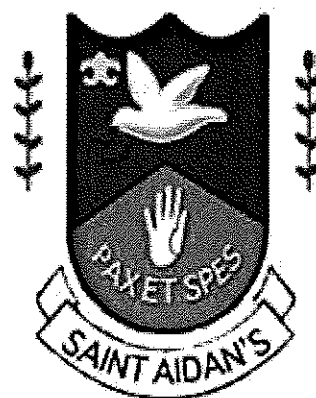


Special Educational Needs Policy

Our School Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.



Our School

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies.

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Introduction

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for boys operating under the Trusteeship of the Irish Christian Brothers. As such it supports the Religious and Educational Philosophy of its Founder Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice.

This Special Education Needs policy document of St. Aidan's aims to outline the additional educational support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It is written in the context of the Education Act 1998 (amended 2012), and takes account of the *Education for Person's with Disabilities Act (EPSEN)* published in 2004.

The S.E.N. policy will be reviewed annually and bases its rationale on the principles laid out in the EPSEN Act which state that:

"The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs"

"People with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers"

"That people with SEN leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives."

(EPSEN Act 2004)

2. Special Education Needs Categories include (but are not limited to)

Categories of Special Education Needs (SEN)

- Borderline/ Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties (EBD)—Attention deficit disorder (ADD), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Specific Learning Difficulties e.g Dyslexia
- Physical disabilities e.g Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Psychological/Mental Health needs
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- Sensory Difficulties (hearing & visual impairments)
- ESOL students (English for students of other languages)
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g Asperger's Syndrome)
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Down's Syndrome

Students may also be withdrawn from class and provided for within the SEN department because of low scoring (under 10th percentile) on CAT. In addition to this support may be offered for the following reasons;

- Social, emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Referral from teacher/parents
- In consultation with Management

3. Roles within Special Education Department:

- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- Special Education Teachers
- Special Needs Assistant
- Guidance Counsellor
- Principal

I. The Role of the S.E.N. Department

Consultative Role

- Facilitate a whole school approach to SEN provision
- Assist in the formulation of policy in this area
- Work with class teachers on curriculum strategies
- Provide information on individual students
- Further develop a knowledge base on special education
- Promote and plan staff development in this area
- Work with parents / guardians to enhance the students' learning from entrance
- Consult with students on their needs
- To advise on subject options
- Facilitate communications with parents
- Process of referrals
- Profile of students on entry

Advocacy role

- Support students in accessing curriculum and assessment structures
- Support students transferring from Primary to Secondary

Liaison Role

- Liaise with National Educational Psychological Service and other professional bodies
- Liaise with the Department of Education and Science
- Liaise with Career Guidance
- Liaise with State Exams Commission
- Link with other support agencies
- Liaise with Speech and Languages Therapists, Occupational Therapists and other psychologists

- Liaise with Pastoral Care team
- Liaise with the Management team, giving them a weekly update
- Liaise with students to discuss their strengths and needs
- Meeting and advising parents
- Facilitate students transferring from Primary to Secondary
- Third level (GC)

Administrative Role

- Advise on the provision of student support as per circular 0013/2017
- Coordinate applications for assistive technology
- Coordinate applications for Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Examinations
- Coordinate applications for Special Needs Assistants
- Timetable students based on allocation of SEN hours
- Source and purchase resource materials
- Updating files with relevant information

Teaching Role

- Direct teaching of students with SEN utilising specialist methods
- To promote wellbeing by providing social and emotional support to all students within the SEN department
- Establishment of a trusting relationship with students
- Provision of education to students that meets their specific learning needs
- Profile and plan student support and set time related targets with regular reviews Design I.S.P's for students with low incidence needs
- Testing – Including continuous informal assessments, WRAT, and other tests as they come on stream.
- Preparing students, approved for reasonable accommodation for house and State exams.

IV. The role of the Subject Teacher

- Familiarity with this S.E.N. policy and S.E.N. folder.
- Consulting the S.E.N. department with regards to students with S.E.N.
- Ensuring the continuous professional development in the area of S.E.N.
- Taking responsibility for the education of S.E.N. students in their class through differentiated approaches.
- Planning optimum use of S.N.A. where applicable.
- Supporting and encouraging students to be independent learners.
- Reporting concerns about specific students to the S.E.N. department.

