



St. Anne's Community College Special/ Additional Educational Needs Policy 2025

St. Anne's Community College's Mission Statement

St. Anne's Community College provides an inclusive post-primary education for students from the local and wider communities by fostering an atmosphere where students of diverse ability and backgrounds can flourish. Personal and academic development are central to our holistic approach which encompasses physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. We strive towards developing a school leaver who is respected as an individual and educated to reach their full potential. At St Anne's, we believe in inspiring minds, nurturing spirit and respecting difference.

St. Anne's Community College's Dignity Charter

In St Anne's, all members of the school community are valued for their individuality, self-worth, professional experience, knowledge, and expertise whether inside or outside the classroom. As a staff we strive to promote the values of respect, honesty, tolerance, empathy and inclusivity. All stakeholders of the school community have a responsibility and a part to play in adopting a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, bullying, harassment and violence or any behaviour that does not align with our respectful school culture. We are committed to creating and maintaining a positive working environment where the right of each individual to dignity at work is recognised and protected. By working together in a positive manner, showing respect and courtesy to our colleagues we understand the need to promote dignity for all.

To whom the policy applies: -

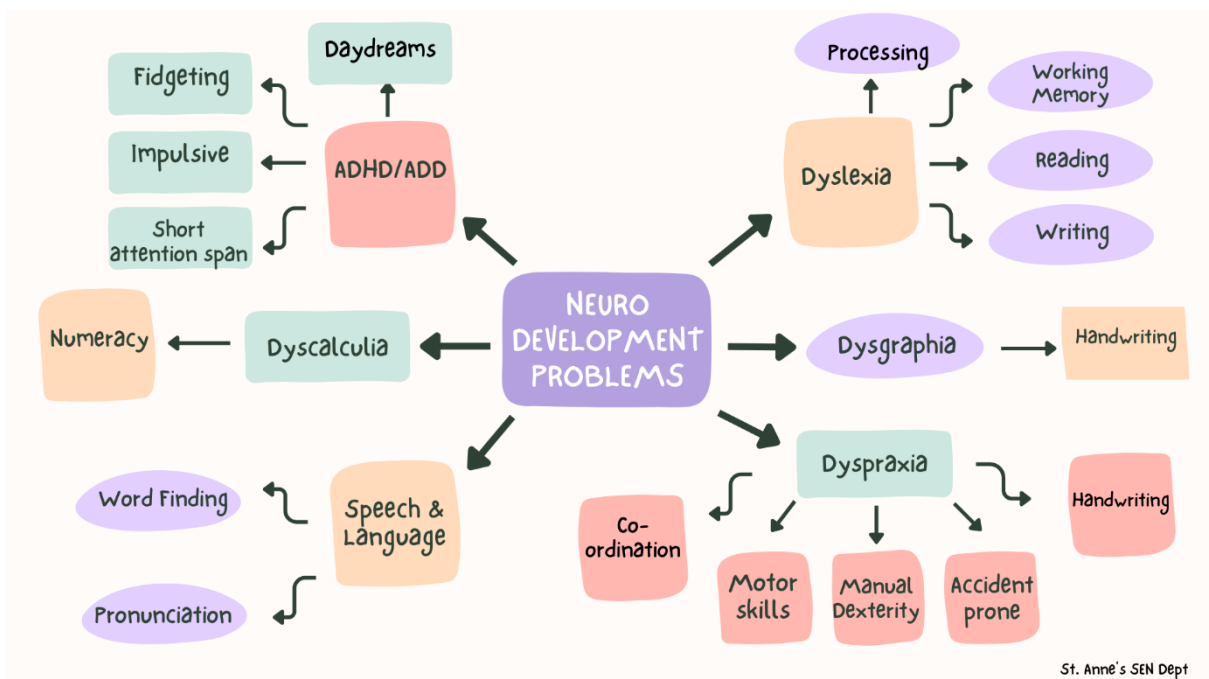
The policy applies to students enrolled in St. Anne's Community College, Killaloe who have Additional/Special Educational Needs. "Special education needs mean a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate and benefit from education on account of enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition" (Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act, 2004).

A general learning need affects most aspects of a child's development including learning, language and activities of daily living. A general learning need can be at a mild, moderate or severe/profound level. Children with general learning need find it more difficult to learn than other children but can continue to learn throughout their lives. A specific learning disability affects one particular aspect of learning e.g. reading, writing, mathematics, motor development (NCSE, 2019).



A special educational need can arise from a child's need, such as: • physical • sensory (blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hard of hearing) • mental health • learning disability or from another condition that results in a child learning differently from a child without that condition. Children with special educational needs and require additional support in school to assist them to achieve their own individual potential. There are also children with needs who may not have any special educational needs that require additional supports in school. Children with special educational needs are children first and have much in common with other children of the same age. There are many aspects to a child's development that make up the whole child, including – personality, the ability to communicate (verbal and non-verbal), resilience and strength, the ability to appreciate and enjoy life, the desire to learn to his/her potential ability. Children have individual strengths, personalities and experiences so particular disabilities will impact differently on them. A child's special educational need does not define the whole child (NCSE, 2019) .

This policy also refers to students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL students).



Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to have clear structures in place so that we can endeavour to meet the needs of students with Additional/Special Educational Needs in our school.

This policy has been informed by: -

- Circular 0080/2024 New measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision.
- Circular 0064/2024 The operation/ application and deployment of Special Education Teaching hours.



St Anne's Community College is committed to providing an inclusive education for students.

"Inclusive education means that the system adjusts to meet students' needs, rather than expecting students to 'fit' into the system. Most students with special educational needs in Ireland are educated in mainstream schools" (NCSE, 2019). Inclusive education means helping every student to achieve the most from school and encouraging each student to take a meaningful part in the everyday activity of the school. Inclusive education is not just about the school or class a student attends. It is also about what goes on in that school or class. The key message in the EPSEN Act 2004 is that students with special educational needs should be educated, wherever possible, in an inclusive environment with students who do not have special educational needs (NCSE, 2014).

Continuum of Support and how it works

- The Continuum of Support framework is designed to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. (NCSE website, 2024). Students with the greatest levels of need are given the greatest level of support.

Assistive Technology

- Applications to NCSE for Assistive Technology are made via the school SENCO. A recent assessment from a relevant professional detailing the need, the nature and the extent of the student's needs and the equipment most appropriate to their needs must accompany the application. The school then sends the application to the local SENCO.
- The SENCO processes the application to determine if it meets Department of Education criteria for this scheme. The SENCO then sends the form to the Department of Education.
- The Department approves applications for assistive technology and notifies the school of the outcome (NCSE website, 2024).

School Transport

- Application for transport is made through the school. The school sends the application to the local SENCO for processing. The SENCO processes the application to determine if it meets Department of Education criteria for this scheme. The SENCO then sends the form to the Department of Education.
- The Department of Education approves applications for school transport and Bus Eireann assesses the options available (NCSE website, 2024).



Escort Provision

- As part of the transport application, the SENO may recommend an escort to accompany a student, if the student's care and safety needs require that support (NCSE website, 2024).

Roles in the school regarding Additional / Special Educational Needs.

Subject teachers

- "Subject teachers make a critical contribution to the creation of a supportive and caring environment in the school for young people with special educational needs, through which these young people are affirmed in their learning and participation in the life of the school. Within the framework of a whole-school approach to inclusion, subject teachers have primary responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment, for all young people within their class groups, including those with special education needs" (Circular 0080/2024).
- All teachers are made aware of students with SEN/AEN at staff meetings and information available to them on teams.
- Subject teachers differentiate teaching and assessment to meet the needs of students.
- Subject teachers link with Special Education Teachers for the best outcomes for students with learning needs.
- The class teacher may identify a student who may be at risk and may draw the attention of other staff members to the student. A teacher may become concerned at a student's lack of progress and may make accommodations for the student within their class. If concerns continue the teacher should consult SENCO, Head of Year, Management or SET/resource teacher.

SENCO

The SENCO in the school is a teacher in the school who oversees the implementation of this policy under the direction and support of the Principal. It is an administrative role. The SENCO:

- Develops the school provision plan for students with special educational needs, advising class teachers about differentiating the curriculum to suit different students.
- Oversees the development of student support files/plans for students enrolled in mainstream with learning needs.
- Meets with and advises parents as needed.
- Monitor and track students with A.E.N.
- Liaise with external agencies and support services as appropriate including: National Education Psychological Service (NEPS); National Council for Special Education (NCSE), State Examinations Commission (SEC), Psychologists, Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists; Dyslexia, Dyspraxia Associations; National Council for the Deaf, Visiting Teacher Services.
- To liaise with feeder schools, teachers and parents of incoming students.



- To coordinate provision for students with A.E.N, e.g. withdrawal of students for individual/group instruction, in class support etc.
- Monitor and evaluate A.E.N. interventions/strategies.
- To support the identification of Irish and 3rd language exemptions
- To coordinate the application for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are met and as out school grows.

Heads of Year

- The Heads of Year work with the Additional Educational Needs team and other staff in the implementation and the review of this policy.
- Heads of Year are members of the school's Student Support Team. The Student Support Team comprises of Heads of Year, The Additional Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO), the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Class Co-Ordinator, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Principal and Deputy Principal. Each Head of Year attends one meeting weekly.
- Heads of Year take referrals from teachers and other staff. Heads of Year can bring to the attention of the Student Support Team students in their year group who may be struggling with academic work, organisational skills or behavioural issues. Together with the Student Support Team, interventions are enacted as necessary.
- Heads of year develop and review Behaviour Support Plans for students with an identified need in this area.

Role of the Guidance Counsellor/s in AEN

- A guidance Counsellor attends all three Student Support Team meetings weekly. The guidance Counsellors work with this team identifying and supporting students with AEN.
- The guidance Counsellors work with the Additional Educational Needs team and other staff in the implementation and review of this policy.
- Guidance Counsellors provide a broad range of services to all students including personal, social, emotional and behavioural support. They provide study skills and exam techniques to students, in addition to subject choice, career advice and information to students and parents alike. The guidance counsellors also provide additional supports to students with AENs as identified.
- Guidance Counsellors support students who are referred on by either staff or self-referrals. Guidance Counsellors update the Student Support Team and other staff on students who they are supporting as necessary. They also assist with the administration of testing e.g. CAT4, WRAT4, WIAT etc. They provide bespoke advice to students with AEN regarding their third level options. They also help students to access supports such as RACE and DARE.



Chaplain

- The Chaplain works with the Additional Educational Needs team and other staff in the implementation and the review of this policy.
- The chaplain meets with all first-year students during the first term and identifies any students struggling socially, emotionally, academically, with organisation skills or any other area. The Chaplain attends all Student Support Team meetings. Students are discussed at Student Support Team meetings and interventions enacted as needed.

Principal

- Under current legislation, the Principal oversees the development and implementation of this policy and has overall responsibility for ensuring the special/additional educational needs of all students are met.
- The principal has general responsibility for establishing and promoting a whole-school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students including those with special/additional educational needs.
- The Principal is a Member of Student Support Team (SST) and attends all three meetings weekly.
- The Principal works with the SST to identify and support students with AEN.
- To keep teachers informed of new developments relation to SEN/LS and to provide staff with training and development in areas relation to special educational needs.
- To respond to appeals by parents with respect to decisions made at this level.

Deputy Principal

- The Deputy Principal is a Member of Student Support Team and attends all three meetings weekly.
- The Deputy Principal works with this team to identify and support students with AEN.
- The Deputy Principal meets with the Special Class Co-ordinator weekly to support the running of the school's special classes.
- The Deputy Principal oversees Heads of Year with the development of behaviour support plans for students for whom this is a need.

SET teachers role

- Special education teachers provide additional teaching to students with learning needs in several different ways including:
 - Assessing the students' needs and progress.
 - Setting specific, time-related targets for students with SEN/AEN both with the main classroom teacher and independently. They work with Subject teachers to support students with learning needs.
 - Teaching students on a one-to-one basis, in small groups or with the rest of the student's class (Team teaching).



- Advising Subject teachers about differentiating the curriculum to suit different students.
- Meeting with and advising parents as needed.

St Anne's Community College endeavours to continue develop a core team of SET teachers to meet the needs of those with additional learning needs in our school.

Special Class Co-ordinator/s

- Special Class Co-ordinator/s oversee the running of the school's special class/es under the direction and support of the school Senior Management team.
- This is an administrative and management role.
- They oversee the development, implementation and review of student support plans for students with a place in the school's special class/es.
- They link with both staff and parents with regards to the students enrolled in special classes.

Special Needs Assistants

- Special Needs assistants provide for the care needs of our students. They provide for needs such as feeding, toileting, mobility, medical, communication and behavioural for learning.

Meeting Structures timetabled in the school to support SEN/AEN

- Weekly meeting between Deputy Principal and Special Class Co-Ordinator.
- Weekly meeting between Deputy Principal, Special Class Co-ordinator and main ASD class teacher/s.
- Weekly meeting between the Principal and SENCO.
- Three Student Support team meetings weekly attended by two Heads of Year (Six heads of year - each HOY attends one meeting), A guidance Counsellor (Two guidance counsellors - one is represented at each meeting), The ASD Class Co-coordinator attends one meeting each week. The SENCO attends all three meetings. The Principal and Deputy Principal attend all three meetings.
- The Guidance Counsellors meet with the Principal and Deputy Principal weekly.
- The Heads of Year meet with all students in their year group at assembly each morning.



How we identify students with SEN/AEN

Before students start in August/September, we identify students with AEN in a number of ways:

- Parents and students provide information to the school if they have an AEN or may need support in some areas when they are in Primary school.
- We also link with Primary Schools while students are in 6th class, through visits to main feeder primary schools.
- Students' Passports provided by Primary Schools are informative.
- Information from the form students complete when they accept a place in the school.
- Observations at information evening and during assessment tests in the term leading up to the summer of sixth class.
- When students start school, AEN are identified by observations by both teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
- Students usually complete the CAT4 assessment before they start at the school or during the first term. This identifies a student's strengths and challenges in four main areas.
- Teachers may identify an AEN through their teaching, class and term assessments and ask the SENCO for advice on how they can best support the student.
- Maths competency tests are usually completed by first years. There is one before Halloween mid-term and another before the Easter holidays. These tests can help maths teachers identify a student's needs.
- Maths competency tests are usually also completed by 5th years in the first term to identify their needs at both levels.
- PPAD-E is administered with English teachers of first-year students before Christmas. This will give an additional layer of information to all staff on the reading, spelling and comprehension abilities of our students.

How we support students with AEN with the transition to Post-Primary School

- We endeavour to identify students with AEN before they start secondary school - while they are in sixth class. We facilitate students with AEN who would like to visit the school before the summer or who would like to visit the school before all students come back.
- First years are the only students at St. Anne's on the first day of term. This helps all students including those with AEN with the transition to secondary school.
- Students complete a booklet over the first few weeks during one or two classes per week which helps with the transition to secondary school.
- A photo is taken of all students individually on the first day of school. It is uploaded to VS ware so that teachers can become familiar with students and can identify them easily.



- A group photo is also taken on the first day to create a positive atmosphere.
- Each class group are assigned student mentors. The mentors are older students who are positive role models for the students. These students support all first-year students including those with AEN.

Types of provision

- Provision for AEN is provided in many ways at St. Anne's Community College. All students with special educational needs in mainstream schools are taught primarily by the subject teacher. The fact that a child has special educational needs does not automatically mean that a school needs additional resources to provide an inclusive and appropriate education (NCSE, 2015). All teachers are made aware of students with AEN and the need for a multi- sensory classroom and differentiation in lessons. For example, some students with learning or special educational needs may need additional teaching and/or other supports. The DES provides additional teaching support to the school for these students to build upon, and complement, the education delivered by the class teacher.
- Since September 2017, students do not need to have a formal diagnosis of disability to avail of additional teaching supports in schools. Using the NEPS Continuum of Support model, the school identifies students who have additional learning needs and assign appropriate support to them within school resources.

Types of provision outside of main classroom teacher's support:

1. Team teaching

Team teaching is where the special education teacher goes into a class with the class.

2. SNA Support

Support for care needs e.g. Feeding, Toileting, Medical, Mobility, Communication, Behaviour for learning.

3. Breaks

Students who are identified as requiring regulation breaks from the classroom are given scheduled breaks for this purpose.

4. Small groups

Students with AEN receive support in small groups. Examples may be support for Maths, English, another subject or in areas such as study skills, communication skills or social skills. The support provided is dependent on the needs of the students and resources available.

5. One-to-one Support

Students with AEN may receive one-to-one support from a teacher. This is when the highest level of need is identified.



6. St Anne's Community College has two Special classes for students with autism spectrum disorder.

- Students who wish to apply for a place in the school's special class are advised to contact the local SENO employed by the NCSE as early as possible. They are advised to also apply to the school.
- Places in the classes are advertised yearly as part of the school's annual admissions notice.
- Students must meet the NCSE criteria for enrolment in the school's special class.
- Please see the school admissions policy for details of admissions processes and procedures.
- As our enrolment deadline is January 2026, it is important to apply to mainstream along with applying for a place in the school special class before the school's deadline as advertised in the school annual admissions notice.

Please see below quotations from the 0080/2024 Circular with regard to parents applying for a place in a special class:

"Advises parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child or young person in a special class or special school: that they should notify the NCSE by 1 February and engage with them on the range of options which are available to meet the needs of their child or young person and that parents/guardians should obtain a letter from the NCSE to submit with their admission application for a special class or special school confirming that the child meets the requirements for enrolment to that setting".

"This process will enable the NCSE to check and verify that the recommendations and reports for each individual child or young person meet the specified eligibility criteria for the category or categories of special educational needs catered for by the special class or special school. Parents/guardians engaging with this process will be provided with written confirmation from the NCSE confirming the outcome of the NCSE's review of the supporting evidence provided which they can then give to the school/s as part of their application for enrolment in a special class or special school". (Circular 0080/2024)New measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision.

How records are kept by SETs and teachers in the Special Classes

- Records are kept on teams under a password protected log in, with two-step authentications. There is a common template used by all SET teachers and ASD teachers and the information is stored on Teams. If more than one teacher is working with the same small group, they share one document.



How information in relation to AEN is communicated to classroom teachers

- Information is only shared as needed. Teachers are updated at staff meetings, and information is available on teams about students with AEN. Some limited information is also available on VS ware.

RACE and DARE

- A list of potential candidates for Reasonable Accommodations, RACE, is compiled and testing takes place. The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second-level education.

Assistive Technology

- The NCSE application form for this is filled in by the AENCO in conjunction with the student's parents and then sent to the SENO for approval and then onto the Department of Education for sanction. Students need a report from an Occupational Therapist recommending assistive technology.

Irish Exemptions:

- The Principal with the SENCO process Irish exemptions in accordance with Circular 0055/22.
- A written application for an exemption is made by the parent or guardian to the school principal on behalf of their child.
- The application should state the reasons why the exemption is being sought. A child will only be considered for an exemption if their educational or otherwise circumstances are included in the details listed in the circular 0055/22.

Abbreviations used in the policy

- NCSE - National Council for Special Education
- SENO - Special Educational Needs Organiser (Employed by the NCSE)
- SENCO/AENCO Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (Employed by the school)
- NEPS - The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provide psychology supports to schools.
- HOY - Head of Year – Teacher with responsibility for the year group
- SST - Student Support Team- This is a team made up of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of Year, SENCO, ASD Class Co-ordinator, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors.
- RACE – Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations
- DARE – Disability Route Access to Education
- HEAR – Higher Education Access Route
- SEC - State Examinations Commission
- ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder
- EAL – English as an Additional Language



- SSF – “The Student Support File provides a process for recording and collating all information in relation to the child or young person, in order to plan interventions aligned to their identified strengths, interests and needs, and to facilitate the documentation of the young person’s response to intervention”. (Circular 0064-2024)
- SSP- “The Student Support Plan is an individualized learning plan which documents the child or young person’s strengths, interests and needs, as well as the priority learning needs that have been agreed as the basis for targets and interventions”(Circular 0064-24)
- BSP – A Behaviour Support Plan is drawn up when behaviours of concern are identified and lower-level interventions have not been successful in alleviating the concerns.

Chairperson of the Board

Secretary of the Board

- Date: 25th February 2025