ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (AEN) POLICY

FEBRUARY 2026

St. Brendan's Community School

St. Brendan's Community School Mission Statement

"Our aim is to create a caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being."

Introduction

This policy is drawn up in the context of The Education Act (1998) and takes cognisance of The Equal Status Act (2000), The Equality Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) and, despite its non-ratification by law, many of the recommendations of the EPSEN Act (2004). One further publication has informed the content of this policy- "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs-Post Primary Guidelines (Department of Education & Science (DES) Inspectorate: 2007).

Its principles stem from the Mission statement of St. Brendan's Community School which highlights the fact that "Our aim is to create a caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being". The Board of Management is charged with a special responsibility to "ensure an appropriate education for each student".

St. Brendan's provides students with AEN supports in the form of...

AS classes /Faoiseamh and Suaimhneas

Faoiseamh and Suaimhneas are Autism Support classes in St. Brendan's Community School.

Applications to Faoiseamh and Suaimhneas will only be considered in the year of entry of the candidate to our school. All applicants must be accompanied by an assessment carried out by an Educational Psychologist approved by the Department of Education and Skills, recommending the candidate as being suitable for consideration of entry into an AS class.

Following receipt of a completed application form supported with all relevant documentation required, applications will be considered in conjunction with the SENO.

The following documentation is required

- A completed application form which is available from the school.
- An educational/clinical psychological report recommending the candidate as being suitable for placement in an AS class.
- Reports from all previous schools attended

- Signed consent Forms from parents/ guardians granting the school access to any relevant reports.

Allocation of places in Faoiseamh and Suaimhneas

- At the recommendations of the SENO.
- Consultation with the AS class coordinator and the AEN coordinator
- Where there are more applicants than places students from our traditional feeder schools/catchment area will have priority.
- All recommendations will then be considered by the board of management of the school who make the final decision on all applications.

St Brendan's Community School may, in some circumstances and following assessment be unable to meet the needs of the applicant on the grounds that they

- Are deemed a risk to themselves or others
- Admission of a candidate would make it impossible or have a detrimental effect on, the provision of the educational establishment of its services to others.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission of a student.

Under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents / guardian or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18, may appeal the decision to refuse enrolment. All appeals must be in writing addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

In the event of such an appeal being unsuccessful a parent/guardian or student if 18 may appeal the decision to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science.

Irish Exemption Class

Students that have an Irish exemption have this option. During these classes Literacy is the key focus.

Study Skills

Students have the option of taking up Study Skills as part of their option subjects for Junior Cert. This in a non-exam subject and the focus during these classes are on the core text heavy subjects for Junior Cert, Religion, Geography, Science and History. There is a maximum limit of 12 students in these classes.

Special Needs Class

Students are accepted into this class who have an Educational Assessment stating that they have a Mild General Learning Difficulty. Currently we have a capacity for 8 students for this class. Priority is given at the recommendation of the SENO and to those in the catchment area. Consultation must be made with the coordinator of the Special class and the AEN coordinator. The board of management reserves the right to refuse admission of a student.

Under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents / guardian or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18, may appeal the decision to refuse enrolment. All appeals must be in writing addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

In the event of such an appeal being unsuccessful a parent/guardian or student if 18 may appeal the decision to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science.

~~L1LP/L2LP~~

We offer this programme to students who meet the criteria. This is/can be based on their psychological assessments, standardised scores, reading ages, CAT scores and primary passports. It is a three-year cycle. Students within our Special Class may participate in this programme and students within our AS classes. It is also offered to students within our mainstream classes who meet the criteria.

Inclusion

St. Brendan's Community School welcomes students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and recognises "the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment". It aims to ensure that these students are encouraged to participate in school life as far as is reasonably practicable and that no student is bullied or singled out for unfair treatment as a consequence of their SEN/AEN. Pro-active steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is supportive and non-judgemental.

Rationale

This policy document, which is regarded as a reflection of current practice, outlines the form that additional support for students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) takes in the school and the philosophy which underpins our actions and decisions. The school bases its rationale on the three major principles laid out in the EPSEN Act which are as follows

- The education of people with AEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.
- People with AEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from appropriate education, as do their peers.
- People with AEN, like their peers, should leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Categories of Additional Educational Needs

To date, the school has provided for the following categories of students Educational Needs:

- Learning Support Students
- Borderline/ Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties Example Dyslexia
- Physical disabilities
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (hearing & visual impairments)
- ESOL students (English for students of other languages)
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder

We understand that under DES circular 08/02 (Appendix 3) there are several other difficulties which come under the AEN domain but have not as of yet encountered.

Roles within Resource/Learning Support Department

All students and in particular students designated as having additional educational needs are supported by the mainstream subject teacher.

Depending on the learning needs of the student, she/he may also be helped in a small group or team teaching or with individual learning support or resource teaching. In some cases, the DES may provide the additional support of a Special Needs Assistant (SNA).

The allocation of Resource hours is dependent upon the National Council of Special Needs (NCSE) and the DES. These hours are allocated annually by the DES through the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO), the General allocation.

Main Partners

- Students and parents
- Mainstream subject teacher
- Tutor
- Year head
- School Counsellor/ counsellors
- Learning Support co-ordinator
- Guidance Counsellor
- Deputy Principal and Principal
- Relevant primary school
- National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) and other relevant professional agencies if appropriate

Implementation Procedures

In the weeks after open night, preceding entry to First year parents/guardians are asked that the school be informed of any specific needs. Parents are requested to submit any psychological/educational assessments that have been carried out in the past and to inform the principal if the student has availed of Learning Support or Resource Hours in Primary School.

The General allocation allows schools to distribute support where needs exist.

The Learning Support team tries further to identify students who may need support by examining the results of assessment tests carried out in March/April, in tandem with the earlier feedback from parents. Further testing may be carried out on students which may present with difficulties.

The Deputy Principal contacts the primary schools of all the incoming First Years to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student. This further informs the Learning Support Team on who may need support.

Planning for Resources

The Parents/Guardians of Identified students with specific additional educational needs can be invited to an individual meeting with the Principal/ Deputy Principal/ AEN coordinator/ Learning support teacher to plan for the following year. The AEN coordinator, in consultation with the Principal and Deputy Principal, compiles a register of students with additional educational needs. Individual tuition or small learning support groups are organised where appropriate. A learning plan is developed by the learning support teacher to help meet the student's needs. A Resource Teacher (and /or) SNA is assigned to specific students depending on the allocation granted by the SENO.

Learning Support in Action

- The Learning Support Team offers advice on learning and teaching strategies for students with additional educational needs and provides access to a staff resource library which provides literature, strategies and advice for all teachers.
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is consulted when they are available.
- Each subject department has developed guidelines on the provision for additional educational needs in their subject area.

Provision for Students who wish to apply for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations

- Individual appointments are arranged with students applying for Reasonable Accommodation for Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate (RACE) with the relevant person. Relevant testing is carried out to ensure RA in exams.
- At Leaving Certificate level these appointments may include the NEPS psychologist who may carry out assessment tests to decide on the needs of each applicant.
- Applications for DARE are processed by the Guidance Department.

Roles and Responsibilities

While it is acknowledged that the care of students with AEN is the responsibility of all at St. Brendan's, there are some clearly identifiable roles to ensure a structured programme of support.

The Board of Management's role is to ensure that the policy is developed supported and evaluated, to consider reports from the principal on the implementation of the policy and to consider any recommendations to ensure adequate accommodation and teaching resources.

The Learning Support Team comprises the AEN coordinator, AS classes coordinator, Special class coordinator, learning support teachers, relevant teachers, Principal and Deputy Principals.

The Role of the Learning Support Team

- To create and foster a school climate of inclusiveness.
- To meet parents of incoming students with AEN
- To keep abreast of all developments in the area of AEN.

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that Reasonable Accommodation is sought and where possible provided for AEN students sitting State Examinations.
- To inform staff of individual students' needs.
- To plan a Learning Support timetable
- To monitor and evaluate individual students/groups of students with AEN.

The Role of the Student Support Team

- To monitor the effects of the policy and help to identify students requiring learning support.
- To refer to outside professionals and agencies as needed.
- To counsel in personal, educational and career development.
- To consult with parents and teachers.

The Role of the Subject Teacher

- To create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes cognisance of learning difficulties.
- To differentiate his/ her teaching practice.
- To assist in the identification of students in need of Learning Support.
- To bring any concerns to the AEN department.

The Role of Parents

- To be proactive and supportive of the school in implementing this policy.
- To use their unique knowledge of their child to further their learning plan.
- To meet with teachers, learning support team or pastoral team where appropriate.
- To provide support for homework and learning.

Student Engagement and Participation

- To engage positively with their learning plan, both at the planning and review stage.
- To participate in their learning in a group, individual or class setting in a positive manner.
- To develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught in a Learning Support setting.

Special Needs Assistants

The role of the SNA is pivotal in the care of students with AEN and is recognised by the whole school community as being of enormous value. The duties of the SNA are outlined by the DES

1. Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with additional educational needs is/are being taught.
2. Assisting children to board and alight from school buses/taxi. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with difficulties e.g. helping students with mobility issues or with typing or writing.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting in out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with additional educational needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups with additional educational needs who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a nonteaching nature.
9. Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of that child. 8 Circular 07/02 DES

Monitoring and Review Procedures

Applications for additional educational resources take place on an on- going basis with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO).

Regular meetings with parents may take place for students with additional educational needs to collaborate and agree on individual learning plans.

Consultations take place with NEPS psychologist when he/she is available to school. Regular meetings may take place with SEN students to discuss their needs and how best those needs can be served.

We have an established AEN Department in our school, specifically to address issues and provisions relating to students with AEN. The AEN coordinator work closely with all those involved internally and externally in providing for the education and welfare of all students with AEN in St Brendan's. Parents and subject teachers may refer students about whom they have concerns to the AEN team and discuss these

concerns. Further action (assessment, extra help etc. as appropriate) may be agreed upon in consultation with parents/guardians and advice/support given to teachers. The AEN coordinator is a core member of the Care Team, liaising closely with Guidance, the School Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal, as well as Year Heads and Class Tutors.

The SNA Team works in close cooperation with the AEN coordinator, Deputy Principal and Guidance.

The AEN coordinator maintains close links with outside agencies such as the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), The Child Guidance Clinic and appropriate specialists.

The school's ability to respond to students with AEN is informed by the needs of the student in the first instance. Also considered will be the experience, understanding and knowledge of the school staff at all levels, the support of school management, the allocation of resources from the Department of Education and the NCSE, the provision of resources, within the school, the support, guidance and cooperation of outside agencies such as NEPS and others involved with the students or the school, the support and co-operation of student's parents/guardians.

The progress of students with AEN may be assessed in a variety of ways, according to their specific and individual needs and provisions:

- Standardised testing is carried out in first and second year for all students to assess their academic progress.
- One to one assessment can be arranged also with the AEN coordinator
- Informal and formal teacher observation and feedback.
- Academic progress in mainstream subjects is assessed in formal subject tests and exams at appointed times during the school year.
- Year Heads/ subject teacher's feedback any concerns raised.
- Parental feedback.
- SNA feedback, informal and formally to AEN Coordinator.
- School attendance/retention, where appropriate.
- Level of student integration, where relevant.

The AEN coordinator maintains individual files for each student where appropriate.

All confidential material including but not restricted to assessment results, psychological and other specialist report's, is held in these files.

Results and information relating to the students are also recorded and the information issued to review and evaluate the students' ongoing progress, as well as inform future provisions.

AEN teachers maintain their own records and files of the students they teach, including results and observations which assist in reviewing progress and determining how the needs of the students are best met.

Curriculum Access

Students with AEN are offered access to the same curriculum and appropriate accommodations may be made where needed. To support that access individualised support is offered during Resource and/or Learning Support to address subject specific issues or needs the students may have, as well as general literacy skills.

In Irish exemption class teachers will focus on literacy to support curricular access.

Study Skills Students have an option to take study skills instead of a third subject option at Junior Cycle and currently are given extra support in subjects such as History, Geography, Science, Religion and project work if the need arises.

The integration and mainstreaming of students with AEN are facilitated by preparation and consultation in conjunction with the AEN coordinator and Year Head. All students apart from students placed in the Special class and AS classes are placed in mixed ability mainstream classes in Junior Cycle, with subsequent banding in Maths and Irish. Provision is made on an individual basis to address specific needs or difficulties which may hamper integration, e.g., social skills or physical difficulties.

Differentiation is encouraged in mainstream subject classes to facilitate students with AEN. It is the responsibility of all subject teachers to provide for students with AEN in the classroom. Students with laptops or other devices are facilitated to enable them to access the curriculum. Projectors and computers are available to support teachers and students.

Provisions

A variety of provisions are made for students with AEN, depending on individual needs and entitlement such as a reduced curriculum, Learning Support classes, Resource one-to-one or in small groups, behavioural support, AS classes etc. These are not prescriptive, provision for support is determined on an individual basis by the team supporting the student, with input from the parents/guardians and student involved. The emphasis is always on integrating and supporting the student in mainstream classes as far as possible.

The AEN coordinator liaises with parents and outside agencies as and when necessary. Contact may be initiated by any of the education partners. Parents or external agencies may ring school and request a call or meeting with the coordinators, to be arranged at mutually convenient times. Meetings with parents are also arranged in conjunction with Guidance, Year Heads, the Deputy Principal and Principal as and when appropriate. Joint feedback or team meetings comprising of various personnel, including SNAs, may be held prior or post psychological or other assessment, or at other times, for the purposes of co-ordinating provisions for the student.

Contact with external agencies is maintained by the AEN coordinator, Learning Support teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Deputy Principal or Principal, as appropriate, for advice, support and resources to adequately meet the needs of students with AEN.

Parental involvement, support and consultation is actively encouraged in St. Brendan's

Mainstream teachers are also encouraged to liaise with the AEN Department and teachers involved in delivering Learning Support and Resource when they feel specific areas need to be addressed. AEN teachers have a flexible approach to supporting teaching and learning. Teacher feedback and in-class monitoring is regularly sought re student strengths, areas of difficulty etc.

Such methods raise teacher awareness of the processes involved and encourage the development of core practices.

Inclusive Teaching Skills are encouraged by:

- Mixed ability classes
- Gathering and making available suitable reference material for teachers, promoting and assisting the development of inclusive and differentiated methods of teaching generally and in their subject areas.
- Developing an inclusive homework and assessment policy.
- Ongoing support of personal and whole staff professional development.
- AEN team support on a personal and or subject department level
- Promoting inclusive teaching skills.
- Reminders, alerts and general notices about AEN for the staff are emailed to staff
- The AEN Co-ordinator works closely with the Year Heads and Guidance Team to facilitate the dissemination of information to teachers.
- Each student that has a psychological assessment has in the drop-down section on VS-ware a section allocated to their AEN.

Each teacher also has a post-box, and individual messages may be delivered there to reach a teacher directly. Parents and students' responsibilities are communicated to them directly in meetings with AEN teachers, the Principal and Deputy Principal and other agencies such as NEPS.

The AEN core team are available for help, support and guidance in the fulfilment of these responsibilities. Books and other reference material are available for staff, parents/guardians and students to consult as required.

Ratification, Implementation and Review

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 28/5/26
- This policy has been made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. It is also published on the School Website and the School App. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron upon request.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every two years. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. The review will also be published on the School Website and the School App. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: Mina Loughnane Acker

Joan Hogan

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: John Kennedy

John Kennedy

Principal/Secretary of Board of Management

Date: 28/5/26

Date: 28/5/26

Date of next review: _____