

**Additional Educational Needs Policy for  
St. Peter's College Secondary School**

**Ratified by the Board of Management on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2024**

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## **1. Mission Statement**

The mission statement of St. Peter's College identifies the school as 'a caring Christian community working to promote and develop learning in an inclusive environment where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential'. The mission of the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department reflects the school's goal to offer highly effective teaching and learning which is underpinned by principles of social inclusion.

## **2. Vision and Aims of Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department:**

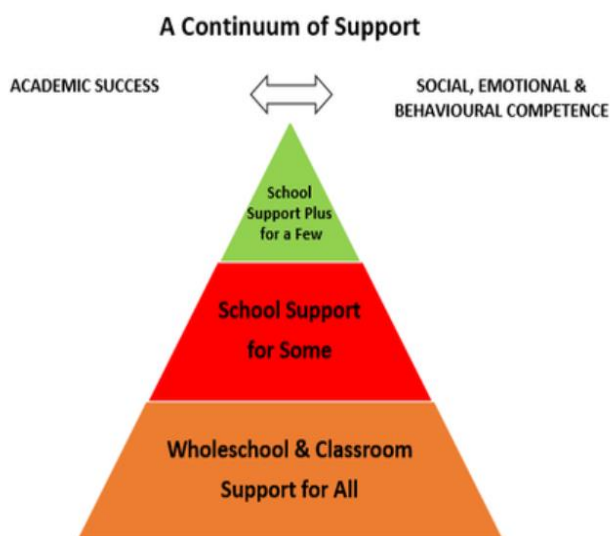
- To foster and maintain a collaborative partnership with students with AEN and their parents.
- To listen to the voice of students with additional needs in all areas of school life.
- To develop an ongoing culture of consultation and discussion within the school community to ensure an inclusive environment for all students with AEN.
- To clearly articulate and inform school management, teachers and special needs assistants on how best to achieve an inclusive education for students with learning, physical, developmental, behavioural or emotional and sensory disabilities.
- To provide a clear rationale and plan for the inclusion of students with any of the five identified areas of need: physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural & learning.
- To ensure that all areas of the school used by students are accessible to all students. This includes adequate space for students who use wheelchairs and signage for students with sensory difficulties.
- To foster a culture of collaboration between teachers around the area of AEN. This includes the sharing of resources, digital technology, accessibility and planning for students with additional needs.
- To promote continuous professional development in various areas of AEN for all staff.
- To support teachers with planning for students with AEN.
- To be aware of the need for reflection and review of existing practice with a focus on the changing needs of students.

### 3. Legislative Framework

St. Peter's College aims to provide education for all students with reference to legislation regarding students with additional needs as listed below.

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004)

### 4. The Continuum of Support



All students in St. Peter's College are supported by a whole school framework on inclusion. The Continuum of Support (COS) encourages a problem-solving approach to assessment and intervention for students with additional needs.

#### 4.1 Whole School and Classroom Support for All

St. Peter's College provides a broad and balanced range of pastoral care supports for all students. All students at Junior Cycle attend timetabled well-being classes. In addition, all

students attend 40 minutes of Class Tutor time per week. All students are encouraged to reach their potential in academic and extracurricular activities.

Teachers have a responsibility to support all students through:

- The provision of highly effective and differentiated teaching and learning activities.
- The creation of a positive classroom environment which incorporates the use of constructive feedback and creates opportunities for all students to experience success.
- The use of assessment to track student progress.
- The communication of any concerns to the relevant colleague e.g., AEN Co-ordinator, Year Head, Principal etc.
- The collaboration with AEN Department in school.

#### **4.2 School Support for Some**

Every teacher has a responsibility to contribute to this element of support. Teachers can contribute to 'School Support for Some' by:

- Contributing to a group or an individual planning process.
- Implementing agreed strategies and inclusive supports that will support a pupil with AEN.
- Communicating progress and/or concerns to the relevant AEN Co-ordinator.

#### **4.3 School Support for a Few**

Teachers can contribute to this stage of support through the continued use of the 'Support for Some' interventions. In addition to this, teachers are involved in the 'School Support For a Few' level of AEN provision through:

- The participation in planning meetings for pupils with more complex AEN.
- The implementation of individualised programmes and strategies for students who are on this level of the Continuum.
- Liaising with the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) in the classroom

The school provides additional support through the Check and Connect Program and Positive Behaviour Support Teams. Students can be referred to these supports by any member of staff.

Finally, the school has established procedures / protocols for liaising with various external agencies e.g., NEPS, NCSE, Visiting Teacher Service in order to optimise the quality of provision for students with special educational needs” as per the 2017 guidelines.

## **5. Student Support Plans**

Student Support Plans (SSPs) will be created through a process of consultation between the relevant AEN Co-ordinator, SEN teacher, the student themselves, class teachers and the parents/ guardians of a student with AEN.

The contents of the Student Support File will include:

- Log of actions to date.
- Student details including strengths and priority concerns.
- Targets for the student.
- Strategies to be used.
- Review dates.

## **6. Additional Educational Needs Team**

The AEN Team comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, AEN Coordinators, AEN Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. The coordination of support for students with additional needs is undertaken by the AEN Co-ordinators who work under the direction of the school management.

### **6.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The role of the Board of Management:**

- To ensure that the school has a policy in place, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure that it is evaluated and reviewed regularly.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided and that all students with additional needs leave the school with skills necessary to reach their full potential.
- To ensure that parents are consulted and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child’s education.

**The role of the Principal:**

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies and procedures relating to the inclusion of students with additional educational needs.
- Oversee a whole-school approach to assessment and screening to identify needs and to guide the allocation of appropriate supports.
- Ensure effective engagement with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with additional educational needs.
- In collaboration with the in-school management team, discharge a key function in the deployment of staff, allocation of resources, organisation of students and timetabling.
- Ensure that systems are in place for effective sharing of relevant information on students' needs with all subject teachers.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with additional educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (subject teachers and special education teachers, guidance counsellors, special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, students and external professionals/agencies.

**The role of the AENCO:**

- To administer standardized tests on students referred for assessment.
- To liaise with primary schools, parents, and professionals as appropriate.
- To liaise with all outside agencies.
- To support the transition of students with AEN from primary to post primary.
- To review all relevant professional reports concerning students attending the school who have additional education needs.
- To liaise with all subject teachers regarding students in their classes who have additional education needs.
- To assign teachers to special education classes in consultation with school management.
- To liaise with all AEN teachers regarding planning and supports to students who attend their classes.
- To engage with parents/ guardians about the needs of their son.
- To apply for Assistive Technology on behalf of students for whom technology is deemed to be essential for access to the curriculum.

- To apply for Reasonable Accommodations for Certified Exams on behalf of students who meet criteria established by the State Examination Commission.
- To assist students completing Disability Access Route to Education applications.
- To undertake testing and interventions as part of the process necessary for exemption from the study of Irish.
- To meet weekly with AEN team members to review existing supports discuss emerging needs.
- To liaise with relevant year head and deputy principal with respect to supports or needs arising for students with additional needs.
- To prepare Matriculation forms for students attending third level.
- To support students as they prepare to leave St. Peter's College.
- To keep the Principal fully informed of the needs, developments and changes in practice within the department.

**The role of the Class Teacher:**

All subject teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of students with additional educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms.
- Collaborative problem-solving activities.
- Differentiation.
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence.
- Embedding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment.

**The role of the AEN Teacher:**

- To be aware of the school's policy and procedures on inclusion for students with additional needs.
- To participate in Continuous Professional Development in the various areas of AEN.
- To familiarise themselves with the relevant professional reports for all students in their classes.
- To consider the recommendations outlined in these reports and discuss which supports to implement with relevant AENCO.
- To plan appropriately for their classes and submit planning to relevant AENCO.

**The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA):**

- To assist students with primary care needs during the school day.
- To assist with secondary care needs.
- To collaborate in the planning of students in receipt of SNA support.

**7. Storage and Sharing of information:**

All documentation relating to a student with additional needs is kept on the student's file. This information is protected by password on the VS-Ware platform. Key information relating to the support of students with AEN is shared via secure school email.

**8. Irish Exemptions:**

The criteria for granting exemption from the study of Irish are outlined in Government Circular 0054/2022.

**9. Co-Teaching:**

Co-teaching may be used to support AEN students who are on various stages of the Continuum of Support. Co-Teaching is provided at Junior and Senior Cycle and is allocated to subjects based on a priority of needs.

**10. Guidance Counselling:**

It may at times be appropriate to offer individual Guidance & Counselling support to students with additional educational needs. Guidance and Counselling also supports whole school inclusion through:

- Study Skills Workshops.
- Subject Choice Information.
- Administration of standardised attainment testing for first year students.
- Information on CAO applications.

## **11. Identification of Students with Additional Education Needs:**

### **11.1 First Years:**

All students undertake the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) and Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) in September of their first year of school. The results of both tests are uploaded to the students file on VS-Ware. In addition to this, all students school passports from primary school are uploaded to their VS-Ware file as well as any professional reports and SSPs that are shared by their primary school.

### **11.2 Referral Pathway:**

If a class teacher/ parent has concerns that a student may have AEN, the first step is to contact the relevant AENCO. The AENCO will:

- Discuss the concern with the parent/ teacher and decide on appropriate next step.
- If deemed appropriate, and if a parent/ guardian consents, the AENCO will undertake relevant standardised testing on the student. Results of this testing will be discussed with parents.
- With the parents' permission, the results of attainment testing will be shared with all relevant teaching staff.
- If a student is identified as having an additional need, appropriate supports will be put in place.
- In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to seek the advice of another professional, e.g. an educational psychologist, in order to determine how best to support a pupil with additional needs.

## **12. Gifted and Talented Students**

St. Peter's College encourages all students to reach their potential through the offering of a broad range of curricular and extracurricular activities in addition to this, students' academic and extracurricular successes are acknowledged by the school and Past Pupil Union at the school's annual Prize Giving Ceremony. The school also promotes the success of students through our social media platforms, termly newsletter and school magazine. Elements of our school's self-evaluation targets and strategies also help to cater for gifted and talented students.

### **13. Parental Involvement**

- Initial contact in 1<sup>st</sup> year.
- Meetings to discuss plans/targets/supports etc.
- Submit reports and other relevant documentation.
- Communicating with AEN teachers or Year heads regarding progress.

### **14. Student Voice**

- Encouraged to share their experience and contribute to the plan of support through individual meeting/informal conversations etc.
- Encouraged to avail of all supports that are offered by the school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_