



Dominican College Wicklow

Additional Education Needs Policy

Introduction

Dominican College Wicklow is a voluntary secondary, girls-only school, with a Catholic Dominican ethos and under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. It was founded by the Dominican sisters in 1870.

The Dominican motto 'TRUTH' is the inspiration of our work. Dominican education is concerned with the education of the whole person. Strong emphasis is placed on each student attaining her full potential academically, but care is also taken to ensure that each student benefits from an enriching all round education. In an atmosphere of trust and friendliness students are encouraged to develop responsibility, initiative, personal growth and leadership so as to help them take their place in society as mature and committed citizens.

The Additional Education Needs (AEN) Policy will be reviewed regularly, as directed by the Board of Management. In this policy document, the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

Policy Context

The AEN Policy has been developed following consultation between students, staff, parents, principal and Board of Management.

The Education Act (1998) states that a recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit, ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs, are identified and provided for. As trustees of Dominican College Wicklow, Le Chéile is committed to the successful implementation of all relevant Education legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000 & 2004), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the Disability Act (2005), the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (2007), Data Protection Act (1988, 1998 & 2003) and the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016. The policy is also informed by the Department of Education & Skills publication: *Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post Primary Guideline and the Continuum of Support (2017 \Model, Circular 0035/17)*.

This policy is also drafted within the context of the following documents:

DES Circular Letter

NCSE Guidelines

IEP Process, 2006

Guidelines in the Continuum of Support Model (NEPS)

Guidelines from the Special Education Support Service (SESS)

Having regard to the resources available and provided by the Department of Education and Skills, and subject to the safety, well-being and the common good (as determined by the Board of Management) of students and staff, the school is committed to the principles of:

- Inclusion.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Equality of opportunity.

- Parental choice in relation to enrolment in the school.
- Respect for diversity of values, belief, traditions, languages and ways of life in Irish society.
- The holistic development of students of Dominican College Wicklow.

The Board of Management is charged with a special responsibility by Le Chéile to ensure an appropriate education for each student, a responsibility in keeping with the Mission Statement of Dominican College Wicklow.

Inclusion

Dominican College Wicklow welcomes students with AEN and recognises the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment. In Dominican College, Wicklow, AEN are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community and that students are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum

It aims to ensure that students with AEN are encouraged to participate in school life as far as is reasonably practicable and that no student is bullied or singled out for unfair treatment as a consequence of her disability. Pro-active steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is supportive and non-judgemental. Students with AEN are facilitated to set achievable goals and are encouraged to achieve to their potential. There are currently 2 qualified Learning Support teachers as well as other members of staff in the school, providing targeted support to students with AEN.

Rationale

This policy outlines the form that additional support for students with AEN takes in the school and the philosophy which underpins our actions and decisions. The school bases its rationale on the three major principles laid out in the EPSEN Act:

- The education of students with AEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.
- Students with AEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from appropriate education, as do their peers.
- Students with AEN, like their peers, should leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Categories of Additional Educational Needs

Within the resources available, Dominican College Wicklow aims to provide for the following categories of students with AEN :

- Borderline/ Mild General Learning Disability
- Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties—ADD/ADHD
- Specific Learning Difficulty—Dyslexia
- Physical disabilities—Dyspraxia
- Mild Speech and Language Disorders

- Sensory Difficulties (hearing & visual impairments)
- ESOL students (English for students of other languages)
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder (e.g.. Asperger's Syndrome)

Under DES circular 08/02 (Appendix 3) the following categories of AEN exist also and will be supported by the BOM, subject to available resources and personnel skills:

- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe / Profound General Learning Disability
- Down Syndrome

Access to Learning Support.

A student **may** be selected for Learning Support in our school where:

- a student who has a psychological assessment which recommends Learning Support/Resource teaching
- a student who received Learning Support in Primary School
- a student identified during the entrance assessment or during the Literacy and Numeracy assessments in First Year.
- a student identified by her subject teachers, tutor or Year Head as having difficulty with one or more subjects.

Roles within Learning Support Department

All students and in particular students designated as having AEN are supported by class teachers. Depending on the learning needs of the student, she may also be helped in a small group, individually or inclass learning support as outlined in the Continuum of Support Model. In some cases the DES may provide the additional support of an Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA). The allocation of learning support hours to the school is dependent upon the National Council of Special Needs (NCSE) and the DES. These hours are allocated annually by the DES through the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO). The model of organisation of these allocated hours within DCW includes consultation with the following:

- Parents and students
- Principal and Deputy Principal
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Class teachers
- Feeder Primary school
- National Education Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Other relevant professional agencies where appropriate.

1. Implementation Procedures

- In the year preceding entry to First Year a letter is posted to all parents/guardians asking that the school be informed of any AEN of the incoming student. Parents are requested to submit any psychological/educational assessments that have been carried out in the past and to inform the Principal if their daughter has availed of Learning Support in Primary School.
- In the Spring before commencing 1st Year, the Principal writes to the principals of feeder primary schools seeking written information on students enrolled in Dominican College Wicklow, including copies of the students' reports and education passport.
- In September the Deputy Principal compiles the information from feeder primary schools on students' reports and education passports as well as their CAT4 Assessment results. The information is shared with the Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support Department. This may further help to identify Learning Support needs.
- In consultation with the AEN Department, the Principal ensures that applications are made to the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) for learning support hours where appropriate.
- The AEN Department tries further to identify students who may need support by examining the results of the CAT4 Assessment Test carried out in February in tandem with the earlier feedback from parents.

2. Planning for Resources

- As soon as possible after enrolment, the Parents/Guardians of incoming students with AEN are encouraged to meet with the Principal and to plan for the following year.
- The AEN team, in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Year Head, compiles a register of students with additional needs. The needs of each individual student are discussed and explained at a staff meeting at beginning of school year and uploaded to the staff shared folder.
- Individual tuition or small learning support groups are organised where appropriate. A Plan is developed by the learning support team, in consultation with the subject teachers, the student and her parents/guardians. The plan is shared with the student, her parents/guardians.
- An ISA is assigned to specific students where the allocation is granted by the SENO.

3. Learning Support in Action

- The role of the AEN Team supports the work of the subject teacher(s) and schemes of work should be discussed with the Learning Support Teacher in order to maximise learning support for each individual student.
- The AEN team offers advice on learning, teaching and assessment strategies for students with AEN needs.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is consulted where necessary.

Organisation of Learning Support:

- In-class support

- Individual withdrawal from class
- Small group withdrawal
- Special Needs assistant where provided by the SENO
- Reduced Timetable in exceptional circumstances
- Help of staff with expertise
- Computers and appropriate software programmes
- Library & computer facilities
- Differentiated materials within subject departments

A member of the AEN team will assume the role of Coordinator each year. This role may rotate annually.

4. Provision for Students who wish to apply for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations

This is organised by the AEN Department in consultation with parents, students and teachers. b. Applications for RACE are processed by the AEN team and the Principal.

DARE

Forms are completed by individual Sixth Year students with the assistance of the Guidance Counsellor.

Roles and Responsibilities

The care of students with AEN is the responsibility of the whole school community. A structured support programme is provided to students with AEN with the help of the collaborative efforts of all involved in the following roles:

Board of Management:

- To ensure an appropriate education for each student, a responsibility in keeping with the Mission Statement of Dominican College Wicklow.
- To ensure that the AEN policy is developed, ratified, supported, implemented and evaluated.
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy and to consider any recommendations.
- To ensure adequate accommodation and teaching resources, insofar as is reasonable, affordable and practicable.
- To provide secure facilities for the correct and safe storage of records and information

Senior Management:

- To oversee the implementation of the AEN policy
- To foster and promote a culture of inclusion, respect for difference, kindness and support

- To liaise with the BOM, AEN Department, Staff, ISAs, Students and Parents/Guardians in the development of a whole school plan for Learning Support and Additional Needs.
- To support the professional development needs of staff in teaching, learning and assessment of students with AEN.
- To liaise with the AEN team, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, Staff, Parents, Students, external agencies and professionals to ensure that the school makes every reasonable effort to provide for the support needs of students with AEN.
- To monitor the implementation of the learning support programme and selection of students for supplementary teaching
- To provide staff professional development to increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of appropriate teaching and assessment methodologies
- The Principal applies to the DES for learning support hours for incoming students with additional needs, in consultation with the AEN Department, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and Parents/Guardians.

AEN Team Coordinator

- To coordinate the communication and work of the AEN Department
- Co-ordinates the assignment of teachers to AEN students, in consultation with the principal.
- To coordinate meetings of AEN Department and ensure that meetings are minuted, stored and communicated with Senior Management.
- Collates and stores all data appropriately.
- To test students who may be in need of learning support.
- Communicates with subject departments at staff meetings.
- To order resource materials for learning support.
- To organise reasonable accommodations for In-House exams.
- To meet with Senior Management at an agreed time, to report on relevant matters
- To liaise with Senior Management, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Staff, Students, Parents and external professionals, as required.

The AEN Team (Learning Support Teachers):

- To create and foster a school climate of inclusion
- To liaise with Senior Management, Staff, Students and Parents/Guardians in the development of a whole school plan for Learning Support and Additional Education Needs
- To keep abreast of developments in the area of AEN
- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To ensure that Reasonable Accommodation is sought and where possible provided for AEN students sitting State Examinations, in consultation with the Care Team and Principal
- To inform staff of individual students' needs and suggest supports for effective teaching, learning and assessment of students with AEN
- To plan a Learning Support timetable and make this available to Senior Management
- To monitor and evaluate individual students/groups of students with AEN.

- To liaise with Senior Management, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and Parents regarding information from primary schools and assessment reports
- In consultation with students and their parents/guardians, ISA (where relevant) and teachers, prepare and review plans for students with AEN

The Care Team:

- To monitor the effects of the AEN policy and help to identify students requiring learning support.
- To refer to outside professionals and agencies as needed.
- To provide student support in personal, educational and career development.
- To consult with parents and staff.

Class Teacher:

- To create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes cognisance of learning needs and difficulties
- Responsibility for the progress of students in her/his classes
- To collaborate with the AEN Team in identifying students who may have AEN
- To differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all students in the class using some of the following: modifying presentation and questioning techniques, group teaching, differentiation of homework, enlargement of text etc.
- To provide learning activities and materials that will ensure success and progress for all students
- To assist in the identification of students in need of Learning Support
- To bring any concerns regarding AEN to the attention of the Year Head and AEN department

Parents:

- The school requests that all parents support the work of the school by providing all relevant information, ensuring regular attendance and encouraging supporting their daughter to participate positively in learning activities
- Contact the school to discuss their daughter's AEN so that the school can commence planning appropriate accommodation and supports for incoming student
- To be proactive and supportive of the school in implementing this policy
- To use their unique knowledge of their daughter to further her learning plan
- To meet with teachers, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Senior Management, AEN or Care Team where appropriate
- To provide support for homework and learning
- The school recognises the right of parents/guardians of students with AEN to be involved in and consulted about the programme of education available to their daughter. When a plan is being developed, parents may be consulted. This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis. The school recognises the right of appeal of parents/guardians as set out in the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

Students with AEN:

- The school requires that all students participate actively and positively in the development of their own learning. This involves all students attending school regularly, participating positively in classroom activities and completing appropriate homework and assignments.
- To engage positively with their learning plan
- To participate in their learning in a positive manner
- To develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught in a Learning Support setting
- Students with AEN will be consulted and involved in the development of their plan

Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA)

The duties of the ISA are outlined by the DES as follows:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
2. Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled students with typing or writing
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of students with additional education needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature.
9. Where an Inclusion Support Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific student, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of that student.

Monitoring and Review Procedures

- The AEN Department meet at an agreed time to discuss relevant issues.
- The AEN Team liaise regularly with Senior Management, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor and Parents.
- Applications to the SENO for special educational resources take place regularly.
- The AEN Team meets with parents and students to collaborate and review on learning plans.
- Consultations take place with NEPS psychologist when necessary.
- Record Keeping: all records relating to assessments of individual students will be kept in a secure location; individual psychological assessments will be kept on file and the student's right to confidentiality will be respected; assessment records will be kept on file for 7 years after the student has left the school.

- Monitoring and Evaluation of the learning support programme will be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Additional Education Needs Coordinator supported by the Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads and Staff.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 4th April 2019

Date of review: February 2020

Signature of Chairperson: L Byrne