outside agencies.
- Communicating with staff, parents and students.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

As set out in Circular 0030/2014 the SNA 'provides additional adult support staff who can assist children with additional educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs. In addition to the duties as laid out in the circular (p 4-7) the following points are also highlighted:

- The SNA is privy to confidential information pertaining to AEN students as such confidentiality is of paramount importance.
- The SNA will attend IEP and Multidisciplinary meetings and reviews when necessary.

Parents/Guardians

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school is essential. Parents/Guardians have much to contribute to their child's learning because of their personal knowledge of their child. Therefore Parents/Guardians will be expected to:

- Share with the school their child's particular AEN. Reports of diagnoses or reports pending from health professionals should be provided at enrolment so that the school can commence planning an appropriate level of support services.
- Support the work of the school and keep the relevant teachers informed of the progress and challenges observed in their child's learning.
- To meet with teachers where appropriate.
- To provide support and engage in homework for learning.

Students

Students in receipt of additional support should as appropriate:

- Engage positively with their support plan.
- Participate in their learning in a group, individual or class setting in a positive manner.
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies they are taught and learn to apply these strategies and skills to improve their own learning.

Identifying the Needs/Model of Organisation

Coláiste Muire uses the NCSE Continuum of Support model to identify and respond to the needs of students. The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:
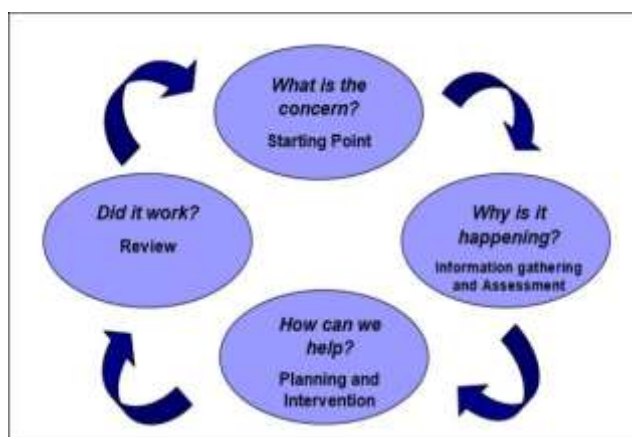
The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of Support:

A Continuum of Support
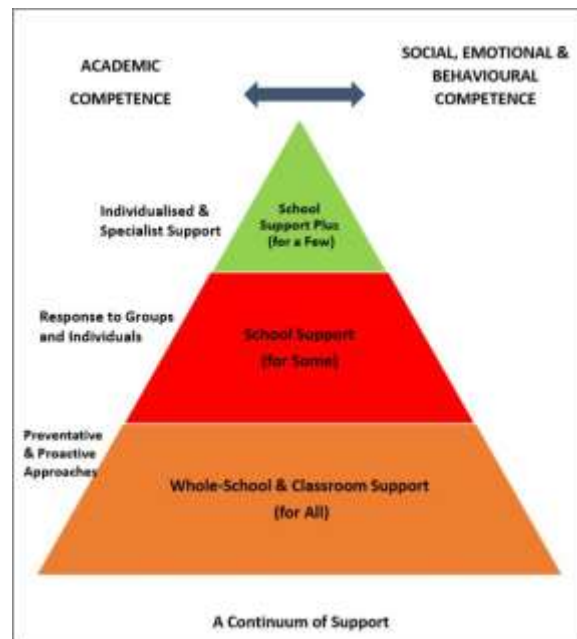
The Three Step Process is to be employed in Coláiste Muire:

1. Identification of Need

2. Meeting the Need

3. Monitoring and review of Outcomes

1. **Identification of Need**

    Circular 13/2017 states the following:

    In summary, in identifying pupils for support, schools should take into account the following:

    - *Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify pupils' performance in reading and mathematics. Those pupils performing below the 10th percentile should be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.*
    - *Pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.*
    - *Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES 2010). This will be evidenced through school- based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Schools should also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available.*
    - *Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties. Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.*
    - *Pupils with significant Additional Educational Needs, e.g. pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils need additional teaching*

support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.

- *Schools should also carefully consider the needs of other pupils who may present with a range of learning and ability to access curriculum.*
- *Pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need additional English Additional Language Support.*

In applying the above and in line with the NCSE continuum of support model, this school will endeavour to undertake the practices and procedures outlined below.

Gathering Information

- Information is gathered from previous schools, parents and professionals when a student enrols or transfers from another school to Coláiste Muire.
- A teacher or parent may express a concern about a pupil. Any indications that the pupil may have additional educational needs should be explored and addressed. These concerns may relate to learning and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties which may affect the pupil's ability to progress at the same rate as their peers. These difficulties may also be identified by the class teacher through observation or assessment procedures.
- Information is also gathered from formal assessments such as CAT4, NGRT, PM11T, WRAT4 PASS, as well as informal class and house assessments.

Assessment and Screening Tests

The information gathered from these formal assessments is used to inform decisions of support for students.

We use the following tools to analyse important data:

- Review student educational passports. In line with DES Circular 0045/2014, all Primary schools are required to use the Educational Passport. This should also include the Additional Educational Needs Summary Form to support the sharing of information for students with identified learning needs.
- Parents are requested to furnish the school with relevant professional reports upon enrolment.
- All first-year students undergo Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4) and National Grading Reading Tests (NGRT) and a Maths Test (PTM11T). These results will be analysed, and some students will sit a Wide Range Ability Test (WRAT4). Results of these tests are not disclosed formally to students or parents. An analysis of the results can be made available to parents/guardians on request.
- Some students may sit diagnostic tests for Dyslexia, Dyscalculia.
- Review of writing and reading samples when applying for RACE.
- Review of school reports.
- Consult with professionals and parents as necessary.

Planning

A student profile, a group plan, an individual support plan or a pupil personal plan (PPP) can be drawn up which identifies the needs, supports and review.

- Planning involves the subject teacher, AEN team, AEN Co-Ordinator, AEN Class Co-ordinator, parents, students and relevant professionals as necessary.

- Plans will reflect the priority learning needs of the student.
- Plans will build in a time-frame for review.

2. Meeting the Needs.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports and in accordance with Principles to guide the implementation process (p5 Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools) '*students with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support'.*

We look at interventions suitable to match the needs of the students, this may include small group teaching and team teaching. Some students may present with specific needs in areas such as social interaction, behavioural, emotional needs and may require one to one support.

Early Intervention Strategies

The school strives to have focused interventions to develop literacy, numeracy, social, emotional and wellbeing. This is provided in the following ways:

- Literacy and numeracy targets of our School Improvement Plan
- Team teaching for specific comprehension skills in 1st year
- Transition Programme for 1st years
- Mentor programme between TY and 1st year students
- Induction programme for 1st years to include locker management, colour coding of books and timetable and journal management of homework
- Relaxation Room
- Wellbeing class timetabled in support of Junior Cycle Wellbeing Program
- Encourage participation in school activities
- Learning to Learning program
- Friends for Life program
- Lockers and BeInCtrl programmes

Setting Targets

This school aims to set targets for AEN students that are, as outlined in the guidelines:

- Linked to assessment
- Strengths based
- Linked to interventions
- Developed collaboratively

Each student should have a manageable number of targets that are specific to their particular AEN. These targets should be achievable within a specified time frame, they challenge and build on existing knowledge and skills.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Under roles and responsibilities in this policy, all members of the school community have a part to play to ensure the AEN of students are met.

Subject teachers can provide support to AEN students through appropriate methodologies including:

- Collaborative problem-solving activities

- Differentiation by varying the level, structure and mode of instruction, also the pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Paired reading
- Adapt lessons to match student interests
- Use of ICT resources
- Group work
- Peer to peer work
- Seating plans
- Questioning

AEN teachers can support students through co-operative teaching, team teaching, early intervention, small group or individual support.

- Interventions are carefully planned with subject teachers to address student's priority needs and achieve targets identified in the student Support Plan.
- Planning of targets should reflect a breaking down of content into small steps to address each specific need of the student. Group plans reflect the needs and strengths of a specific group.
- Outcomes for students should be assessed, recorded and reviewed. The outcome of this will aid the process of developing further targets for the student.
- Some students with more complex needs may have on going needs where a time frame is not always suitable.

3. Monitoring and Reviewing Outcomes

Baseline information is used to review and record progress and planning. We use three different types of support plans on the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1- Classroom Support

This is where a Student Profile is drawn up by the AEN Class Co-Ordinator for all students regardless of needs which tracks all assessments from primary school to the current date.

Stage 2 School Support

A small group or individual support plan is drawn up by AEN team teachers and appointed AEN Class Co-Ordinator. It will outline the nature of the students learning difficulties, suggest specific teaching strategies, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. This support documentation will be available to teaching staff using the school management VsWare. Colour coding of timetables and books will be used for all students.

Stage 3 School Support Plus

A Support Plan at stage 3 is an individual support plan drawn up by the AEN team and AEN Class Co-Ordinator involved with this student. Teachers, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians and/or professionals external to the school will set out:

- The nature and degree of the student's abilities and strengths.
- The nature and degree of the students AEN.
- The present level of educational performance (formal testing).
- Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion either in the classroom or in a small group setting.

- Specific methodologies to support access to the curriculum.
- Support required from SNA if appropriate.
- Specific programmes to support the AEN of the student including L2LP where appropriate.
- Students' targets to be achieved, monitored and reviewed.

Language Exemptions/Waivers

Students who are exempt from languages through sections 2(a) or 2(b) of Circular 0053/2019 will be timetabled for study or support class at this time depending on the needs and resources available and in line with this policy.

Students who are exempt from languages through section 2(c) of Circular 0053/2019 have already identified as students with AEN and are covered under this policy.

Sharing Information and Record Keeping

The AEN Team is responsible for sharing information to class teachers regarding relevant students and for collecting relevant updates in order to monitor and review outcomes. Some of this information will be shared on Microsoft 365 and VsWare and is available to teachers only with a valid login code and password.

- All students' AEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- Minutes of all meetings are filed by AEN Co-Ordinator.
- Subject teachers have access to Student Profiles and a list of names of each year group which will adopt a colour coded system to indicate any areas for concern.
- Subject teachers have access to support files on request.
- Files and information are stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Health and Safety Issues

- Every staff member and pupil are entitled to a safe and secure environment and to be treated with respect.
- Where students receive individual support the teacher involved is responsible to ensure that themselves and the student are visible through a glass panel in the door.
- The student can be collected and returned to the classroom if necessary, by an AEN team teacher.
- Where a student has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the student from a class if arranged with teachers or if required to do so to attend to primary care needs.

Implementation of the additional educational needs policy

The role of the Additional Educational Needs Department is to provide a proficient and responsive learning support service which keeps up-to-date with changes in the curriculum, syllabi, teaching and support methods which reflects all learning needs. Within an appropriate framework of support, the Additional Educational Needs Team assists students to function as independent autonomous learners.

How the Additional Educational Needs Department Operates

The department functions on a withdrawal basis which means that the students attend support sessions on a one-to-one or in a small group situation. Team teaching is used for all students in 1st

year for development of literacy skills and an extension of team teaching to other year groups will progress with resources available.

Review on Progress

From information gathered from initial assessments, an individualised programme or a group programme is put in place for students. Regular reviews of student's progress are made, and parents are informed. The duration of support will be determined by the student's progress.

Assessment

- Parents (upon enrolment) and Primary schools are requested to complete a Pupil Details Form and to forward information on additional educational needs including reports from a psychologist where this is available. Where in-coming students are identified as having AEN, a meeting takes place between the Additional Educational Needs Team, parents and students to build a picture of the individual, their particular strengths and their specific learning difficulties.
- All students entering first year are screened in basic skills in literacy and numeracy competency. This normally occurs in September and is repeated in March/April.
- Where necessary, a meeting may take place between the resource/learning support teacher in the primary school setting and the Additional Educational Needs Team regarding the on-going support for in-coming students.
- Students with AEN will be further assessed by the Additional Educational Needs Team and by outside agencies, as considered appropriate, to identify on-going specific needs and to develop appropriate strategies to remediate difficulties.
- This process is continued to Junior Certificate where exam provision, e.g. reasonable accommodation in consultation with students/parents/teachers is considered. This process can also be continued in some cases up to Leaving Certificate. The Additional Educational Needs Department submits these applications for reasonable accommodations to the Department of Education and Skills.
- The NEPS (National Educational Psychology Service) psychologist must also be contacted about the availability of assessments for each school year.
- A Pupils Details Form will also be completed for students entering the school in a year other than 1st year. Reports concerning additional educational needs will also be requested of parents/guardians in this case.

Review and ratification

This Policy was reviewed in November 2019 and ratified by the Board of Management on 5th December 2019.

Signed   *M. Molloy*   Date 05/12/2019

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed   *M. MCDERMOTT*   Date 05/12/2019

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management