



St. Benildus College
Additional Educational Needs
Department Policy

Contents

St. Benildus College.....	1
Additional Educational Needs.....	1
Department Policy	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Rationale	3
3. Aims & Objectives of the Department.....	5
4. Enrolment	6
5. Transition to Post-Primary School	6
6. Admission Arrangements.....	6
7. Facilities and Resources	7
8. Lunch Club	7
9. Identification of Students for Support	7
10. Model of AEN Provision	8
11. Roles and Responsibilities.....	9
12. Exceptionally Able Students	13
13. Assessment, Records and Progress.....	14
14. Irish Exemptions.....	14
15. Assistive Technology	14
16. RACE (Reasonable Accommodations for Certified Exams)	15
17. DARE (Disability Access Route to Education).....	15
18. Continuing Professional Development	15
19. Policy Review	16

1. Introduction

This policy was created in accordance with the Mission Statement of St. Benildus College. St Benildus College provides a Catholic, LaSallian education rooted in a tradition which prepares young people for college and for life. The school seeks to educate students spiritually, academically, physically and socially through the promotion of Christian values, teaching the broad, prescribed academic programmes as well as a wide range of student activities under the guidance of a caring, dedicated management, staff and administration.

Educational Philosophy of St. Benildus College

The De La Salle order (est. by John Baptiste La Salle in 1679) has been associated with education in Ireland for more than a century and has links with South Co Dublin since 1953. St Benildus College is part of a network of LaSallian Schools involved in the delivery of a quality education and the building of vibrant LaSallian Communities.

The philosophy of the College is to foster the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of each pupil. Academic achievement is stressed but participation in sporting and artistic activities is also strongly encouraged. The College, operating through an innovative and flexible curriculum, provides a broad and inclusive education. Learning takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect, allowing each pupil the opportunity to develop his academic potential while at the same time giving him a strong awareness of Christian values and promoting a sense of personal responsibility.

The Mission Statement and Educational Philosophy of St. Benildus College embody the principles and values which underpin Additional Educational Needs (AEN) practices within the school.

2. Rationale

St Benildus College welcomes pupils with Additional Education Needs (AEN).

This policy describes the aims and objectives by which the College will identify, assess and provide for students with AEN. AEN consists of, but is not limited to learning, physical, hearing and visual difficulties.

The purpose of the formation and implementation of this AEN policy, which is regarded as a reflection of current practice, is to comply with legislation and provide a set of guidelines for the use of additional teaching resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to support students with additional educational needs.

This policy is written in context of a revised model introduced in 2024 for the operation/application and deployment of Special Education Teaching (SET) resources. <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/314375/fed235a3-0438-4255a044-540af1f9970f.pdf#page=null>

Legislative Context

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

“Special Education Needs” means a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate 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 the condition”

Education (Welfare) Act 2001

Aims to provide accessible education for all children as an integral part of their welfare. The State acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents as the prime educators of the child.

Education Act 1998

This Act makes provision, in the interests of the common good, for the education of every person in the state, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs:

Department of Education & Science Circulars, specific reference to

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/314375/fed235a3-0438-4255-a044-540af1f9970f.pdf#page=null>

Supporting Publications

Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (DES 2024)

Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support for Post Primary (NEPS 2007)

Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support for Post Primary Resource Pack for Teachers (NEPS 2007)

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS 2007)

NCSE Toolkit New Teacher Allocation Model (NCSE 2017)

This policy should also be read in conjunction with relevant policies including the school's Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour, Guidance Plan and Attendance Policy.

Inclusion

The College recognises the right of students with AEN to access, participate in and benefit from an appropriate education. Support is provided for students with AEN in line with the NCSE Continuum of Support Model.

The College recognises the importance of genuine communication and partnership with parents and students in planning, delivering and evaluating this support. The provision of support for students with AEN is an integral part of the College's overall aim to raise the achievement of all students.

Some students will permanently, or from time to time, have a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age. Some may have additional needs that prevent or hinder them from making use of the facilities provided. We will support these students and work together, in partnership with parents and outside agencies, as necessary.

All students have access to the full curriculum of the College and all activities. All students are encouraged to become independent and take responsibility for their own learning as much as possible.

3. Aims & Objectives of the Department

- Give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other additional needs, as they relate to education.
- Ensure that students with additional educational needs are educated in an inclusive environment as far as possible.
- Co-operate and work closely with the NCSE and other agencies with regard to the education of students with additional needs.
- Develop a whole school approach and shared responsibility for supporting all students with AEN.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the additional educational needs of students and of how they can support them in their education
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with additional educational needs.
- To create a happy, healthy and inclusive environment in which all students may develop their own personal gifts and interests and be valued for who they are.
- To enable pupils to participate in a broad and balanced curriculum so that they can reach their full potential.
- To develop positive self-esteem and a positive attitude to school and learning to encourage good attendance.
- To enable pupils to become independent learners.
- To provide students with AEN strategies to enable them to fulfil their academic, social-emotional and personal development.
- To identify students for support, subject to school resources.
- To assess, monitor and review the progress of pupils receiving support and adapt individual allocations accordingly.
- To involve parents in supporting their child's learning.
- To involve students in the decision making process relating to their educational

4. Enrolment

St. Benildus' College enrolment policy welcomes the full participation of students with additional educational needs and undertakes to avail of both financial and personnel resources, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with additional needs in order that these students, insofar as is reasonable and practicable, may participate fully in the educational and social opportunities provided within the College.

5. Transition to Post-Primary School

There is a formal and well-functioning communication structure between the College and its feeder primary schools.

St. Benildus College believes that the quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can be a determinant of how well they settle in school. Extra provisions made to smooth the transfer process of pupils with AEN are as follows:

- Parents complete school application form which gives details of supports students have received in Primary school as well as any diagnosis or assessments of AEN.
- Contact is made with all feeder primary schools to gather information on students with AEN.
- Students who have Irish exemptions are identified. Copies of exemption certificates should be forwarded to the school prior to the first day of term.
- Parents/guardians are welcome to contact the school office to schedule a meeting with the learning support team prior to entry, either in person or by telephone to discuss concerns.
- An information booklet is issued to new students and their parents/guardians.
- An effective anti-bullying policy is in place. ☑ There is an annual Open-Day for parent/guardian/child visits.
- A member of the AEN Team is present and available to speak with all new parents/guardians at an Annual Evening.
- As required, learning support teachers from feeder schools can visit our college with any of their students that they feel would benefit from a tour of the school in order to further smooth the transition from primary to secondary school.
- When required, if a child is particularly anxious about transfer, a one-to-one meeting is set up between the learning support department and parents/guardians and child to alleviate any concerns.

6. Admission Arrangements

St. Benildus College will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with additional educational needs.

The AEN Core Team, should be made aware of any additional needs as early as possible to ensure correct supports are put in place.

7. Facilities and Resources

Students with AEN are allocated support based on the NCSE Continuum of Support Model.

Additional funding will be used to purchase suitable resources for the department which will enhance the learning of all students.

The AEN Team will continue to work from three core classrooms which have been designated for learning support, using other free classrooms when there is great demand in a particular period.

The AEN Core Team encourage the use of various resources in supporting students. Resources such as ICT resources, suitable Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate texts, exam material, games for learning, and age appropriate reading material is available.

8. Lunch Club

A lunch club has been established in the school and is open to students who may, for a variety of reasons, prefer to have lunch in a quiet space.

9. Identification of Students for Support

In-coming First Year students are screened by information supplied on the enrolment form, information from Feeder schools and the Assessment Tests (CAT 4).

A class teacher or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the AEN department, by way of a referral form. Any referral made by a class teacher must be forwarded to the Year Head.

When a parent refers their child to the Principal, this information will be passed on to the AEN Core Team and Year Head.

Student information is gathered by formal and informal assessment: Observations from mainstream teachers, consultation with parents, interviews with pupils, review of assessment test (CAT4), review of house exams and reports, behavioural record if appropriate and consultation with the Guidance Department.

Following this profiling stage, decisions are made as to appropriate support necessary. This is done in consultation with parents.

The decisions made may be as follows:

1. No need for further action.
2. Need for monitoring/support in mainstream setting.
3. Purposeful withdrawal or other support.
4. Mentoring.
5. Referral to Guidance Councillor.
6. Referral to school Psychotherapist.
7. Referral to GP/outside agencies.

10. Model of AEN Provision

The model of AEN provision in the College is in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support model. 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:

- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small Group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Team Teaching

The period of intervention recommended to each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual needs. The duration of provision is kept under review.



National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Continuum of Support

Allocation of Teaching Hours

The teaching and learning support allocation of hours is utilised for the purposes intended. The majority of these hours are delivered by the AEN Core Team, and the remaining hours are allocated to a number of Supplementary Learning Support Teachers.

Our role is to provide a proficient and responsive learning support service, which keeps up to date with changes in curriculum, syllabi, teaching and support methods. Within an appropriate framework of support, we assist students to function as independent, autonomous learners. We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities for all. Support may include small group withdrawal support classes, 1-1 withdrawal classes or Team Teaching. Individual provision and its outcomes will be kept constantly under review and amended, as necessary, in line with the continuum of support.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management

The board of management has the overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with AEN. The Board will support the implementation and review of the AEN Policy, provide supports and resources to aid a whole-school approach and promote inclusive practices through the School Plan.

The Principal

The Principal has the general responsibility for establishing and promoting whole-school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students, including those with AEN. The Principal convenes an AEN Team and assigns responsibility of co-ordination to a member or members of the AEN Team.

The AEN Team

The AEN Team includes the Deputy Principal, the AEN Co-ordinator, AEN Core Team, the Guidance Counsellor, Supplementary Learning Support Teachers, relevant subject teachers, relevant Year Heads and SNAs. The aforementioned personnel work in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

The AEN Core Team

The AEN Core Team includes the AEN Coordinator, Deputy Principal and teachers in the AEN Department who have a large portion of their timetable allocated to teaching AEN classes.

The Role of AEN Co-ordinator

The AEN Core Team will ensure that they are fully involved in developing and monitoring the College's AEN policy and that AEN provision is an integral part of the College development plan. The Co-ordinator along with college management will ensure that they are fully informed of the Colleges AEN provision, including how funding, equipment and personnel resources are deployed. They will ensure that the quality of AEN provision is regularly monitored and evaluated.

The AEN Co-ordinator has oversight of all matters regarding the day-to-day management of all aspects of AEN policy and provision, for leading the AEN Team and co-ordinating the involvement of outside agencies. Specific responsibilities of the role include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Colleges AEN policy and provision. ☐
Coordinating the AEN Register.
- Coordinating provision for students with AEN and the set-up of the AEN timetable.
- Ensuring that students who have been referred by class teachers due to poor attainment are screened for learning difficulties.
- Chairing a weekly meeting with the AEN Core Team.
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers of the AEN Support Policy.
- Meeting with parents of students with AEN.

St. Benildus College

AEN Policy

- Managing the AEN Core Team.
- Overseeing the records on all students with AEN.
- Contributing to the training of staff.
- Liaising with and advising Special Needs Assistants.
- Overseeing SNA access for students and SNA timetables.
- Assisting the team of SNAs in establishing targets for students with SNA access.
- Identification of students for reasonable accommodation in house exams and overseeing provision of same.
- Applying for additional teaching support and resources including RACE
- Liaising with external agencies including the DES, NCSE, NEPS, Visiting Teacher Service, health and social services, psychologists and other relevant voluntary bodies.
- Overseeing the transition of First Years from Primary to Secondary School including: College visits, meeting with parents and partaking in Student Support Team (SST).
- Liaising with learning support teachers in relation to student progress and reorganising resources if required.

The Role of the Guidance Department

The Guidance Counsellor works closely with the AEN Core Team. The AEN & Guidance teams collaborate on assessment processes and assist in making other teachers aware of relevant information about students with AEN. Meetings are held with members of the AEN Core Team during which students with AEN are supported by planning/monitoring and follow-up actions decided upon. They also provide guidance and support to parents as required. They advise and guide students with AEN through the DARE application process where relevant. They assist students with AEN at different stages of schooling and assist them in making career decisions.

Mentoring

There is a student mentoring programme in operation in our college whereby teachers volunteer to act as mentors for the more vulnerable students. With active collaboration between Guidance Counsellor and the AEN Core Team, students with AEN who may be at risk of not achieving their full potential both socially and emotionally are quickly identified and provided with mentoring throughout the school year. Feedback from mentors is very valuable when reviewing a student's progress and assessing their on-going needs.

The Role of the AEN and Supplementary Learning Support Teacher

The core task of the learning support teacher is the teaching of students with AEN. The model of organisation that has been adopted in St. Benildus College allows the learning support teacher to implement their teaching role in the following ways:  By withdrawing students for additional classes

- By providing specific support for students with AEN in areas such literacy, numeracy, and social skills.
- Liaising with subject teachers.
- All Learning Support Teachers must keep a record of work covered in every class, including samples of students' work.

The Role of Subject Teachers

A key element of our AEN provision is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the subject teacher and the AEN teaching team. Subject teachers in St. Benildus College play a key role in bringing about the inclusion of students with AEN. They play a central role in identifying students who may be at risk and for drawing the attention of the AEN Core Team to such students. Teachers collaborate with the AEN Core team and seek advice when considering the needs of students with AEN when planning for differentiation and teaching lessons, setting homework and formulating tests. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Being aware of the school's policies and procedures (as outlined in this document) for supporting students with additional educational needs
- Consider students with AEN as part of their Subject Department Plans
- Being aware of students in their classes with AEN
- Ensuring that the subject content has been differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Liaising with the learning support teachers regarding their students.
- Where a student has access to an SNA the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the AEN Core Team.
- Take responsibility for their own professional development to seek adequate training to support the identified needs of students within their class.
- Support and encourage independence in the student's learning.

The Role of the Year Head

Year Heads have general responsibility for monitoring the academic and social progress of students. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Liaising with the AEN Co-ordinator to help to identify students with AEN
- Monitor and review the progress of all students in their Year group, including students with AEN.

The Role of the Special Needs Assistants

The SNAs role is to look after the care needs of students with SNA access. The purpose of the SNA scheme is to provide for students with significant primary care needs. Primary care needs include administration of medicine, and care needs requiring frequent interventions when essential. For details of care needs please see circular 30/2014. Students who are

St. Benildus College

AEN Policy

granted SNA access may have to share an SNA with other students. Through the course of their time at St. Benildus College students are encouraged, where appropriate, to become independent of SNA support.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

The role and input of parents/guardians is vital to the success of the student. Parents/Guardians are part of the collaborative team, which is central to inclusive practice. The AEN Core Team endeavours to maintain open lines of communication with parents/guardians concerning their sons' progress. Appointments to meet a member of the AEN Core Team can be arranged through the school office. It is imperative that the parents/guardians and the school work together, with the support of outside professionals, where appropriate, to ensure the best possible outcomes for each student. It is extremely important that the school recognises and values the role of the parent/guardian. It is equally important that the parent/guardian respects and values the role of teachers as the professional educators. The role of parents/guardians include:

- Providing all necessary information and documentation to the school in relation to their son's needs, e.g., psychological reports, OT reports, etc.
- Communicate with the school if they are concerned about their son's education
- Work with and support the school in providing the best possible education for each student.

The Role of the Student

Students are encouraged to discuss their progress and learning needs with their learning support teacher. It is important for the students to know that their opinions concerning their progress are being listened to.

Students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and to become aware of themselves as learners.

Liaison with outside Agencies

The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) liaises closely with the AEN Co-ordinator and facilitates the delivery and co-ordination of educational services to children with AEN. The SENO also processes application forms for resources for students with AEN on behalf of the NCSE and advises parents/guardians regarding their son's needs.

The National Psychological Service (NEPS) provide psychological assessments of students and recommendations on how best to address strengths and weaknesses identified. The service also advises as to how best employ resources and strategies in the classroom, and school environment in general, to benefit students with AEN.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support for students experiencing difficulties of a behavioural/emotional nature and provides advice and recommendations on how best to address those difficulties in a school environment.

Other Agencies include the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Visiting Teacher Service.

12. Exceptionally Able Students

The Scholars Programme is an integral part of the College's Additional Educational Needs (AEN) provision, specifically designed to support Exceptionally Able Students. This initiative aims to identify and nurture academic potential, providing students with opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom and promote their holistic development. The programme is aligned with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Exceptionally Able Students and operates under the auspices of the School's AEN Department.

Structure and Implementation The programme is structured into two distinct groups:

- Junior Scholars: Students from First to Third Year.
- Senior Scholars: Students in Fifth and Sixth Year.

The Scholars Programme is not available during Transition Year due to pedagogical considerations. However, Third Year Scholars are encouraged to explore participation in external programmes, such as the Dublin City University (DCU) Gifted and Talented Programmes, to further their academic development during this period.

Each academic year, the programme undergoes a review to identify new candidates for inclusion. Progression from the Junior Scholars to the Senior Scholars group is based on established selection criteria to ensure continued engagement and academic growth.

Key Objectives The Scholars Programme is underpinned by the following key objectives:

1. **Promoting Autonomous Learning:** Students are encouraged to take ownership of their education by engaging in extracurricular academic competitions and projects that foster independent research and critical thinking.
2. **Providing a Digital Support Hub:** A dedicated Microsoft Teams page serves as a centralised platform for information on competitions, academic opportunities, and peer collaboration.
3. **Facilitating Peer Mentorship:** Senior Scholars play an active role in mentoring Junior Scholars, offering guidance on academic challenges and fostering a culture of mutual support and intellectual engagement.
4. **Engaging with Alumni:** The programme includes an alumni component, where former Scholars return to share insights on university courses, study techniques, and strategies for success in the Leaving Certificate.

Review and Development The Scholars Programme is subject to continuous review and refinement to ensure its alignment with best practices in supporting Exceptionally Able Students. Feedback from participants, mentors, and educators is incorporated into the annual review process to enhance the programme's effectiveness and impact.

By embedding the Scholars Programme within the AEN Department's framework, the College remains committed to providing a stimulating and challenging environment for its most academically capable students, fostering their intellectual and personal development.

13. Assessment, Records and Progress

The AEN Core Team carry out the following functions:

- Liaise with the Guidance Counsellor in relation to the formal and informal assessment of students with AEN.
- The administration of the Cognitive Assessment Test (CAT4). All incoming 1st Year students complete the CAT4. Students are also assessed in Transition Year.
- The administration of standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Complete applications for Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Exams. (RACE)
- Monitor the progress of students with AEN through teacher and Year Head feedback and end of term reports.

AEN Core Team and the compiling and maintenance of records relating to students with AEN

The AEN Core Team compiles and maintains data on students with AEN. This data may be received from outside or generated within the school. Data from outside includes psychological reports and reports from parents and other schools. Data created in the schools includes those in relation to assessment, student progress, state examinations, or planning to transfer inwards from the primary school. Data relating to students is treated in a sensitive and confidential manner. Our school acts in accordance with the Data Protection Acts (1998 and 2003) in relation to the management and maintenance of such data.

14. Irish Exemptions

Irish Exemptions are granted in line with Circular 0055/2022.

15. Assistive Technology

Assistive technology in our college supports students within the mainstream classroom.

Procedure for new entrants to the college

- If a laptop is already being used by the student in his Primary School (as granted by the NCSE) the laptop should be transferred with the student on transition.
- All laptops which are grant-aided by the NCSE are the property of the college, can be used by the student for their personal use but must be returned to the college when the student leaves the school.
- Parents must sign for the use of school equipment when it is loaned to the student.

Procedure for students who are already enrolled

- If on entry to 1st year or at a later stage, it becomes obvious that use of a laptop is necessary, an application will be made to the NCSE on the student's behalf if they meet the necessary criteria.
- In cases where the NCSE do not grant finance for the purchase of a laptop but where it is deemed necessary, the student can use a personal laptop in consultation with the AEN Department.

St. Benildus College

AEN Policy

- The AEN Core Team will assess the student's eligibility for a RACE application to use a laptop for exams. The SEC has issued clear criteria for this application process, and the AEN Core Team will follow these guidelines, and apply where a student meets these criteria.
- Where possible the college will facilitate all students using laptops in House exams.

16. RACE (Reasonable Accommodations for Certified Exams)

- The AEN Core Team works closely with Year Heads, the Guidance Counsellor and subject Teachers to determine what students may be eligible for a RACE application.
- These students are then tested according to the SEC guidelines on RACE applications.
- The testing is carried out by members of the AEN Core Team, and results and recommendations are documented carefully.
- Applications are then made for students who meet the criteria.
- As soon as written confirmation of the results of the application are received, these are added to the student's file.
- A copy of the SEC decision is also sent home.
- The list of accommodations granted is given to the Exam Secretary who uses this information to make the appropriate arrangements for the State Examinations.
- Information on RACE is available on the state Examinations Commission website www.examinations.ie under reasonable accommodations.

17. DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)

- The AEN Core Team and the Guidance Counsellors work closely to identify students who may qualify for DARE.
- Applications to DARE are the responsibility of the student.
- These students are advised, directed and supported through Section B of the application by the Guidance Counsellors and AEN Core Team.
- Information on DARE scheme is available through www.accesscollege.ie

18. Continuing Professional Development

- The AEN Core Team strives to keep up with changing syllabi, curriculum, and best practice policies.
- It is the policy of the college to encourage and facilitate teachers in the AEN Core Team to have completed the Graduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs in line with our TPL Policy.
- All teachers are encouraged to undertake regular TPL courses. Teachers can apply to the Board of Management for financial support for these courses.
- Whole Staff training is recognised as vital to inclusive practice and the positive educational experience of students with AEN, and with that in mind management has supported initiatives to bring speakers on various AEN to address the staff.

St. Benildus College
AEN Policy

19. Policy Review

This policy has been formed, reviewed, adopted and ratified in accordance with procedures agreed by the partners in education.

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Signed: May Bohan Date: 27/3/25

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Deel Moulds Date: 27/03/2025