



FIRHOUSE
EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Continuum of Support Policy (Additional Educational Needs Policy)

Firhouse ETSS offers the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and, justice and equality for all. In our school, every student will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each student to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement

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Policy and Patron Context

This policy is reflective of the vision for Educate Together Second-level Schools as promoted in:

- *A Blueprint for an Educate Together Second-level School*
- *Educate Together Second Level Charter*
- *The Ethical Curriculum Framework.*

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- *Admission Policy*
- *Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Policy*
- *Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)*
- *One-to-one Teaching and Wellbeing Support Policy*
- *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*
- *Student Support Assistant Policy.*

Statement on Language

The school is seeking to provide clarity for the school community on language used in support of all.

There is no universally agreed consensus on what terminology to use in relation to disability and there is currently no consensus regarding an alternative to the word ‘special’ in an education context. (...) such language can be patronising and have the effect of ‘othering’ this particular group of students. As noted by the National Disability Authority in their recent advice paper on Disability Language and Terminology (NDA, 2022), some people use the term ‘additional educational needs’ to replace special educational needs which is not fully satisfactory from an inclusive education perspective as all children and students have individualised needs and no one’s needs are additional. However, as the term Special Educational Needs is used at present in Irish legislation, its use is unavoidable (...).

(Adapted from Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations. Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students. Department of Education, 2024, p. 6).

The school is adopting this thinking in relation to language to support awareness and to provide clarity for the school community.

Introduction

In Firhouse ETSS, we recognise each student as a unique individual with a variety of talents and interests. Students have individual needs, they are facilitated and supported to contribute to our school community in many ways as is reflected in our school motto – *Be Your Best Self*. We endeavour to meet students’ physical, intellectual, social, emotional, relational, behavioural and care needs through our student-centred programmes. It is our

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aspiration that if a child is identified as needing support, they will receive the assistance they require to enable them to reach their full potential.

The aim of this policy is to enable students who require support for their learning to enjoy equal access to the curriculum.

Aims of the Continuum of Support Policy

The aims of this policy are guided by the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004), the Equal Status Acts (2000; 2004), Circular 0014/2017 (new model of allocation), Circular 008/2019, and the *Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classrooms (2024)*.

The aims of the Continuum of Support Team (CoS Team) in Firhouse ETSS include encouraging, supporting and enabling students with diagnosed special educational needs and/or support needs to reach their full potential in a safe, caring and supportive environment through communication and co-operation with all of the supporting partners.

Firhouse ETSS aims to:

- acknowledge the primary responsibility of the subject teacher and to support them in meeting the support needs of students
- ensure that students are educated in an inclusive environment
- ensure that students' needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is developed and respected
- give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children who have a disability or who have other educational needs, as they relate to education
- provide a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of all students in the school
- affirm that students with support needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from, education as students who do not have those needs
- provide for the involvement of parents/guardians in the education of their children and in the decision-making process in relation to their children. Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents/guardians in order to achieve appropriate support at home
- cooperate and work closely with the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs
- ensure that all members of the staff team are aware of the individual needs of the students, as necessary. Develop staff team expertise in supporting students with identified support needs

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- ensure that support needs are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the needs of the whole school community
- ensure that the CoS Team supports the school curriculum in the areas of literacy and numeracy. As well as academic success, the personal development and social skills of every student with support needs are in focus for the team
- ensure that the CoS Team cooperates and works closely with the relevant partners and support agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs
- provide programmes that meet the individual needs of the student. Such programmes may include Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs), short courses, social skills, literacy and numeracy support
- ensure the effective and efficient use of resources
- ensure that, where possible, key personnel within the CoS Team are suitably qualified and engaging in ongoing professional learning.

The aims of this policy are to:

- assist in the transition of students with support needs from primary school to secondary school
- create a vision for supporting students with special educational needs
- give parents/guardians an understanding of how the school supports students with identified needs and encourage supportive involvement in their child's progress
- support the staff team by providing information on needs as per the Continuum of Support to ensure the inclusion of all students and details of further learning opportunities
- provide support for students in state examinations and in the transition to further study or to the world of work e.g., Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE) applications.

Supporting Partners

A multi-faceted approach is essential to effectively support every student in a holistic manner. The recognised partners in the education of a student with support needs include:

- the student
 - the parents/guardians
 - the principal
 - the Board of Management
 - the Continuum of Support Team
 - the Student Support Assistants (special needs assistants)
 - the teachers
 - the tutors
 - the progress leaders
 - the guidance counselling department
 - National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- and*

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- any other external agencies that work with the student to assist in their overall development.

The oversight of the education of the children with support needs in Firhouse ETSS rests with the Board of Management. The Board of Management, and the principal acting on its behalf, will monitor the implementation of the Continuum of Support Policy on an ongoing basis to ensure effective practice, to promote a whole-school approach to special educational provision and to appoint the appropriate staff team members to coordinate the provision.

Admission of students with SEN (Refer to Admission Policy)

The Board of Management of Firhouse ETSS endeavours to meet the educational needs of all students within the parameters of a mainstream setting. The school uses the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Youth, to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students. Parents/guardians seeking such resources, such as SSA support, assistive technology are advised to provide written documentation e.g., professional reports to the school by February of the year of entry. A meeting is arranged to discuss their child's individual needs to support any applications to be made.

In making provision for students with support needs, the following information is required. Has the student had access to any of the following resources to date?

1. Student Support Assistants (special needs assistants)
2. Special class / outreach class / special school
3. Help for specific needs from any special education teacher or school equivalent
4. Assistance with relationships, behaviour management and regulation, in a mainstream or special setting
5. Professional assessments and reports (report should be forwarded to the school and ideally should be a maximum of 2 years old)
6. Any additional resources to help with the identification of special educational needs
7. Help in areas including visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or social and emotional challenges
8. Any resource in relation to travel or mobility
9. Assistive technology information (e.g., laptop, monitor)

Please note:

1. All students with special educational needs who accept a place in Firhouse ETSS become part of the school community and are treated equally under our *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*.
2. Access to the student records and student support files to include Student Support Plans (SSPs) and/or Personal Pupil Plan (PPPs), and/or Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), from

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primary or other schools, is essential to cater for the support needs of students. This information must be provided, within the timeline stipulated, when a place is accepted in Firhouse ETSS in order that the school can apply to the NCSE (with due respect for such deadlines) for the resources needed to support students with special educational needs.

3. Parental/guardian permission is sought for access to any relevant medical or psychological reports. In the absence of such reports, the school may make a recommendation for an assessment, or similar, as necessary.

4. Firhouse ETSS, in cooperation with the NCSE Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), NEPS and/or other relevant authorities, will inform the Department of Education and Youth of resources, equipment or personnel required to cater for the special educational needs of the student.

5. Subject to the provision and availability of the necessary resources, the principal and/or relevant teacher will, as soon as possible, arrange to meet with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the student's needs and the school's capacity to meet those needs.

Continuum of Support Team

In Firhouse ETSS, we believe that learning takes place most effectively in the context of a caring relationship and that positive teacher/SSA/student relationships foster trust and promote self-reliance and initiative in the student. All planning for teaching and learning is informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles ensuring that learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment that fosters belonging for all. The students and the staff team interact in a manner that demonstrates our RESPECT values.

Ultimate responsibility for the education of children with support needs in Firhouse ETSS rests with the Board of Management.

The Board of Management, with the principal acting on its behalf, endeavours to:

- work with the Continuum of Support Team (CoS) Team and all members of the staff team to monitor the implementation of special educational provision on an on-going basis to ensure effective practice
- promote a whole-school approach to special educational provision and student support
- appoint the necessary personnel as supported by the SET allocation of the school
- sanction exemption from Irish, as required, in accordance with relevant circulars
- have oversight of the RACE process
- ensure adequate timetabling of hours for SEN provision
- facilitate meetings and ongoing professional learning for the CoS Team and the wider staff team.

The Role of the Continuum of Support Team

The CoS team:

- develops student support files and plans as necessary for students with support needs in line with NEPS' *Special Educational Needs A Continuum of Support*
- shares/seek advice with/from staff team members on helpful teaching methods and resources in their respective areas
- liaises with external agencies as appropriate and in consultation with senior leadership
- ensures the support of students with needs by coordinating and sharing administration duties. These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priorities of the CoS Team are addressed.

The Role of the Continuum of Support Coordinator

The Continuum of Support (CoS) Coordinator has overall responsibility for the management of daily operations of the CoS Team and liaises regularly with the principal, deputy principal and special education teachers. The CoS Coordinator works collaboratively with the CoS Team, ensuring the following duties are undertaken:

- designing SET Timetables
- leading the development of plans for SEN learning and teaching
- liaising with the staff team to ensure that resources required are available and updated as necessary
- undertaking Exceptional Review (SSA/SET) applications with NCSE
- completing RACE applications
- completing assistive technology applications
- carrying out CAT4 testing
- applying for school transport for students
- organising testing and paperwork relevant to applications for Irish exemptions
- liaising with parents/guardians, staff team, students, professional bodies and medical professionals
- coordinating the regular review of the *Continuum of Support Policy*
- liaising with new team members and student teachers
- attending Student Support Team meetings
- evaluating CoS (AEN) referrals
- ensuring the staff team is aware of relevant professional learning
- facilitating and creating professional learning experiences for whole school development
- preparing for and attendance at SENO Review Meetings
- supporting induction of incoming 1st Year students
- assigning role-specific and student-specific tasks to the SSA
- coordinating and supporting the work of the SSA Team

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- collaborating with the SSA team in creating and reviewing timetables, as necessary
- monitoring the effectiveness of the supports provided to students
- promoting positive relationships amongst all SSA team members and the wider team
- coordinating meetings with SSAs, including the sharing of practice and professional learning
- updating the Student Support Plan (SSP) for students with additional educational needs (AEN)
- consulting with SSAs and team members on Student Support Plans
- ensuring that all SSA team members are aware of the individual needs of the students as necessary and that SSA team members are provided with opportunities to develop expertise in supporting students with additional educational needs.

Autism Class Coordinators

The following duties are undertaken by the Autism Class Coordinators:

- facilitating the student's admission process into the Autism Class
- meeting with parents of prospective students
- visiting feeder primary schools and ensuring all relevant materials and information are supplied by the schools
- arranging school visits for incoming students
- involving parents/guardians in the education planning process (e.g., Student Support Plan, target setting, home/school communication, phone calls and meetings, as necessary)
- applications for assistive technology, where a recommendation has been made
- applications for school transport for students
- completion of testing and paperwork for Irish exemptions for students in the Autism Class
- working collaboratively with the deputy principal to organise the timetables of students within the Autism Class
- working with mainstream class teachers to identify suitable opportunities for integration
- identification and implementation of accommodations that the student may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom
- liaising with parents/guardians, staff team, Student Support Team, students, professional bodies and medical professionals
- maintaining records of students who are in the Autism Class and records of the support they are receiving
- completion of RACE applications
- assisting the Career Guidance Counsellor when completing Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) for students from the Autism Class
- ensuring information on the students in the Autism Class is regularly updated on Office 365 and that this information is available to the team.

Special Education Teachers (SET)

Special education teachers will be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to support the variety of needs. Depending on the learning needs identified, a student with support needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

SET teachers engage in a range of teaching approaches to include:

- co-teaching
- individual support (as required)
- small group support (as required)
- Nurture.

Students with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Appropriate interventions are identified based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary.

(Adapted from Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream. Department of Education and Youth, 2024, p. 27)

Student Support Assistants (SSAs) (Special Needs Assistants (SNAs))

Dependent on the allocation of Special Needs Assistants granted by the Department of Education and Youth, a team of SSAs caters for the care and support needs of students in a non-teaching capacity and under the direction of the teacher. They provide assistance as required and duties vary depending on the needs of the students (as per circular 0030/2014).

SSAs contribute to the development and review of Student Support Plans. SSAs review practices informally throughout the academic year, in collaboration with students and the Student Support Coordinator/Autism Class Coordinator.

The Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor has an important role in supporting students, providing emotional support and mentoring to individual students who are experiencing emotional, organisational, motivational and self-management issues. The level of support regarding vocational and educational choices will often be more complex for students with support needs.

To ensure effective communication and coordination of the Continuum of Support Policy, the Cos team meets regularly. These meetings support:

- effective communication and sharing of information in relation to students

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- effective planning, resource sharing and professional learning experiences to support the needs of our students
- policy development and review.

The role of class teachers

Class teachers play a central role in the successful inclusion of students with support needs in mainstream classes. All teachers plan for teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that the knowledge, understanding and skills of all students are developed. In Firhouse ETSS all planning for teaching and learning is informed by UDL principles to ensure equality of access for all students. All teachers must make themselves aware of the support needs of students and this information is made available to the staff team through the database set up for students with SEN from the beginning of the school year. A summary of needs is also available on VShare under the tab 'AEN' for individual student profiles and is updated as necessary.

All teachers are to:

- be aware of the school's policy and procedures for working with students with support needs
- access guidance from the CoS Team regarding students with support needs
- engage in relevant professional learning where possible to meet the needs of their students
- plan with the SSA in consultation with the Student Support Coordinator, as to how to maximise support for the student where a student has SSA support
- support and encourage independence and resilience in students
- provide L2LP curricular support, where relevant
- embed UDL principles in planning for teaching and learning.

The role of students

Students have a critical role to play in the development of and reflection on their own learning. The committed participation of a student means that they can become:

- part of the development of their learner profile and their priority learning targets
- more aware of different teaching and learning strategies
- more independent as learners and enabled towards taking responsibility for their own learning
- successful as learners with the ability to develop skills and strategies to maximise their own learning
- more aware of working cooperatively with others and of the concept of a team approach to enquiry and formulation of responses to tasks set.

The role of parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of their child. Where a student has diagnosed special educational needs and/or support needs, parents/guardians are encouraged to work closely with the school to ensure:

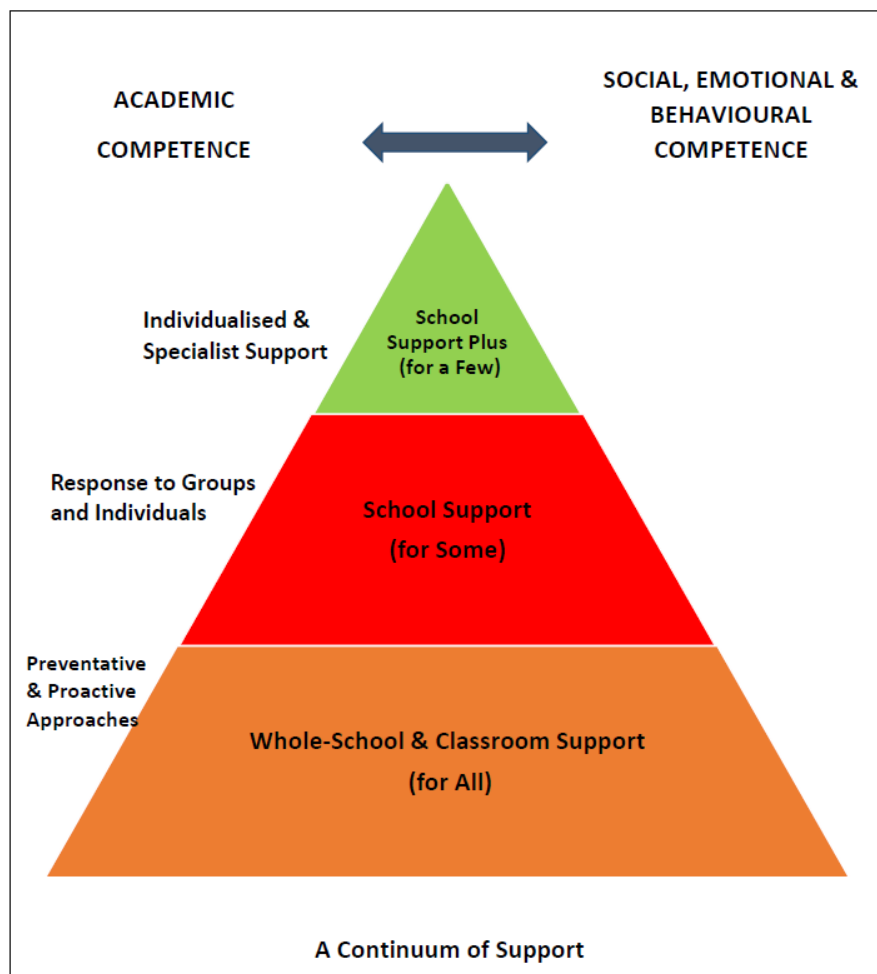
- the sharing of all relevant assessments/reports and information during the transition from primary to secondary school
- the sharing of any new information from professional assessments/reports with the Student Support Coordinator
- student engagement with educational supports, strategies and interventions
- the correct use and maintenance of aids or equipment provided to the student
- the timely return of any forms, documents or communication from the school.

Communication and Assessment

From admission, information on provision as per the Continuum of Support is provided to parents/guardians and throughout the year further details and updates are communicated to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are expected to keep the school updated with developments from their perspective and to work closely with the school to make their child's learning experience as positive as possible.

Parents/guardians may be invited to contact the school throughout the year in addition to the structured Student Progress Meetings.

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Decisions on the support offered to students are made based on several criteria. These include, and are not limited to:

- information gathered from a psychological assessment (where the student has one)
- information gathered from parents/guardians
- information gathered from primary school teacher referrals
- formal and informal school assessment
- observation by class teachers and SSAs
- communication with outside agencies
- student self-referral.

A student support file is then developed to support the student. It will be monitored and reviewed, and student progress will be recorded.

Methods of identifying students with individual needs

Diagnostic Assessment of 1st Year Students

Firhouse ETSS recognises that standardised test scores are only a partial indication of a student's ability but can be helpful when considered in conjunction with other information relating to the student. As such, we gather the standardised test scores from primary school prior to commencement of 1st Year. We also administer CAT4 testing in October/November of 1st Year. These assessments help to identify students with support needs, including the academically gifted. All test results are confidential.

Where assessment results and observations of subject teachers indicate a possible cause for concern, parents/guardians will be invited to attend a meeting with the Student Support Coordinator/CoS Team and/or the principal/deputy principal. This is to facilitate an appropriate programme of support to be developed for the student and to discuss any external assessments that may be necessary.

Students who transfer from another post-primary school

Any student with support needs who transfers from another post-primary school will do CAT4 testing and appropriate resources will be made available to them, where possible, within the resources available to the school.

Irish Exemption

Parents/guardians must apply in writing to request an Irish exemption for their child. If a student gains access to an Irish exemption at primary level, parents/guardians notify Firhouse ETSS and present the Irish exemption certificate on admission. Where provision allows, students who are exempt from Irish may be provided with small group teaching during this time in the areas of literacy, numeracy and social skills, as per the continuum of support. Students in junior cycle are prioritised for this support.

Four documents need to be consulted regarding exemptions from the study of Irish:

- Circular Letter 0055/2022
- *Guidelines for Psychologists on Assessment and Reporting* (1995)
- Circular 0014/2017
- The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015

As per Circular Letter 0055/2022:

Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in exceptional

circumstances. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal teacher, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student where he/she is the applicant, the class teacher, special education teachers, and the student.

Firstly, however, it is important to clarify that, under the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (p. 20), schools are expected to provide **all students** with the opportunity to study Gaeilge in junior cycle:

Some students may have had exemptions from studying Irish in their primary schools and may not therefore be required to study it for the purposes of assessment by the SEC. With the specification's emphasis on the oral and cultural aspects of Irish, however, it is important that junior cycle students are encouraged to study the language, which they can do along with their peers, and to see it as an opportunity to achieve a level of personal proficiency that is appropriate to their ability.

The crucial point here is that such students *may* choose not to take the final exam and the Assessment Task i.e., assessment by the SEC.

As per Circular Letter 0055/2022

Exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only:

a. *students whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of their primary education) was received outside the State and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish*

Or

b. *students who were previously enrolled as recognised students in a primary or post-primary school who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the State and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment*

Or

c. *students who:*

i.) present with significant learning difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning over time (Irish and, or, English). Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing

- regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment*
- target-setting*
- evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (word reading, reading comprehension, spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review.*

and

ii) at the time of the application for exemption present with a Standardised Score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

Schools are obliged to ensure that the provisions of Circular 0055/2022 are correctly implemented. Where a school or parent/guardian need clarification or further information on the processes and procedures concerning exempting a student from the study of Irish, they are advised to visit the Department of Education and Youth's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/services/exemption-from-the-study-of-irish/>

and/or

<https://www.gov.ie/ga/an-roinn-oideachais/seirbhisi/>

**Choosing to avail of an exemption or choosing not to undertake state exams may restrict students in their future career paths, for example, in the case of students who may decide in 6th Year that they wish to become primary teachers.*

Allocation and Provision of Support

Firhouse ETSS aspires to provide a model of responsible inclusion that best meets the needs of the individual student and class group. This may take the form of co-teaching settings and/or smaller teaching groups for particular subjects. It is supported by the SSAs where access has been provided and based on the level of need of the individual students.

As directed by the NCSE, the allocation of resources in the school will provide supports to students based on their needs as per the *Continuum of Support* (NEPS).

The CoS Team interprets the outcome of assessments and considers the most appropriate form of intervention for individual students, in consultation with all relevant partners.

If withdrawal of students with support needs from mainstream classes for additional support classes is deemed necessary, permission will be sought from parents/guardians. If deemed appropriate by the Student Support Coordinator, a student may have timetabled support classes with a specific subject teacher. Where possible, withdrawal from mainstream classes is timetabled to coincide with language exemptions. The provision of literacy, numeracy and social skills classes is rotated to ensure that students are not withdrawn from the same subject in any given year.

In summary:

- support that enables students to achieve their learning goals within the mainstream classroom is the preferred method of provision
- individual classes are only used where a student requires specialised individual support

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- small group classes are based on similar need profiles and the capacity to withdraw students at the same time. The organisation of these groupings is coordinated by the Student Support Coordinator
- withdrawal classes will take place during Irish where the student has an exemption or will be timetabled on rotation, so the student does not always miss the same subject
- small classes may be facilitated where groups of students are supported with numeracy and literacy, social skills and support with organisation
- the provision of Level 2 Learning Programmes is accessible as part of junior cycle for students who have general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.

Reasonable Accommodations (RACE)

The CoS Team liaises with the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to secure and facilitate reasonable accommodations for eligible students with SEN during State Examinations. Applications, dates and deadlines are shared with the school each year by the SEC. Parental/guardian permission is always sought at this stage.

Students who are eligible for special arrangements for the State Examinations have the benefit of same during Firhouse ETSS in-house exams e.g., 3rd Year Checkpoint Examinations, 5th Year Summer Examinations, 6th Year Mock Examinations, where it is possible for this to be achieved within the resources available.

Assistive Technology

The CoS Team will liaise with the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) and the NCSE to secure and facilitate personal equipment (such as tablets, laptops, mobile devices, notebooks, voice recognition software) for eligible students with individual needs and learning variability. Such equipment remains the property of the school, is to be used for schoolwork and must be returned to the school at the end of each academic year or upon leaving the school.

Data Protection

In accordance with The Data Protection Act (1998, amended 2003), access to information regarding any student with support needs must be protected. All information is provided to the staff team through a password-protected Teams page and via notes on VSware. VSware is a password-protected, school-based data management information system. All hard copies of confidential documents are kept in a locked filing cabinet. Any internal electronic communication regarding students with AEN is coded, to protect the privacy of all students.

Linking in with outside agencies

Firhouse ETSS fosters and maintains positive links with a significant number of outside agencies. These include:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- State Exams Commission (SEC)
- Lucena
- Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Clinical Psychologists
- Speech & Language Therapists
- Primary schools.

This list is not exhaustive, and the school will develop further links with outside agencies as the needs of the students dictate. It may be necessary to hold case conferences with relevant professional experts with the permission and knowledge, including attendance, of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the best approach and provision for that student.

Transport

Applications for transport are made through the NCSE. If successful, the students are granted individual or shared transport. The school is not responsible for the selection or supervision of drivers.

Ratify, review and evaluate the policy

The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is being adhered to and that it continues to meet the needs of the school. On-going review should be in line with any changing information or regulations and feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff team members and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation, and within the framework of school planning.

This policy was agreed by the Board of Management:

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 11/11/2025

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 11/11/2025

Appendices

Appendix 1: Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish

Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish

Post-Primary Schools

For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s) on behalf of a student (or by a student who has reached 18 years of age)

Name of Student

Date of Birth

Class

Name of School

I/We wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf

of _____

I _____ (student who has reached 18 years) wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish.

Please indicate (✓) the grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0055/2022

2.2.1(a) The student is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment or re-enrolment whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have the opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.

2.2.1(b) The student's education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish and who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

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2.2.2 The student experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum and which are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time and presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

2.2.3 The student experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs, that persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs (over not less than two years) and which are a significant barrier to the student’s participation and engagement in their learning and school life and who been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible and the Principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

2.2.4(ii) The student has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

Please provide detail of any supporting documentation being submitted to the school

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

For the purpose of this application the documentation provided will be assessed, by relevant school personnel and other professionals where necessary, to determine whether there is grounds to grant an exemption from the study of Irish. Tick the box if you wish to proceed.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For school use only

Date of receipt of application:

Principal: _____ **Date:** _____

School roll number: _____

Appendix 2 Overview of Supports

Overview of Supports	
Check and Connect	Morning check-in with tutor.
NCSE Sustained In-school Therapy Support	Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist supporting Team members in facilitating movement/regulation and whole school vocabulary enrichment.
Progress Leader	The progress leader supports the personal and academic growth of the students. They monitor students' attendance and progress and meet with relevant staff team members to ensure their year group has the best possible learning experience.
Tutor	Each tutor is a listening ear to the thoughts, feelings and needs of their students. They focus on building relationships and community and help the students to understand and live the school motto <i>Be Your Best Self</i> .
Continuum of Support Coordinator	Coordination of whole-school support with adherence to Continuum of Support Model.
Student Support Coordinators	The Student Support Coordinators work collaboratively and under the direction of the Continuum of Support Coordinator.
Autism Class Coordinators	Coordination of the work of the Autism Classes.
Autism Class Teachers	Support for the two Autism classrooms and integration of the students into mainstream. Reverse integration is also a feature of this work.
Attendance Coordinator	Providing support to students with poor attendance and supporting their families. Developing attendance plans and implementing school wide strategies to improve overall attendance rates.

Continuum of Support Policy

CoS Coordinating and Testing	This covers the coordination of the CoS department and diagnostic and profiling testing with the identified students.
English as an Additional Language (EAL) Support	Targeted support for students if English is not their first language.
Nurture Programme	Strategies to help young people develop social and emotional skills.
One Good Adult	Programme to support students who are experiencing challenges in school.
Co-teaching	Two teachers working together to facilitate the inclusion of students with additional needs in the mainstream classroom.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Lessons are designed utilising UDL principles which maximises learning for all.
Assistive Technology	Building skills to support students who use assistive technology across the school community.
Social and Emotional/Communication Programmes	This area is to build social and emotional skills and strategies for students who have needs in this area. It is a targeted approach to build capacity in students to navigate adolescence.
Student Support Assistants	Supporting students who have care needs.
Wellread Initiative	Promoting a reading culture in school.