V. The Role of Special Needs Assistant (SNA)/ Classroom Assistants

- The Special Needs Assistant provides care assistance to named student/students who have special educational needs.
- The Special Educational Needs Department and Year Head work collaboratively in devising an appropriate strategy plan for a student with special educational needs in consultation with the S.N.A.
- The SNA implements this plan and keeps a daily record of the student's progress.
- The Special Needs Assistant plays an important role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development. The wellbeing and care needs of the students should also be a priority.

4. Provision for Resource Students

(The following provisions are used to support students with S.E.N.)

I. Irish Exemptions

Students who have an Irish exemption at Junior Cycle may be timetabled for Resource at this time depending on their individual requirements. If a student does not require resource they will remain in their timetabled Irish class.

At Senior Cycle while Resource support may lessen, provision is reviewed on an ongoing basis. This includes supervised study and or subject support.

(Irish exemption criteria and procedure circular M10/94).

II. Withdrawals

The SEN department may withdraw students from other subject areas in consultation with management, the respective subject department teachers and with parental permission. In some cases students with SEN may be on reduced timetables to facilitate their Special Education Needs. These students may attend Resource during these periods on their timetable.

III. Team Teaching

If possible a collaborative team teaching approach to learning support may take place.

IV Whole School Approach

The school is committed to a policy of inclusion and every year SEN information is shared with staff, formally through presentations, meetings and information on staff common, and informally liaising with staff. This is essential for teaching and learning.

5. Identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs

The procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs include the following:

I. Information from parents/guardians

Parents/guardians have an obligation, on enrolment, to make known to the school authorities details of any previously diagnosed disability or special educational need and to make available to the school reports of examinations or assessment tests which have been previously carried out.

II. Liaison with the Primary School/other Second Level school

Parents/guardians are required to sanction the release of any relevant information from the Primary School on transfer.

Members of the SEN department visit the 'feeder' Primary schools to discuss the learning needs of incoming students with S.E.N. The purpose of these visits is to acquire a thorough knowledge of these incoming students. There will be ongoing interaction with these schools, where needed.

Students transferring from another second level school are required to sanction the release of any relevant information to this school on transfer.

III. Initial testing

Enrolling students are required to take an initial assessment (CAT) for the purpose of profiling students. This group test will be supplemented, where necessary, by individual testing following entry in the autumn. These tests will inform possible candidates for Learning Support.

IV. Staff referrals

These are an important means of identification. The professional judgement of staff members working on a daily basis with students is an essential method of identification. Additionally, information from assessments given by the guidance counsellor assists in identifying students.

V. Consultation with appropriate support agencies

Relevant information may be available from other sources that will assist the school in identifying learning needs and making appropriate provision.

6. Involvement of Parents

The school regards the partnership with parents as paramount and is always open and responsive to expressions of concern made by parents.

Parents are invited to attend meetings concerning their son's progress.

The subject teacher, form tutor, year head, career guidance teacher, Special Education Teacher and management are available by appointment to meet with

parents regarding any area of concerns they may have regarding their sons. They are encouraged to discuss any issues with the school at the earliest opportunity.

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the Education Act for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 to:

- Inform parents of their child's additional needs and how they are being met.
- Consult with parents in regard to the making of all decisions of a significant nature concerning their child's education and invite them to participate in such decisions.

The Special Needs Department communicate with the parents of students with special educational needs as necessary. This contact can take the form of a meeting, telephone call, email or text.

A professional relationship and trust is built up between the S.E.N. department, S.E.N. students and parents.

Students receive school reports in the school year, following examinations. There is one parent-teacher meeting each year where parents have the opportunity to meet with all teachers. The Special Needs Teachers may be available at this time, or have an alternative arrangement with parents/guardians. SEN Teachers are also in attendance at the open evening in September.

7. Involvement of Students

- The School believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.
- The SEN department fully involves students in discussions concerning their disability. Students in the Senior Cycle are particularly encouraged to adopt a proactive and independent approach to their studies.

8. The Individualised Education Plan (IEP)/ Student Support File

The IEP/SSF consists of:

- Priority learning needs
- Relevant information concerning student's SEN
- Appropriate teaching approaches and interventions
- Short/medium term learning goals
- Curricular needs
- Other relevant information

All decisions regarding a student's plan may be discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers, resource teacher and student.

9. Assessment and Evaluation of Students

Students are assessed on an ongoing basis formally and informally.

Formal Assessment

- Prior to entry, first year students sit an entrance assessment.
- Students may sit the Neale Analysis, Schonell Graded Spelling Test (Aston Index), Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 4) at the discretion of the SEN department.
- Students sit in-house exams in December and May.
- 2nd Year students will sit standardized tests as per DS guidelines.
- Students sit Differential Aptitude Tests (DAT) in Transition Year
- Other professionals working with the school may formally assess students with S.E.N.

Informal Assessment

- End of unit/chapter tests
- In class questioning
- Assessing homework/project work
- The literacy and numeracy skills of students with SEN may be assessed.

10. Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examinations (RACE) guidelines are sent to schools each year by the Department of Education. Students who may meet the criteria for RACE will be tested by the SEN department. If they are found to meet the criteria, an application will be made to the State Examinations Commission. Students who meet the criteria of the State Examinations Commission will be accommodated by the school for State Exams as necessary.

Students provided with reasonable accommodation for the Junior Certificate, are guaranteed reasonable accommodation at Leaving Certificate.

Communication, involvement and dissemination

The S.E.N. working group worked together to review this policy. A process of collaboration followed involving the policy co-ordinator, school management, staff, students' council, and the parents' council.

Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our school policies. Specifically important to this policy is:

- Update/change to legislation affecting S.E.N.
- Department of Education and Skills circulars and guidelines
- Student feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental/Guardian feedback

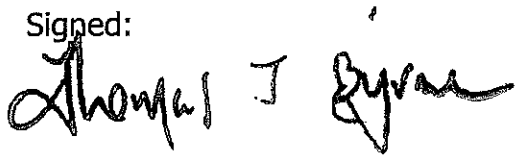
Review and Development

We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, an examination of this policy will take place to reflect our evaluation practices, to ensure legal compliance, and to support the maintenance of best practice.

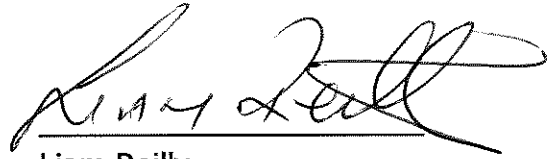
Ratification History

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13th May 2026

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas J Byrne', written over a horizontal line.

Thomas J Byrne
Chairperson of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam Reilly', written over a horizontal line.

Liam Reilly
Principal

APPENDIX

Links with Outside Agencies and Services

The school works with a significant number of outside agencies. These include:

Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

National Education Psychology Service (NEPS)

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

State Examination Commission (SEC)

Special Educational Needs Office (SENO)

Education and Welfare Office

HSE Social Worker team

LCA Support Service

LCVP Support Service

Visiting Teacher Service

Lucena Services to include:

Clinical Psychologists

Occupational Therapists

Speech & Language Therapists

Special Educational teacher

Registrars – psychiatric

Youth Liaison Workers

Nursing Managers

Consultant Paediatric Psychiatrist

HSE to include:

Psychologists

Psychiatrists

Consultant paediatricians

Foster care

Occupational Therapists

Physiotherapists

Speech & Language Therapists

College & University Student Support Services

Aspire (Aspergers support)

Association for Higher Education Access and Disability

National Council for the Blind of Ireland

National Council for the Deaf

National Braille Production Service

Irish Learning Support Teachers Association

Irish Association of Special Education Teachers

The Dyspraxia Association

Dyslexia Association of Ireland

This list is not exhaustive and the school will further develop links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate.