

**St. Cuan's College,
Castleblakney
Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.**



Additional Educational Needs and Special Education Needs Policy

Ratified & Adopted by St. Cuan's College Board of Management:

Date: 15th December 2020

Signed: *Justin Harkin*

**Justin Harkin
Chairperson**

Signed: *Collette Kennedy-Walsh*
**Collette Kennedy Walsh
Principal**

Mission Statement

St. Cuan College is a Catholic Diocesan Co-Educational College.

St. Cuan's College is dedicated to the academic, social, cultural and spiritual growth of its students. In this pursuit, we are devoted to achieving the highest attainable level of education and promoting the development of young men and women of strong moral character consistent with the school's Christian tradition.

We endeavour to create a stimulating, respectful and supportive environment for staff, students and families in which all are valued and encouraged to develop and share their unique talents. St Cuan's College promotes further education beyond Leaving Certificate, inviting the local community to join us in our pursuit of personal development - mind, body and spirit.

Definitions

Additional Education Needs (AEN herein) and Special Education Needs (SEN herein)

AEN - Additional Educational Needs refers to students in the context of St. Cuan's College who for a variety of reasons may face additional barriers to education and learning. This may make it difficult for them to achieve their full potential. This is different to children with Special Educational Needs.

These areas include but are not restricted to:

- Students who fall behind the general level of progress for other reasons e.g. through illness**
- New comers from another system**
- Travellers**
- Students where English is not their first language**
- A health condition that impacts their everyday life**
- Social/ emotional / behavioural issues not linked to a special need that may be short term or long term**
- Students who are particularly gifted and need additional stimulus**

Some students may fall into more than one of the above categories.

SEN - Special Educational Needs refers to students in the context of St.Cuan's College with a mental, emotional or physical disability. An individual with

special educational needs may need help with communication, movement, self-care and decision making. Other types of special needs include:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Emotional disturbance
- Epilepsy
- Reading and Learning disabilities
- Speech and Language Impairments

For the purpose of this document, we will use the acronym AEN to cover both types of need.

Introduction

This document sets out the policy of St. Cuan's College in respect of students who have special educational needs. St. Cuan's College welcomes students with AEN and recognises the need to provide individual education to people with such needs wherever possible in an inclusive environment. It aims to ensure that these students are encouraged and facilitated to participate in school life as well as the community as far as is reasonably practicable and that their unique talents are recognised. In doing so, it recognises the contribution of the students, parents/guardians and staff of the school as well as school leadership. It seeks to support the fostering of a caring, disciplined and respectful environment. It encourages commitment and shared responsibility, working towards the achievement of full potential of all its-students.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the framework for addressing AEN in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Equal Status Act, 2000 and The Education for People with Disabilities Act, 2004, DES circulars 0071/11 & 0014/17)
- Enable and support effective communication between parents, students with AEN, staff, other AEN professionals and the Board of Management when required.

- Provide practical guidance to staff, parents, and other interested parties about our AEN procedures and practices.
- Enable staff in partnership with parents/guardians to assess and periodically review the school's capacity to cater for the diverse needs that are identified.
- Specify what additional resources or facilities may be required by the student and/ or the school.
- Provide and cater for the needs identified, in as far as teaching (all AEN students) and other essential (SEN students) resources are allocated to the school.

Aims of Policy

This plan aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- Identify additional educational needs that our students may have
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs
- Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs
- Track, monitor, review and report on the progress of students with additional needs
- Support and facilitate good communication between the AEN team, principal, staff and parents/guardians
- Further each student's education in an inclusive and holistic manner.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

- The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of this school policy
- They appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- They also ensure that adequate accommodation, storage space and teaching resources are provided.

Principal

The role of the school principal includes the following:

- Support the Board of Management in reviewing this policy
- Assume overall responsibility for implementation and for procedures

relating to the inclusion of students with AEN.

- Oversee a whole school approach to assessment and screening to identify needs and to guide the allocation of appropriate supports.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with AEN
- Ensure all school staff is clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Ensure that whole school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents/guardians, students and external professionals/ agencies.
- Give careful consideration to the formation of a multi- disciplinary AEN team (subject teachers, special education teacher, SNA, pastoral care teacher), whose members have expertise/ interest in AEN so that the provision can be coordinated efficiently and flexibly to meet a range of needs.

AEN coordinator

The AEN coordinator holds the following responsibilities:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to AEN on an on-going basis.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for students with AEN
- Liaise with the principal, NEPS (National Educational Psychologist) psychologist, the AEN team and relevant class teachers to prioritise students for psychological assessments (NEPS).
- Create and maintain a school register of students with AEN and ensure compliance with GDPR requirements
- Ensure that Student Support Files (SSFs herein) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs herein) (see Appendix 2 for descriptions of both) and structured learning plans are in place for students with AEN and reviewed annually with parents/guardians.
- Coordinate regular planning meetings with the AEN team to monitor, review targets of IEPs
- Oversee and assist in the administration of standardised assessments.
- Liaise with examinations post-holder with regard to RACE (Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Exams) applications and extra support for in house exams.
- Allocate and monitor learning support classes given to teachers outlining priority learning targets that are in line with their IEP.
- Collaborate and advise SNAs around the care needs of relevant students.
- Address the issue of AEN at staff meetings and other relevant meetings.
- To assist with the transfer programmes between primary and post-primary and between second level and third level/ working life.

AEN Teacher

The AEN Teacher holds the following responsibilities:

- The day to day running of St. Cuan's ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Unit.
- Provision of diagnostic and informal assessments for identified students at regular intervals.
- Monitoring of student progress and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions.
- Having familiarity with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for and meet a variety of learning needs and advising colleagues regarding use of same.
- Directing and assisting with in the implementation of a broad range of classroom strategies that are best suited to the student's learning.
- Provision of direct teaching to a student or group of students in line with the National Council for Special Education's (NCSE) *Continuum of Support Framework* (see Appendix 1 & www.ncse.ie)
- Contribute at meetings involving parents and/ or outside agencies when appropriate.
- To direct the work of the SNAs in the lesson.
- Ensuring that parents / guardians receive a written weekly report and a more frequent report if the care and educational needs of the student warrant it.

Class teacher

The class teacher should:

- Have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all students in his/ her class, including those selected for additional support.
- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom.
- Implement differentiated teaching strategies to suit a variety of learners.
- Collaborate with the AEN team regarding learning targets of students with AEN.
- Liaise with the SNA in relation to the care needs of the student in the classroom.

SNA (Special Needs Assistant)

The duties of the SNA are carried out according to the guidelines, circulars, e.g. 0071/11 and contracts of employment for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills. The SNA will meet the care needs of the AEN students to which they are timetabled in accordance with Circular 30/2014.

Parents/ Guardians:

Collaboration and good communication, including the sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of St. Cuan's College's AEN provision. Parents/ Guardians, through their unique knowledge and understanding of their own child have much to contribute to their child's learning.

In cases where a child's AEN is known prior to enrolment the principal and AEN Co-ordinator will meet with the parent / guardian prior to enrolment to discuss the suitability of St. Cuan's College. Should the child be accepted the parents and guardians will be invited to meet with the principal and AEN co-ordinator to assist St. Cuan's College generate, modify and /or update the student's Student Support File (SSF) and Individual Education Plan (IEP). This meeting is to take place within four weeks of the student starting in St. Cuan's College.

Every parent/ guardian of a child with AEN is encouraged to share any information, reports or concerns regarding their child's development and / or participation in school life that they deem relevant. This can be done via a note, letter, email or telephone message to the AED co-ordinator or in the case of children attending St. Cuan's College's ASD unit, the ASD teacher. All information pertinent to a child's capacity to learn on a given day is appreciated, e.g. sleepless night

Parents are also actively encouraged to seek a meeting with the Principal and / or AEN Co-ordinator regarding any matter of ongoing concern. In so far as possible such a meeting will be facilitated within three weeks of receipt of such a request. In all instances the principal or AEN Co-ordinator will be joined by a colleague who is also involved in the education of the child. A parent / guardian is also welcome to bring an advocate to the meeting.

A brief minute of all such meetings and agreed outcomes and related time-frames (if the matter pertains to something that requires same) will be placed in the student's Student Support File.

In the event that a parent or guardian is unhappy with the outcome or follow-up to such a meeting or series of meetings they may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be made in writing and signed by the parent / guardian.

Parents and teachers are also asked to keep one another informed of progress

in a child's learning and of challenges as they arise.

The Board of Management also requests that parents / guardians:

- Participate in parent-teacher meetings, where they will be given the opportunity to meet with all teachers involved in their Son/Daughter's education.
- Support the targets outlined in their child's SSF & IEP and engage in all suggested home-based activities.

Students:

Students who are receipt of support teaching should, as appropriate:

- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them.
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught and learn to apply them in order to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities and self-assessment.

Models of AEN provision

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, St. Cuan's College aims to strike a balance between in-class support, group support and individual support while ensuring that the needs of students with additional needs are met inclusively. We do this in the following ways:

- Curricular differentiation
(the process of modifying or adapting the curriculum according to the different ability levels of students)
- Curricular reduction (reduced load)
 - A student with AEN who experiences difficulty in coping with the breadth of the current curriculum is permitted to 'drop' a subject. This occurs only after all avenues have been exhausted. A consultation between the parents/ guardian and the relevant subject teacher is a key part of this discernment. Parents must sign a consent form giving permission for a reduced subject load.
- In-class support/Differentiation
- Support of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal from class
- Organisation and Life Skills lessons

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of the student. Importantly, those with the highest level of need will be given access to the greatest level of support, i.e. from existing resources.

Enrolment of students with AEN in St. Cuan's College

The schools admissions policy outlines the procedures with regard to the enrolment of students with AEN.

Identifying Students with AEN

Students will be identified based on the following data:

- Formal assessment (standardised tests in First Year)
- Information from parents
- Information from feeder schools
- information from other second level students where a student is transferring in
- Reports from psychological services
- Informal assessment/ observation in mainstream classes
- Information from staff

Appendix 1

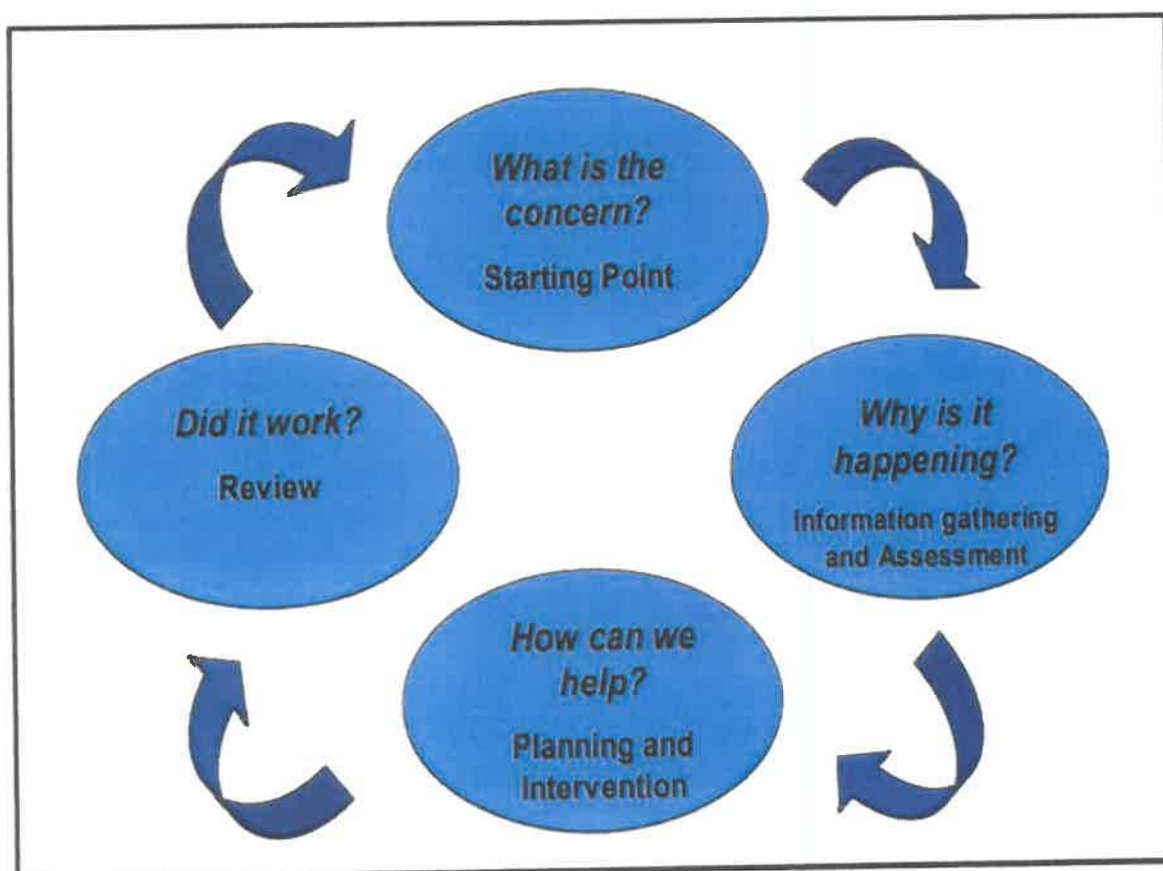
National Council for Special Education (www.ncse.ie) Provision and the Continuum of Support

Continuum of Support

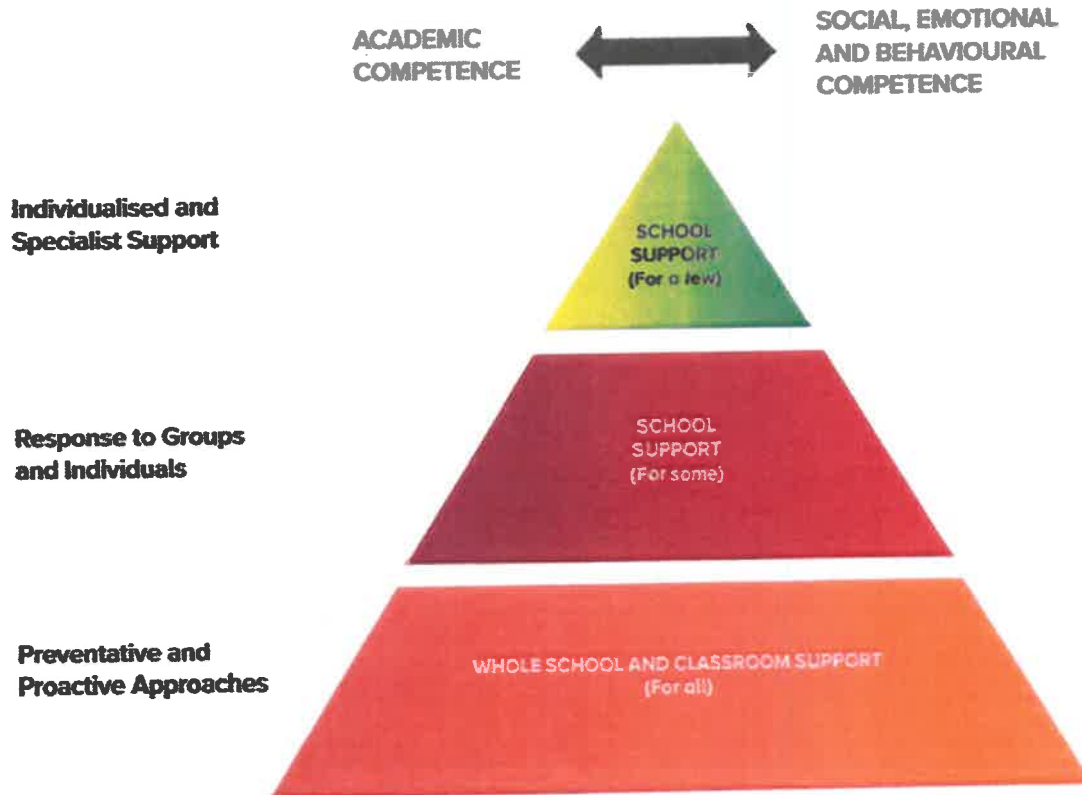
The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in St Cuan's College is underpinned by recognition that additional educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEPS Continuum of Support.

The Continuum of Support is a problem solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students.

This problem solving process is illustrated as follows:



The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



Appendix 2

Student Support Files (SSF) / Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

A Student Support File is devised for students identified with Additional Education needs. All students receiving AEN support will have a tailored learning plan with specific targets. The level and type of support will reflect the specific targets of individual students as set out in their plan.

The SSF is informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching support, some may require the same level while others may require more intensive support.

The SSF process involves:

- Communication with parents / guardians
- Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
- Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
- Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information obtained from parents)
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- AEN provision
- Priority Needs
- Areas of strength
- Setting targets for each priority learning need:
- Identifying the strategies and resources required:
- Relevant documentation
- Setting the date for review

A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances

Student Support Files aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner.