

Additional Educational Needs Policy – A Whole School Approach

Mary Immaculate Secondary School  
Lisdoonvarna Co Clare.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY



This policy applies to all students with SEN, including students with EAL and exceptional ability, who attend Mary Immaculate Secondary School Lisdoonvarna Co Clare. It is also intended to serve the school community including the Board of Management, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Mission Statement**

Mary Immaculate Secondary School is a Catholic School. Its Christian ethos permeates all disciplines and every extra-curricular activity. The student is helped to mature as a whole person whose spiritual, educational, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, moral and physical potential is encouraged to develop to maturity in an atmosphere of Christian care and concern. The school strives to form a community in which pupil, teacher, parent and management aim to live by Christian values, recognising the dignity of each individual.

### **1.2 Consultation**

This policy was formulated in consultation with the teaching staff and management of Mary Immaculate, parents of students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN), the Board of Management (BOM), Special Needs Assistant (SNA), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO).

### **1.3 Rationale**

□ This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional educational support for students with SEN.

- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision.
- The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below.
- The policy is a working document and will be reviewed annually.
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice.

### **1.4 Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

The principal aim of Additional Educational Support in Mary Immaculate is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with AEN and to enable each to realise their individual potential. In line with our ethos and official Department of Education and Skills (DES) recommendations, Educational support strategies will actively seek to include the diverse range of cultures and abilities of its students.

### **1.5 Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all students with AEN, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Mary Immaculate. It is also intended to serve the school community including B.O.M, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

# Continuum of Provision for Students 2025-2026



Academic

Social/Emotional

School Support Plus

Dyscalculia Screener  
Dyslexia Screener

Connors Rating  
One to One Emotional

School Support

Free Writing Sample  
DASH, WIAT  
WRAT

Behaviour Book  
Report Card  
Social Stories

Classroom Support

DRT in Numerical Reasoning and Verbal Reasoning.  
DEAR and SSE  
Ed Passports & Primary meetings  
Individual Interview  
Primary Results (Sigma & Micra

Year Head  
Class – Peer  
Anti-Bullying  
Pastoral Care  
SEN  
Wellbeing  
Friends

## 1.6 Legal Framework

Mary Immaculate sets out to provide education for all its students, with reference to legislation regarding students with SEN as listed below: □ The Education Act (1998) □ The Education Welfare Act (2000) □ The Equal Status Act (2000) □ The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003) □ The Equality Act (2004) – Disability Act (2005) □ The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) □ The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003) □ The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS).
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

## 1.7 Aims of the Policy

The principal aim of Educational Support in Mary Immaculate is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with additional needs and to enable each to realise their individual potential.

Additional **Educational Support provision also seeks to:**

- Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
- Involve parents in the support of their child's education.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on Educational Support for students.
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner.

The school hopes to achieve the following by updating the AEN policy:

- To include the most recent best practice in AEN.
- To reflect the most recent recommendations, most particularly the Continuum of Support at Post Primary Schools (NEPS).
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to students with AEN.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of students with AEN in the school.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Ensure that students with AEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution, they can make in this area.
- Ensure that AEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.

- Ensure that students with AEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with AEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with AEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at school.
- To outline procedures and practices which will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with AEN.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with AEN. (Learning Support Guidelines)

## 1.8 Definitions

Special Educational Needs In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) the term “special educational needs” is defined 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... (Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/A3004.pdf>

### Inclusion

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the NCSE has been adopted. Inclusion is defined as a process of:

addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and □ removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/ her attendance at school. Literature Review of the Principles and Practices relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs (NCSE 2010, p.39) [http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/NCSE\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/NCSE_Inclusion.pdf)

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS IN THE SEN TEAM

The AEN team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, the AEN Co-ordinator, the Special Educational Teachers. The Deputy Principal and Principal are also part of the Care team in the school and works closely with this student support team and with Year Heads. The team is advised by the SENO and NEPS psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with AEN students in the school. The specific roles and responsibilities of personnel are as described in the DES Inspectorate publication, Inclusion of Students with Special needs, Post-primary Guidelines (2007), Guidelines for Post Primary Schools – Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, September 2017. In addition, the General Allocation Model as set out by Circular 0014/2017.

2.1 Board of Management	2.2 Principal	2.3 AEN Co-Ordinator
<p>To ensure that all students with SEN are identified and assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that the school has an up to date SEN policy in place, monitor the implementation of that policy and ensure its evaluation.</li> <li>• To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society.</li> <li>• To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN.</li> <li>• To ensure the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies and ensure that parents are informed of their child’s SEN and how these needs are being met.</li> <li>• To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child’s education.</li> <li>• To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of EPSEN 2004. And the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011</li> </ul> <p>□ To promote the inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled in all of the school community</p> <p>Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011</p>	<p>To facilitate a SET Co-ordinator and works closely with the coordinator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform the Board of Management of issues, with SEN.</li> </ul> <p>□ To consult with the SET Coordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds. □ To establish a “Special Needs Support Team” in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN. □ To promote a whole school approach to special educational needs, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area. □ To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of SEN students.</li> <li>• To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN. □ To process applications for Irish Exemptions.</li> <li>• To provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion.</li> <li>• To manage the implementation of policies and practices</li> <li>• To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions</li> <li>• To assign roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• To keep records of those receiving support and the level of support provided.</li> <li>• To ensure compliance with statutory requirements when EPSEN is implemented.</li> <li>• To direct the work of the SNA</li> </ul>	<p>To co-ordinate/ devise a school AEN Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create and maintain a school register of students with AEN .</li> <li>• To communicate the needs of students to teachers</li> <li>• To assist in the identification of students with AEN.</li> <li>• To ensure that Student Support Plans and structured learning plans are in place for students with AEN.</li> <li>• To advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.</li> <li>• To assist the Principal in the allocation of resources.</li> <li>• To process applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Exams (RACE)</li> <li>• To provide RACE in house exam where possible given the resources available</li> <li>• To process DARE applications</li> <li>• To liaise with outside professionals □ To meet with parents in order to plan and to review interventions □ To administer and correct standardised assessments</li> <li>• To administer the Drumcondra online Testing</li> <li>• To ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents, etc.</li> <li>• To report annually to the BOM A member of the SEN Team and on the Pastoral Care Team.</li> <li>• To advise and collaborate with SNAs around the care needs of relevant students.</li> <li>• To facilitate a weekly meeting of the SEN team.</li> </ul> <p>*These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the needs of the department are met.</p>

<p><b>2.4 Year Head</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute significantly to the work of the special educational needs support team.</li> <li>• To facilitate the inclusion of an individual students with special educational needs by monitoring the student’s progress within the year group. □ To encourage an awareness of special educational needs from the students, including a respect for students with SEN. Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention □ Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student. □ Providing direct teaching to a student with SEN either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or</li> </ul>	<p><b>2.5 SET</b></p> <p>to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum. □ To provide team teaching/ cooperative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. □ Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate. □ Collecting and analysing schoolwide screening data, including intake screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records. Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff □ Planning, implementing and reviewing individual and/or group interventions</p> <p>To work with the other members of the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the</p>	<p><b>2.6 Guidance Counsellor</b></p> <p>school. □ Counselling in personal, educational and career development □ Co-ordinating a number of assessments tests in TY. □ Providing career information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting at the Options Information Evening for students and parents of students progressing to Senior Cycle □ Consulting with parents and staff □ Providing vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience</li> <li>• Working closely with Year Heads and the SEN team to identify students requiring support</li> <li>• Facilitating individual appointments for students in third year, TY and Leaving Cert Year to support them in making career decisions □ Advising students and parents on subject choice and subject load □ To liaise with students, parents and the SEN team in relation to DARE applications.</li> </ul>
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2.7 SNA	2.8 Mainstream Teacher
<p>To provide care assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be made aware of the AEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.</li> <li>• To recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.</li> <li>• Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.</li> <li>• Assisting / escorting students on school trips.</li> <li>• When necessary, assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.</li> <li>• Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate).</li> </ul> <p>Member of AEN Team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.</li> <li>• Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be aware of the School's policy and procedures ensuring all students' needs are met.</li> <li>• To seek advice from the AEN Department regarding students with AEN.</li> <li>• To participate in CPD in the area of AEN.</li> <li>• To devise a plan, in consultation with the teacher or AEN Co-ordinator, on the most effective use of the SNA for a student in the class.</li> <li>• To support/ encourage independence in the student.</li> <li>• To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students</li> <li>• To create a positive classroom environment for all students.</li> <li>• To create opportunities for success</li> <li>• To use assessment for learning and comment-only marking.</li> <li>• To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.</li> <li>• To assess/ monitor progress.</li> <li>• To consider the needs of students with AEN in all aspects of classroom planning.</li> <li>• To identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour, or interaction with other students).</li> <li>• To complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, etc. as required by the AEN team</li> <li>• Contribute to group or individual planning and review</li> </ul>

<p>agreed by the AEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a nonteaching nature. The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.</li> <li>• Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and cooperation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.</li> <li>• Engagement with parents of students with AEN as required and directed by school management.</li> <li>• Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.</li> <li>• The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when Students with AEN are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.</li> <li>• To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.</li> <li>• SNA is expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator with a copy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement agreed strategies</li> <li>• Prepare information for Support planning meetings</li> <li>• Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies</li> <li>• Direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom</li> <li>• Inform parents of the progress of students through the parent-teacher meeting and school reports.</li> <li>• Contribute to the school development planning for their subject area whilst always having concern for students with AEN.</li> <li>• Build a bank of differentiated resources pertaining to their subject area, which are shared collegially</li> </ul>
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2.9 Involvement of Parents	2.10 Involvement of Students
<p>* The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child’s education. The quality of a child’s experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents can provide valuable support to a child with AEN while the child is making the transition. Mary Immaculate provides support to parents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaising with parents prior to transfer and meeting with parents and students during the open evening.</li> <li>• Organising individual induction meetings with each student and their parents in June □ Informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first-year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate.</li> <li>• Having an effective anti-bullying policy (including a ‘Peer Mentor’ system), and keep parents informed of issues relating to bullying.</li> <li>• Actively encouraging parents to contact the AEN Co-ordinator Parents and the transmission of information The parents of a child with SEN can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child’s learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning preferences.</li> <li>• The AEN team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN with the acceptance of a place in the school. Once they have accepted a place in the school parents are asked to complete a form indicating if student has had educational/medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and if they have previously attended learning support/resource. Copies of IEPS/student support plans are also requested.</li> <li>• The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child.</li> <li>• The school journal is used for weekly/daily home-school communication, and parent teacher meetings are held once a year for face to face communication.</li> <li>• Students receive a school report four times in the school year (at October, Christmas, Easter and Summer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AEN department fully involve students in skills audits and discussions around their learning needs.</li> <li>• Students have input into their learning targets. Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self-monitor.</li> <li>• *The school believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special arrangements may be made with the parents in relation to the homework that each individual student with AEN is expected to undertake.</li> <li>• Regular communication is available through direct email to AEN Co-ordinator and meetings on request.</li> </ul> <p>Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties,</p> |  |
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### **3. PROVISION AND THE CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT**

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Mary Immaculate, is underpinned by recognition that special educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term.

Our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEPS's Continuum of Support.

#### **3.1 Student Support Plans**

A Student Support Plan is devised for students with Special Education needs. All students involved in AEN support will have a tailored learning plan. Students with more complex needs will have a Behavioural Care Needs Plan in addition to the Student Support Plan.

The Student Support Plan process involves:

- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- AEN provision
- Priority Needs
- Setting targets for each priority learning need:
- Identifying the strategies and resources required:
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review: A review occurs each academic year.

However, it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances These Student Support Plans aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner. They are available for all teachers to refer to on Office 365 in the AEN section.

### **3.2 Enrolment**

The schools admissions policy outlines the procedures with regard to the enrolment of students with AEN (See Appendix 1).

### **3.3 Transfer from Primary School**

The transfer of information from primary level to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with AEN. At the Open Night for prospective parents the importance of completing the specific form for the AEN Department (See appendix 2) is outlined. Following acceptance of a place in the school, parents of incoming first years are invited to attend an information meeting outlining practical supports, structure of Additional Educational teaching hours, pastoral care structures and information regarding Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Exams (RACE).

#### **The Deputy Principal / Principal will:**

- Visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools to collect up-to-date information.
- Liaise with primary school and parents of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school.
- Meet with the parent/ guardian of students with AEN.
- Establish communication with the primary school resource/ learning support teacher.
- Apply for SNA support/Assistive Technology for students for relevant students.

Once accepted to Mary Immaculate:

- The AEN team will ascertain the students learning style and strengths.
- The AEN team will create learning targets for each student with AEN. These targets are monitored and evaluated at regular intervals. Once achieved, new targets are set.
- At the beginning of each academic year, all students on the AEN Register are reviewed individually in terms of type of support needed and curriculum load.

Students transferring into other Year Groups

Student Support Passport from Primary School in conjunction with Sten scores informs staff greatly in preparation for AEN students.

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychological report, School reports, attendance, etc.) This is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Any relevant information is then passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

### **3.4 Provision for Students with Emerging Needs**

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (Dots, in class assessment,

informal observation, and parental concern). Teachers are asked to complete a referral form for students who they have a concern about that focuses on the student's behaviour, academic performance, homework etc. Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Parental consent is obtained before diagnostic tests are administered. Teachers are also encouraged to refer to students' Dots results to determine the student's areas of strength and their needs and link with at least two other subject teachers before completing a referral form.

**Students who score below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in Maths and English in the DOTS assessment are given further assessment to determine if this is a reflection of their true ability. If so they are offered one of the models of SEN provision.** For example, withdrawal support or a reduced Curriculum.

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
- Curricular reduction (reduced load) - A student with AEN who experiences difficulty in coping with the breadth of the current curriculum is permitted to 'drop' a subject. This occurs only after all avenues have been exhausted. A consultation between the parents/ guardian and guidance teacher is also necessary. Parents must sign a consent form giving permission for a reduced subject load.
- Team Teaching/Co-operative Teaching
- In-class support/Differentiation
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Organisation and Life Skills lessons

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The duration of provision is varied and is reviewed throughout the intervention. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum. All decisions in this regard are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers, the student, principal and guidance counsellor.

### **3.5 Provision for Autistic students with a recommendation for a special class.**

Mary Immaculate School has been allocated a special class with space for six Autistic students. This class is called St Annes in line with the other mainstream class names and it is located in heart of the school for integration.

In order for a student to qualify for a place in this special class they must have the relevant diagnostic report with a recommendation for a special class placement. Parents need to contact their local SENO as soon as possible if their students require a place in the special class (5<sup>th</sup> class). If the student meets the criteria, the SENO will give parents a letter of recommendation which allows them to then apply to the school for a place for the student in the special class.

If the child is offered a place in the special class the offer is made in accordance with the school admission policy and the Department of Education and NCSE guidance and is subject to the availability of places and the operation of the admission policy at the time of enrolment.

An offer of a place does not constitute enrolment until all admission procedures have been completed.

Students enrolled in the special class will be supported at the top of the Continuum of the Support (Support for Few). They will have access to SNA support and a flexible timetable where the students individual capacity will determine the level of mainstream class attendance.

Students enrolled in the class are also entitled to apply for an Irish Exemption.

### **3.6 Provision for EAL students**

Mary Immaculate Secondary School provides an education for all, which acknowledges, and is enriched by the diversity of ethnicity, culture and faith of its pupils. Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those for whom English is an Additional Language, is ensured not only by direct language support from teachers in smaller groups or on an individual basis, but also by a whole school approach. This comprises a learning environment that encompasses a varied range of teaching and learning strategies, multicultural and multilingual resources and displays, and whole school celebrations that embrace a wide range of world cultural events.

**EAL students in Mary Immaculate Secondary School can usually be divided into 3 categories:**

- Visiting exchange students. These students are usually with us for one or more school terms or a full school year. Their level of English skills will vary.
- EAL students who have come to us from Primary School, (they have usually already been assessed and may have moderate to good English skills.)
- New arrivals to the country (e.g. asylum seekers.) They may have limited or no English language **The school provides effective learning opportunities for all pupils by:**
  - setting suitable learning challenges,
  - responding to diverse learning needs,
  - And overcoming potential barriers to learning.
  - Where appropriate the written test from the EAL Post-Primary Assessment kit will

### **Working with bilingual and multilingual pupils**

The school recognises the following factors as being central to progress for EAL pupils:

Recognition of the importance of home language.

- Treating racism and bullying seriously (Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Strong home/school and wider community links.
- Learning environment that is sympathetic to a variety of cultures.
- Resources, which include bilingual materials.
- Curriculum, which portrays positive images and role models.
- Initial assessment of language stage of EAL pupils.
- Teaching of small groups of pupils, particularly those who are newly arrived to the country.
- Providing in-class support to EAL pupils.
- Monitoring of EAL pupils' progress.
- Developing self-esteem of pupils.
- Liaising with teaching staff and care team.
- Provide advice on classroom strategies to support and include EAL pupils.
- Provide advice on inclusive curriculum materials.
- Provide advice on differentiation of work for EAL pupils.
- Facilitate students to participate in first language national examinations where appropriate.
- Liaise and develop partnerships with external agencies.

### **Curriculum Principles:**

The curriculum should reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Ireland. Good education begins from sharing the experience that children bring to school from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The school's goal is to enable pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to gain full access to the Curriculum and to develop strategies for recognising and overcoming any obstacles that prevent pupils from developing their full potential in school.

### **Curriculum Planning:**

The needs of EAL pupils in accessing the curriculum need to be carefully identified, as does the provision of a balanced and positive multicultural education.

Teachers need to ensure that the language and learning needs of pupils are clearly identified and provided for.

### **Curriculum and Classroom Practice:**

Teachers should have high expectations of all pupils regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social background.

- Activities are matched to pupils' needs and abilities and have a clear sense of progression.
- There is evidence of development in oral communication and literacy throughout the curriculum
- Practice and development in language skills will be encouraged through:
  - collaborative activities that involve talk.
  - opportunities for feedback to others.
  - models produced by peers to show what can be achieved.

Classroom organisation and groupings will encourage and support active participation with peer support where appropriate.

- Assessment methods allow pupils to show what they can do in all curriculum areas.
- Bilingual pupils should be encouraged to use Bilingual dictionaries and google translator.
- Where appropriate reasonable accommodations are sought for pupils who are entitled to use a bilingual dictionary in state examinations.
- Access to meaning should be provided by presenting and introducing lessons or topics with visual support wherever possible:
  - Videos
  - Maps
  - Posters
  - Pictures
  - Objects
  - Use of ICT

#### **EAL Pupils and Special Educational Needs:**

A child has special educational needs if she/he has a learning difficulty. A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty, Special Educational Needs (SEN), solely because the home language is different from the language in which she will be taught at school.

While regarding bilingualism in a child as an advantage, the school recognises that the spectrum of children with special educational needs will include a proportion of EAL pupils, and other pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school recognises the importance of, and the difficulties involved in, the early recognition of SEN in EAL pupils.

Assessment of SEN in EAL pupils may involve the special education team alongside NEPS, the student and parent/guardian and or any other support body where deemed necessary.

The nature of support for EAL pupils with SEN will be decided on an individual basis through consultation between all relevant professionals, the student and parents. This support will take account of the child's needs as an EAL pupil.

The School endeavours to make sure that home language does not prevent the parents/guardians either from accessing information on their child's special educational needs, or from putting forward their point of view.

**As with all children, it is acknowledged that liaison with parents is a vital element in the creation of a home/school partnership to support learning in school.** Effective communications is the key for parents of EAL pupils. This is taken into consideration by:

- Providing a welcoming environment, actively seeking to put parents at their ease in what may be an unfamiliar setting.
- Interpreters will be facilitated when and where they are needed, particularly in parents evenings and parents meetings with teachers.
- Endeavouring to ensure that the language used in letters, newsletters and other correspondence, sent home is clear and straightforward.
- Reading through letters (where appropriate) with children before they are taken home.
- Encouraging parental attendance at parents' evenings and participation in other school functions.

Individual support files will be kept updated with relevant information and regular assessment tasks will indicate children's progress. This assessment should also inform curriculum planning.

Pupils should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by setting their own targets for achievement or assessing their own progress.

### **3.7 Resources**

- Teachers and students have access to resource rooms. All mainstream classrooms have Interactive White Boards, PC's and Overhead Projectors.
- The SEN Department and the English Department have received support from both the BOM and Parents' Association enabling establishment of a library. All students can use the library for a quiet space to read during lunch time.
- Following training of three staff members and beginning each academic year the FRIENDS for Life Programme will be delivered to two first year classes.
- Show Me Boards are available for use for all teachers.

### **3.8 Reasonable Accommodations for State and In House Examinations (RACE)**

Applications are made by the SEN Coordinator for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. Information relating to RACE is provided to parents on an annual basis at an information meeting held in the school. The following are the range of accommodations available to the students, which are applied for as per circular criteria:

Reader, Scribe, Spelling and Grammar Waiver, Special centre, Recording Device, Scanning (reading) Pens.

The State Examinations Commission grants accommodations. From October 2016, the State Exams Commission SEC will operate a devolved model at both Junior and Leaving Cert Level. The school will make application for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Cycle and these accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Cert, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need for the accommodation. Where resources permit and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations at mock exams and other school assessments.

Students in non-exam years sitting a differentiated test will have that noted on their report. Specialised reports can be created where the student has sat many differentiated exams during inhouse assessments.

### **3.9 Communication**

SEN Team

- The AEN Coordinator and teachers of the SET department meet formally once a week. Informal meetings occur on a daily basis.
- Members of the AEN team can meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the year between the mainstream teachers and AEN team concerning incoming first year students with AEN.
- The AEN Team aims to communicate with each other as much as possible through email using the school system Office 365.
- At the beginning of each school year, the AEN Coordinator updates a register of information focusing on the incoming first years with AEN. This information is shared using Office 365, and all teachers are made aware of its existence at the start-of-year staff meeting and encouraged to consult it regularly.
- Student Support Files are available to all teachers on Office 365. This is a secure coded system in compliance with GDPR.
- AEN is on the agenda at every staff meeting.
- Teachers are kept up-to-date about all students with AEN through email and on Office 365, detailing relevant student information.
- Information is also communicated via the year head and student support structures such as the Care Team.

**Parents Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:**

- School Open Day
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Letters to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone Calls
- Email
- Meetings involving external agencies
- Meetings with the AEN Coordinator and Principal/Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor/Year Head where relevant.

### **3.10 Record Keeping**

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual students file in the AEN co-ordinator's classroom/office in a locked cabinet. All information is

managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

### **3.11 Exemptions from Irish**

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular 0055/2022)

Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support/ Resource is arranged for students with AENs, who do not study Irish, during Irish time. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability.

- Applications for Irish exemptions on the grounds of AEN are made by the AEN Coordinator and signed by the Principal.

### **4.1 PRIORITY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- Extension of FRIENDS for Life programme to all first year groups in 2026-27.
- Extend use of 365 AEN for access to Student Support Plans and Learning Targets.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff in the area of special education.
- Raising teacher awareness of, and expertise in, differentiated teaching methodologies, through the methodology card system for each student with addition needs.
- Continuation of links and collaboration for AEN with SSE, ICT for Learning Strategies at Mary Immaculate, and other action groups within the promotion of Teaching and Learning and Wellbeing in Mary Immaculate Secondary School.
- Students at School Support Plus are involved in the planning of their IEP and are to be invited to attend the IEP meeting.
- At the end of each year, the subject teacher to complete a **transfer of student form** for each student with AEN detailing interventions that work for the student, assessment of course work, homework, behaviour and attendance. Completion and storage of these forms is the responsibility of each subject department. The forms are passed on to new teachers of the student in each particular subject area.

## **4 APPENDIX**

4.11 Enrolment Policy

4.12 Methodology Card

4.13 EPSEN Act 2004

- 4.14 Inclusive Education for Children with SEN (NCSE)2010
- 4.15 Inclusion of Students with SEN Post Primary Guidelines 2007
- 4.16 SNA Circular 2014
- 4.17 Assessment Instruments Circular 0035/2017
- 4.18 A Continuum of Support for Post Primary Schools
- 4.19 NCCA Passport
- 4.20 Student Support File Guidelines
- 4.21 Effective Intervention for Struggling Readers

### Review, Evaluation and Revise Team:

Principal, Management, SEN Team, Staff, Parents, Students, Board of Management.

### TIME FRAME FOR REVIEW:

Review at regular intervals

Revise as necessary

In the light of evaluation process, feedback from school communities and other developments will be sought.

This policy was reviewed by all stake holders on the dates recorded below.

Date	Parent Council Representative Signature:
Date	Teacher Review Group Representative Signature:
Date	Student Council Chairperson:
Overall date this policy was reviewed:	BOM Chairperson Signature: