

Additional Educational Needs Policy



St Kevin's College, Ballygall Road East, Dublin 11

Roll number: 60581M

School Patron: The Edmund Rice Schools Trust

7th April 2025

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Section 1:

Introduction

This policy takes cognisance of directives contained in the Education Act 1998, the Epsen Act 2004, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equality Act 2004 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The policy was prepared using guidelines from the 'Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs- Post Primary guidelines (DES 2007, last updated in the 24th January 2020), Circular 0014/2017 and Circular 0075/2022

Mission Statement

We Care, We Belong, We Achieve

St Kevin's College is a Catholic Boys' Second-Level School under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice School Trust. In keeping with the religious and educational philosophy the school seeks to foster the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social cultural and physical education of all its pupils in a safe, secure and caring environment.

Context

St. Kevin's College is an Edmund Rice all-boys catholic secondary school. The school, like all ERST schools in the country, follow the guiding principles of the ERST charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching & learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

St. Kevin's College is committed to enabling each student's potential, both in the academic and non-academic fields.

Rationale

Additional Needs are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004) as,

“a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit 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...”

As per our school admission policy, St. Kevin's College welcomes students with additional educational needs (AEN) and endeavors to “provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment” (ibid, 2004).

The various categories of additional educational needs, as defined by the Department of Education (DE) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and are as follows:

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Mild general learning disability
- Borderline general learning disability
- Specific learning disability
- Moderate general learning disability

- Students who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of the students in their class group
- Students with temporary emotional trauma
- Students who fall behind from the general level of progress of the class because of other reasons (i.e. illness)
- Students whose first language is not English – English as an additional language (EAL)
- Students who are particularly gifted and need additional stimulus
- Autism/autistic spectrum disorder
- Students with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome
- Specific speech and language disorder
- Multiple disabilities

This policy applies to all students with AEN, including students with exceptional ability who attend St. Kevin's College. It is also intended to inform best practice and policy across the school community including the Board of Management, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

Section 2:

Aims

The aims of the AEN Policy are:

- To ensure that students with additional needs are identified and supported in an inclusive manner within the whole school context in so far as practical.
- To provide a quality education appropriate to meet the needs of all students.
- To ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the additional educational needs of students in a manner that is GDPR compliant.
- To involve parents/guardians in decisions about the education of their children.
- To ensure that all relationships within the school are ingrained with the spirit of care.

- To promote a collaborative and effective liaison with all relevant outside agencies and bodies

Continuum of Support

St. Kevin's College follows the *continuum of support framework* in identifying and responding to students' needs. The continuum recognises that students require different levels of support depending on their identified need.



The continuum of support framework ensures that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions such as team teaching to more intensive, individualised one to one support. Student support is informed by careful monitoring of progress. Educational needs include academic, behavioural, social and emotional, physical sensory, language and communication difficulties.

School Enrolment and Admission

The Board of Management of St. Kevin's College welcomes applications from all parents and guardians.

Once a place has been accepted in St. Kevin's College, parents are asked to forward copies of all relevant reports from professionals such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or occupational therapist reports. The reports should be given to the school at the earliest opportunity, to allow the AEN team enough time to plan and seek additional resources from the National Council of Special Education, if required. Before entry to school, provision is made for students with additional needs so they can gain equal access to learning in school, alongside their peers.

Transfer from Primary to Secondary School

- The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and the AEN coordinator meet with the teachers from the feeder primary schools in the local area. Meetings with sixth class teachers, special education teachers and principals usually take place in April and May. The AEN coordinator then contacts parents of incoming students with additional needs.
- The HSCL invites students from feeder schools to visit St. Kevin's College for induction in April and May. All students have an opportunity to visit our specialised Hub rooms. We have three Hub rooms that are used to support smaller class groups or individuals throughout the year.
- An information evening for the parents of incoming first year students is held annually. The evening is an opportunity to establish contact with the school and build good relationships. The AEN coordinator talks to parents about our AEN provisions and meets with parents to answer questions or give them an opportunity to voice concerns.

- A good handover and information flow between schools is essential, particularly in relation to student achievements, strengths and level obtained. We compile all information such as registration forms, 6th class reports, school passports and educational assessments. Information obtained from primary schools is regarded as confidential and disseminated on a need-to-know basis. Transfer programmes can be designed for students with additional needs.
- At the start of the academic year the AEN Coordinator holds a whole staff meeting to inform teachers of students with additional needs. The coordinator also informs staff about accessing information about students in their class with additional needs. Information and recommendations on how teachers can support students with specific identified needs is also discussed.
- Students are placed in mixed ability groupings in first year from the CAT 4 assessment results that are usually carried out in February/March of sixth class.
- A positive school climate that encourages good relations among students and between students and teachers is fostered.

Section 3:

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management are responsible for:

- overseeing the development, implementation and review of policies and services in relation to students with additional needs.
- ensuring appropriate policies and procedures for the education and inclusion of students with additional needs are in place.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the needs of students with additional educational needs are met.

- Promoting whole school policies and procedures that are supportive to the learning of all students.
- Overseeing a whole school approach to assessment and screening to identify student needs and to guide the allocation of appropriate resources.
- Regularly collaborating with the AEN coordinator to ensure that systems are in place for the effective sharing of relevant information on student needs with all subject teachers.
- Ensuring that whole school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, students and external agencies.
- Encouraging continuous professional development of the AEN team to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of special education.
- Liaising with the AEN coordinator regularly at strategic times during the academic year to discuss progress in the department.

The Student Support Services Team

The members of the team include the principal, deputy principal, AEN coordinator, home school community liaison, guidance counsellor and behaviour support teacher.

The student support team (SST) meets every week to discuss emerging student needs in a supportive way and to address the social, emotional, behavioural and academic needs of all students. The student support team is concerned with the welfare and wellbeing of all students in St. Kevin's College. It is a mechanism through which many of the existing student supports are coordinated and planned.

The role of the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator:

- Liaise with and advise the principal, deputy principal, subject teachers and special needs assistants (SNA's) regarding student needs.
- Coordinate data gathering, screening and testing.

- Make arrangements for planning, implementation and review of student support plans (Hub Files) using the continuum of support model.
- Liaise with parents and students regularly.
- Liaise with outside agencies including the special educational needs officers (SENO) and the national educational psychological service (NEPS).
- To work with management on allocation of AEN support and timetabling of small group and individual classes.
- To liaise with management on AEN planning and whole school planning.
- Identifies students who may qualify for reasonable accommodation in the state exams and to apply to the state examinations commission on their behalf.
- Works with the Junior Cycle coordinator regarding the implementation of the Level 2 Learning Programme.
- Working with the programmes coordinator regarding the selection of students for programmes at Senior Cycle, including Leaving Certificate Applied and Transition Year.
- Sharing relevant AEN information with staff at whole staff meetings, vsware and the Hub Files shared drive and emails.
- Liaising with the feeder primary schools with regard to incoming First Years through meetings or following up on issues if they arise.
- Meet regularly with the special needs assistants and review their timetables termly.
- Take part in relevant continuous professional development.

The Year Head is responsible for:

- Referring students to the AEN team for additional support if required.
- Referring students to the AEN team based on assessment results, progress reports and feedback from teachers.

- Communicating with parents/guardians who may seek support for their son, based on school assessments.
- Consulting with the AEN team if a student himself has expressed concerns over his own learning progress in school.

The role of the Subject Teacher is to:

- Be familiar with the policy and procedures of students with additional needs, outlined in this policy.
- To make themselves aware of the students in their classes with additional needs.
- To familiarise themselves with the Hub student Files.
- To familiarise themselves with the different strategies that help support students in their class.
- To familiarise themselves with the AEN register and the different types of educational needs present in our school.
- Use appropriate differentiation strategies in their teaching.
- Take responsibility for their own continuous professional development.
- Engage in Team Teaching when required.
- When a student has access to an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the AEN coordinator.
- Be familiar with assistive technology and know how to use it if the need arises.

Special Needs Assistant

- Special needs assistants are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to students that have additional educational needs. They play a vital role in the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to students with additional needs.

- The principal, deputy principal and the AEN Department work collaboratively to devise strategies for the students with AEN. The SNA is made aware of the plan and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- SNAs may be assigned to a student with assessed educational needs. They play an important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development.
- SNAs communicate effectively with teachers on all aspects of the students' provision and attend meetings relevant to their role.
- SNAs normally carry out their duties on the school premises. However, on occasion an SNA may accompany a student on a trip outside the school to provide assistance.
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of students with additional needs, both formally and informally as required and directed by the AEN coordinator or management.
- SNAs treat all matters relating to school business and work as strictly confidential.
- Be involved in Hub planning for students with access to SNA support.
- Attend weekly AEN meetings and staff meetings when appropriate.
- Give special assistance as necessary for students with difficulties e.g. Helping students with AEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene and, where appropriate, administering medication.
- Assist with RACE for in-house examinations (when appropriate).
- Assist teachers in the supervision of students during assembly, recreation and in movement from classroom to another.
- Accompany individuals for movement breaks when required.

- Provide and update a timetable during the school year in collaboration with the AEN coordinator and furnish the School Management with a copy.

Guidance Counsellor

- In relation to AEN the guidance department will liaise with the AEN Team in many areas and work closely throughout the school year.
- The guidance counsellor assists with the administration of testing, for example CAT4 tests
- They work closely with Year Heads and the AEN team to identify students requiring support.
- Facilitate individual appointments for students in third year, transition year and sixth year to support them in making career decisions.
- Advise students and parents on subject choice and subject load.
- Liaise with students, parents and the AEN team in relation to DARE / HEAR applications and to process them.
- Advise students in relation to entry requirements for courses.

The Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinator

- Collaborates with the AEN Team in identifying potential LCA students.
- Works with the AEN Team to investigate individual needs of LCA students.
- Communicates with LCA teachers regarding students with AEN and encourages differentiated teaching and learning approaches.

- Monitors work experience which provides a hands-on learning opportunity especially beneficial to students with additional needs.
- Ensures the LCA teaching team has an opportunity to attend CPD with LCA and AEN focus.

Parents

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are important elements of our AEN plan. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own son have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parents/Guardian should:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of up-to-date professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage.
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend parent-teacher meetings.
- Inform the school of their child's needs, at the transition stage.
- Discuss any concerns with the AEN Team, especially during transition from primary school

Students

- Students that are in receipt of support at school should be familiar with targets that have been set for them.

- Students should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the targets.
- Students are encouraged to develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught and learn to apply these to their own learning in the classroom.
- Students should contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment tasks.

Section 4:

Models of Provision

Prior to Entering St. Kevin's College:

- Parents have the opportunity to meet with members of the AEN team at the school's Open Night. All sixth-class students enrolling in St. Kevin's are required to complete the Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) prior to entering. This test identifies strengths and needs across four different areas. Students who achieve below average in a standardised mean test score may be considered for AEN support.
- Once a place in the school has been accepted, parents are asked to complete the registration form indicating clearly if their child has had educational / medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and/or if they previously attended AEN classes. Copies of individual education plans/ student support files from the primary school are also requested from the parent by the AEN team for those students identified as having either an emerging need or a known one.
- Students with AEN may be identified following consultation with the feeder primary schools. Principals and teachers from primary feeder schools, with parental consent, inform the school of areas of concern and forward relevant information.
- Where they are available, Primary School Passports containing information such as the Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test and the Mary Immaculate Reading

Attainment Test (Micra T), standardised scores and teacher observations/comments are reviewed by the AEN Department.

School Based AEN Identification:

- Identification of educational needs is central to our policy. By using the **Continuum of Support framework**, we can identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to respond to needs in a flexible and appropriate way.
- If parents/guardians have concerns regarding their child's progress, they should contact the school in order to discuss the matter with a member of the AEN team.
- A Subject/Class Teacher/Form Tutor or Year Head can refer any student about whom they have concerns to the AEN Team.
- A referral for AEN support can also be made to the Student Support Team
- Once a referral is made, a process of formal and informal assessment is undertaken by the AEN team.

Means of Informal Assessment:

- Observations from mainstream teachers
- Observations from Special Needs Assistants
- Consultations via email with class teachers/Form Tutors/ Year Heads
- Analyse previous assessments
- Consultations with parents/guardian/primary school
- Meetings with students

Means of Formal Assessment:

- Review of entrance assessment result/Primary School Information
- Review of CAT 4 tests, administered in 1st and 3rd Year
- Review of class tests and in-house exams and reports
- Behavioral record if appropriate.
- Consultation with Student Support Team
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellors.
- Administration of Individualised assessments such as the WIAT III.

The senior management team or any member of the AEN team, having consulted with the parents and teachers involved, may propose a student for appropriate school based individualised assessment and/or consequent assessment through NEPS. The Principal and AEN coordinator, in consultation with the NEPS psychologist, will determine which student(s) are to undergo a NEPS assessment, dependant on available resources.

If a student transfers during the year into the school, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychologist report, School reports, attendance). Where applicable, any relevant information is then passed on to the AEN Coordinator.

Students with Emerging Needs:

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concerns may be identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT4), in class assessment(s), informal observation(s), parental concern(s). Some students will need further diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs. Parents are contacted and consent is sought before tests are administered.

Diagnostic Tests include:

WIAT III- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test for Literacy

DASH- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting

MALT 4- Maths Assessment for Learning

PPAD-E- Post-Primary Assessment & Diagnosis – English

Section 5:**Allocation of Support for Students**

St. Kevin's College uses the Continuum of Support Framework to identify and support children with additional needs. A staged approach is used to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individual support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support model, as recommended by the DES, 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.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching support, resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, team-teaching, and small group teaching.

In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

The NCSE Continuum of Support model is used to guide the allocation of extra support for students. School support is divided into three levels of support:

Whole School and Classroom Support for All (Level 1)

This involves a preventative and proactive approach in whole school settings across all subjects and students. This includes:

- Building relationships and positive rapport with students.
- Following the set code of behaviour. Behaviour lessons at the start of the school year.
- Student rewards and awards.
- AFL techniques used in lessons and differentiation in classes for mixed ability groupings.
- Teachers support students with additional needs on a day-to-day basis.

School Support for Some (Level 2)

- Class teacher involves the AEN Team in the support process when this is deemed necessary.
- Gathering of information involving the AEN Team, teachers and parents.
- Development and monitoring of the student's additional needs and if deemed necessary the development of a Hub File (Student Support Plan).

School Support for Few (Level 3)

- Additional needs identified as severe and/or persistent may require more intensive support.

- Student Support Plus may involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process.
- Students will have a Hub File (Student Support File).

Student Support Files/ Plans (Hub Files)

Students with additional needs may have Student Support Files (Hub Files) created for them. These are for students with educational reports from professionals and also students who have been identified by the AEN team as needing such files to aid the students' learning and development.

To create Hub Files information may be gathered from a range of sources including subject teachers, form tutors, year heads, the AEN team, the Student Support Team, assessment results, relevant reports parents and the student himself.

Hub Files/Plans are used to help students with additional needs are experiencing success in their learning and development. Where relevant, information from these files is shared with teachers to ensure that they are aware of strategies that have been adopted for the specific student

Student Support Files (Hub Files) are working documents and are updated regularly to suit the emerging needs of the student.

Additional models of AEN Provision:

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching, and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context the following options are considered:

- Curricular differentiation
- In- class support
- Team Teaching
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Level 2 Learning Programme. L2LP is specially designed for specific students with general learning disabilities in the Higher Moderate to Low Mild categories.
- Allocation of suitable resources for gifted students

The period of intervention for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Applications are made for reasonable accommodations provision for students with additional needs sitting the State Examinations. The school makes applications for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria set out by the State Examinations Commission at Junior Cycle. This approved accommodation can be reactivated for the Leaving Certificate, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need.

When confirmation of accommodations is received, a copy is sent to parents/guardians, and it is also added to their file. The full list of students availing of accommodations is also given to the Exam Secretary who uses this information to make appropriate

arrangements. If a student avails of reasonable accommodation in State Examinations it is indicated with an asterik (*) on his exam results.

Where it is deemed appropriate, and resources permit, accommodations may be available to students who qualify at Mock Exams and other in-house assessments.

Exemption from the Study of Irish:

Certificates from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application.

Every effort is made to arrange withdrawal for additional support for students with additional needs, who do not study Irish, during the timetabled Irish classes. This is not guaranteed as it may be limited by staff availability and timetabling restrictions and is completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Post- Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

Parents/Guardians seeking a new application for an Irish exemption for their son must write to the School Management Team of St. Kevin's College. The guidelines set down by the DES will be strictly adhered to (Circular 0055/2022) This circular succeeds 0053/2019

Assistive Technology:

Applications are made on behalf of students to the NCSE where appropriate.

Students should ensure that the devices are fully charged and accessible in all classes.

If a laptop is already being used by the student in his primary school (as granted by the NCSE) the laptop may be transferred with the student upon transition to St. Kevin's College. All laptops which are grant-aided by the NCSE are the property of St. Kevin's College. They can be used by the student but must be returned to the school as soon as the student graduates or leaves school.

Section 6:

Communication

St. Kevin's College recognises that effective communication between teachers, parents and students is essential to addressing the needs of students with AEN.

Communication with AEN Team and Teachers:

The AEN team members aim to communicate with each other as much as possible.

Informal meetings may occur on a daily basis.

At the beginning of each school year the AEN coordinator and AEN Team update teachers on students with additional needs entering St. Kevins College. Information is provided to teachers to support students with additional needs. AEN information is also shared on VShare and all teachers are made aware of the students in their classes with AEN. The AEN Team aims to communicate as much information as possible to support the student while adhering to GDPR guidelines.

Communication with Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians have access to VShare, the school app and the school journal.

Parent teacher meetings are held once a year for face-to-face communication. Regular communication is available through phone calls or email to the AEN coordinator and person to person meetings on request. Where a student is withdrawn for assessment or additional teaching support, parents are consulted, and their permission is sought.

Parents are actively encouraged to contact the school should they have any concerns regarding their son's progress in school.

Record Keeping:

A full record of psychological reports and outside agency reports are kept in individual student files in the AEN coordinators' office. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information Acts, and Data Protection Acts.

Reviewed by Staff: 24 February 2025

Ratified by Board of Management: 7th April 2025

Signed by the Chairperson on the Board of Management:

Signed by the Principal:

Date:

