

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed



INCLUSION (AEN) POLICY



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INCLUSION (AEN) POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

School Mission statement: At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that encourages the potential of each person. The mission is realised through our core values of Respect, Community, Equality, Care and Excellence in Education.

PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS (AEN) INCLUDE:

- Students with learning disabilities
- Students with emotional and/or behavioural issues
- Students with physical or sensory disabilities
- Gifted students

WE SEEK:

- To encourage the development of the full person through imparting knowledge and skills and through inculcating values
- To develop critical thinking faculties and to promote informed decision-making skills in students
- To bring students to an awareness of their identity in a multi-denominational, multi-cultural context
- To enable the transition to further education
- To encourage the participation of parents in the education of their children
- To respond to the educational needs of the local community

RATIONALE

The school's Special Educational Needs policy aspires:

- To provide an inclusive learning environment where all are encouraged to achieve their potential
- To enable each student to develop social and personal skills, thus enhancing self esteem
- To encourage students with special needs to participate in the full range of school activities
- To offer an education which develops a variety of skills i.e., practical, artistic, musical and sporting
- To allow special needs students access to the curriculum and where possible, encourage students to sit Junior/Leaving Cert. examinations
- To encourage staff to avail of professional development from the NCSE.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

The following criteria can be used to identify students who may benefit from extra supports:

- School links with primary schools. Primary school passport documentation
- Liaising with primary school class teachers, AEN teachers & SNA's
- Link via SCP with primary schools in Homework Club etc.
- Liaising with HSCL and Guidance.
- School meetings and discussions with parents/guardians of incoming students
- Testing: CAT 4 tests, Maths (PT Maths), English (NGRT). Analysis (academic tracking) of monthly class tests, term exams, mock exams, state exams
- Referrals from teachers to AEN team or AEN coordinators
- Educational (psychologists), clinical (OT, S&L, CAMS, physiotherapist etc...) and medical (GP, consultant etc...) reports presented to school
- Meeting with NEPS and other external agencies
- Induction days for incoming 1st years
- Student self-referral.
- Referral from SST to the AEN team.
- Using the ATHENA tracker in consultation with Year heads.

AEN PROVISION

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all students, and especially for those with additional educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all students are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued.

The following is a brief outline of the school's AEN provision.

- AEN teachers will help and offer advice to subject teachers on a needs basis.
- The school has a mixed ability class system in 1st year. The results of the standardised assessments are made available to the subject teachers on request. This, along with other approaches and methodologies, allows the staff to differentiate the classwork to meet the needs of the students.

- Students who are exempt from the study of certain subjects are removed from class where possible, and extra learning support is given in small groups during that time. Parents are informed regarding the implications of this. Please see Circular regarding the exemption of Irish 0055/2022 <https://assets.gov.ie/232778/8a54db37-2036-4d6a-861f-0be60c2cf7f2.docx>.
- Some additional educational needs students may receive help on a 1:1 basis. Each individual case is judged on its own merits based on the results of various testing, psychologists' reports, input from outside agencies or teacher observation/opinion etc.
- Small, targeted groups are identified in consultation with the English and Maths departments (in areas of literacy and numeracy). Appropriate support and interventions are put in place.
- Application is made to the State Examinations Commission for reasonable accommodation in Junior and Leaving Cert. examinations. These applications are made in consultation with parents, the SENCO, subject teachers and students.
- The coordinators of the School Completion Programme are proactive in assisting additional needs students to stay in school and achieve their potential e.g., homework club, extra-curricular activities.
- Co-operative teaching - identifying students within the classroom who need to avail of the additional support.

INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

- The school is part of the JCSP programme.
- All 1st year students are given the chance to “taste” optional subjects so they are able to make an informed decision on the options they choose.
- All Junior Cycle students (1/2/3 years) have an ICT class. This gives all students the opportunity to be digitally literate.
- All students who have been granted Assistive Technology (AT) by the SENO, or have been using AT in their previous school, have a strong recommendation from a professional are timetabled where possible for one AT class per week.
- Mixed ability classes allow the students in our school to have equal opportunity to a broad and balanced curriculum commensurate with their ability. Co-timetabling of core subjects and/or co-teaching from 1st year allows students to access the level most appropriate to their ability.
- Additional needs students have equal access to the curriculum.

- At the moment provision of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is subject to agreement between unions and the Department of Education (DE).
- The AEN team currently compiles an AEN student profile on our school management system, Compass. This aims to be reflective of the NCSE Continuum of Support post primary model.

ROLE OF THE SUBJECT TEACHER:

Section 22(1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of students in schools. The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all students in his/her class, including any student with a special educational need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with additional educational needs.

Subject teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.

In line with the Continuum of Support Guidelines, the class teacher may gather information through formal and informal means, with a view to informing interventions. The classroom teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to students with additional needs, including differentiating the curriculum as appropriate. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist, and the local Special Educational Needs Organiser.

The classroom teacher will also make specific accommodations for students within the class as a result of concerns about a student's progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers and the development of a programme of differentiated instruction for that student.

Where a student has an SNA, the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the AEN department.

All teachers should also support/encourage independent learning with all students. This is particularly important for Senior Cycle students.

Subject teachers must have due regard to the rights of students with special educational needs as per their professional code of conduct.

All subject teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of students with special educational needs. Each subject department will include in its plan how it caters for the different students taking their subject. These methodologies include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms. Where co-teaching is implemented in most cases both teachers should plan how to most effectively engage each teacher to meaningfully benefit the targeted AEN students.
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Varied group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment
- Differentiation can be achieved by:
 - i. Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
 - ii. Adapting lessons for students' interests
 - iii. Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs
 - iv. Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology
 - v. Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. In matching programmes to students' needs, a range of curriculum options are available, including Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

Focused interventions to develop literacy, social, emotional, life-skills and well-being are particularly important for junior cycle students with additional educational needs. The school uses NEPS 'Friends'

programme, NBSS transition and transfer programme, NBSS. Alert training, SESS Pathways to Prevention, Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (NBSS)).

Our Student Support Team and the AEN Co-ordinator serve an important preventative and early intervention function, particularly in addressing the needs of students with social, emotional, behavioural and well-being needs. This team provides a forum to share concerns and to work towards solutions. It plays an important coordinating role and facilitates monitoring and review of students' progress.

TARGET SETTING

Good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for students with additional educational needs. Targets are: linked to assessment; strengths-based; linked to interventions and developed collaboratively.

Best practice indicates that targets should be few in number; they should be informed by priority learning needs and directly linked to suitable interventions. Targets are based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches. Where possible, targets will be measurable and observable and will reflect the specific special educational need of individual students. Targets will be achievable within a specified time frame they will also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address students' holistic needs.

The AEN department will liaise and collaborate with subject teachers in relation to the monitoring of specified targets through compass.

A review of attainment (through academic tracking) and using Athena, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example sense of belonging and connectedness to school) will take place for students with special educational needs.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

In line with DE guidelines additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs. Support is given in a variety of ways to effectively meet students' needs. Examples include:

- Co-teaching

Different Strategies for example:

- One teach/one observe
- One teach/one assist
- Parallel teaching
- Station teaching
- Alternative(differentiated) teaching
- Team Teaching
- Small group withdrawal

SUPPORT FOR FEW

Coláiste Mhuire Co- Ed has provision for one ASD programme - 2 classes. There are 12 students affiliated to the programme and the ASD team (consisting of three teachers and 4 SNA's) have responsibility for timetabling and provision of care. This support will be delivered through a variety of mediums and the supports may change over time. The AEN co-ordinator and school management play a supporting role to all in the ASD programme.

As per circular cl0059-2021 the school acknowledges the existence of L2LPs. These are designed for certain categories of students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability, where the difficulties/needs of those students, prevent them from taking some or all of the subjects or short courses on offer at level 3, as a result of being identified as requiring additional learning supports.

As per cl0059-2021 students who are identified as struggling with EBD, meet with a suitably qualified AEN teacher and benefit from targeted programmes and short/long term interventions depending on the level of need.

SUPPORT FOR SOME

The AEN team will identify certain students who will benefit from more intensive programmes based on their needs. This support will be delivered through a variety of mediums - such as co-operative teaching, small group or individual support and/or a combination of all three.

The school's academic tracking data, in consultation with ATHENA analysis, may be used for consultation when the AEN team are allocating these supports.

Following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive support. As a result of this and in line with the continuum of support the allocated AEN support may change over time.

SUPPORT FOR ALL

The school engages with programmes in Numeracy, Literacy and Social/Emotional domains to promote early intervention and seek to provide a response to such intervention if necessary. (See Appendix for Whole School Provision Map).

PLANNING

In line with Department of Education guidelines the core AEN team, under the direction of the AEN Coordinator supports subject teachers in:

- Identification of students with special educational needs
- Record keeping/planning, setting targets
- Planning teaching methods and approaches
- Organising early- intervention and prevention resources
- Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

TIMETABLING PRACTICE/RATIONALE FOR THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

In line with the requirements of Circular Letter 0064/2024 school management and the AEN coordinator will seek to deploy resources appropriately by:

- 1) Using the induction programme and early screening for early intervention and learning.
- 2) Allocating resources to students with the highest level of needs, as students with the highest level of needs receive the highest level of supports in so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 3) Providing additional supports which are tailored to meet the unique needs of students, addressing social, emotional and vocational/life skills, as well as literacy, subject specific and mathematical needs.

- 4) Allocating support classes to teachers who are expert in the subject or learning support.
- 5) Providing flexibility for specialist teachers so that groupings timetabled for support may change over time.
- 6) Supporting a core team of teachers for additional educational needs. Members of this team have the necessary experience and ongoing access to professional development to support the diverse needs of students with special educational needs.
- 7) A member of the additional educational needs team, who has a recognised qualification in AEN, is assigned the responsibility for planning for the provision for special educational needs within the school.
- 8) Use of allocation is reviewed by the AEN coordinator and school management. The overall allocation is accounted for both from a teacher and student perspective.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Inclusion

“Effective inclusive schools are problem-solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students.”¹

Our students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) are members of an inclusive school community.

This is achieved by:

- 1) Having a special educational needs AEN team consisting of suitably qualified and/or interested staff members led by a AEN co-ordinator.
- 2) Working with and listening to the opinion of the student(s) and parent(s) concerned.
- 3) Making application to DE through SENO for support where deemed necessary.
- 4) EAL applications and support.
- 5) Giving every student an opportunity to learn effectively so that he/she can achieve his/her potential academically and socially.
- 6) Providing our students with a wide variety of subjects.
- 7) Where resources permit, small class groupings will be formed so that each student is provided with support.

¹ https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE_Inclusion.pdf

- 8) Where resources permit, Co-operative teaching will be implemented to allow for inclusion and to provide support within the mainstream classroom.
- 9) The curriculum may be differentiated/reduced to accommodate the diverse needs within each group e.g., worksheets, class material presented in a user-friendly manner or using the JCSP statements.
- 10) Students will be provided with a taster programme in all option subjects to assist with correct choice of subjects to be carried forward.
- 11) All levels of subjects are taught in Junior and Senior cycle.
- 12) Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied are offered and provide wonderful opportunities to our students.
- 13) Extra-curricular activities are provided to promote development and encourage social inclusion.
- 14) Using Educational technology in a way that supports students and assists them in their learning.

School-wide approach to provision for students with special educational needs

School-wide Planning

The school-wide approach will involve collaboration across the school community to improve student learning, behaviour and well-being. The school-wide approach will address the full continuum of needs ranging from milder and transient needs to more severe and enduring needs.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The school recognises that good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for students with additional educational needs. Parents will be consulted in relation to:

- The child's needs and strengths
- The support and strategies being developed to support their children
- Reviewing of student progress
- Levels taken in State Exams

Parents will also be consulted when the additional education needs policy is being developed and/or reviewed.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The school will regularly review its approach to student engagement and participation so that all students, including those with additional educational needs, have opportunities to share their views on issues that affect them in school.

ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNAL BODIES AND AGENCIES

Where appropriate the school will seek support and guidance from external bodies and agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), the NCSE Support Service, the Inspectorate and relevant health professionals. This will be particularly relevant in the case of those students presenting with complex needs. The school will facilitate meetings between parents and these support services where appropriate. The school will endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the continuum of support.

TRANSITIONS

The school recognises transitions can be challenging for all students and may pose even greater challenges for children with additional educational needs. These transitions include the transition from primary to second level school and the transition from second level onwards or the transition or movement from one school to another. In managing the transition of students with additional educational needs from primary to post-primary school the school will liaise in a timely manner with the parents and the primary school.

This may involve some of the following:

- Meeting between designated staff members (HSCL/Year head and/or the AEN co-ordinator) and a representative of the primary school
- Open evening
- Peer mentoring – Le Chéile
- Request transfer of School passport from the primary school (HSCL, AEN Co-ordinator & 1st year head)
- One to one meetings between designated staff member and parent (and student) where individual needs of the students are discussed
- Sharing of information with subject teachers at the start of the academic year (staff meetings/compass)

- Induction morning and evenings for incoming students

If a child with additional needs transfers from another post primary school

- Parents are asked to fill in an online form and this includes the request for their student support file and any relevant reports.
- The student is allocated a mentor from the student support team.

APPENDIX 1

ROLE OF THE SNA / SNA POLICY

This section is included to clarify the role of Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) in Coláiste Mhuire Co-ed.

It is important to note that frontloading SNA support eliminates the need for an individual assessment for each student, ending the link with the requirement for a formal diagnosis to gain access to support, and will reduce the delays in making supports available to schools

This section was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties and is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and DES Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05, 0030/2014, 0035/2022

The work of the SNA should be supervised either by the Principal or in the absence of the Principal by a Class Teacher. Those duties involve **tasks of a non-teaching nature** such as:

- Provide input with regard to care needs for the preparation of IEPs.
- To assist the teacher in whatever way is necessary to help the student(s) integrate as fully as possible into school life.
- Assist with care planning.
- Provide assistance and information in relation to care needs for preparation of physiological and school reports and files. Also helping with briefing profiles on AEN pupils.
- Assist in analysis of attendance for AEN Pupils.
- Assist transition process in relation to care needs for pupils from one school to another and from one teacher to another.
- Provide preparation and tidying up of SNA room(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught – this includes any special equipment needed.
- Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary, travelling as an escort on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g., helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.

- Assisting on out-of-school visits, trips to matches, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom (this may be to provide timeout).
- Administering approved medication.
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teacher. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class)
- Participation with school development planning with special reference to AEN pupils.
- Liaising with class teacher/resource teachers/Principal.
- Assist in compiling information for staff on the care needs of AEN pupils.
- Work with teachers to support assigned students to become more independent learners. The SNAs are encouraged to develop independence in their assigned students through showing interest both in the classroom setting and during breaks.
- Information received on students, and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully.

Parents with questions or issues about school policy or practice should be referred directly to AEN co-coordinator or the Principal.

STAFF MEETINGS

The SNAs may be required to attend Staff Meetings when an issue of relevance to their own particular work is included on an agenda.

On days of In-Service ancillary staff may be required to attend school to complete tasks laid out by Principal and Duty Principal.

TRAINING

Regular training is offered to SNAs when appropriate. This may coincide with in-service days for mainstream staff or is availed of when appropriate courses become available through the local Education Centre.

BREAK DUTY

The SNA in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is not assigned to an individual child but rather to the school as a whole. However, during lunch break the SNA (or another SNA if the assigned person is not available) if the case arises will have direct responsibility for a particular child. It is the responsibility of the SNA to monitor their behaviour and to watch out for them.

Please note: it is not the job of SNAs to transcribe notes for students or to take notes down from the board.

APPENDIX 2

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of students are met. The principal will take general responsibility for establishing and promoting school-wide policies and procedures which support the learning of all students including those with special needs. The principal will oversee a school-wide approach to assessment to identify needs. S/he will guide and support the AEN team/coordinator in their duties.

THE ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TEAM / AEN CO-ORDINATOR (AEN TEAM)

The AEN team/co-ordinator will:

- Form a special education needs team (AEN team) to coordinate the provision of special education in the school.
- Delegate the performance of specific responsibilities to other staff members including the AEN team.
- Co-ordinate data gathering, to facilitate the implementation of standardised tests, to collate the information and identify needs.
- Allocate resources (organise suitable support for the AEN students with a variety of needs).
- Plan, implement and review student support files on compass.
- Aid teachers in the recording, planning and implementation of group AEN sessions.
- Facilitate continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with special educational needs ensuring also that all school staff understand their roles and responsibilities in this area (AEN Handbook).
- To work with and support non-qualified AEN teachers, where possible in the provision of support for AEN students.
- To consult in the identification of literacy and numeracy target groups.
- Test relevant students. Plan and prepare applications for reasonable accommodations in the state exams (this has been delegated to a member of the AEN Team).
- To facilitate the new JC level 2 programmes.
- To work with and support the ASD programme - the ASD programme is run primarily by identified AEN teacher(s).

Role of the AEN Co-ordinator

The AEN team/co-ordinator will work closely with the principal, subject teachers, parents, the guidance counsellor, the pastoral care/discipline team and other support structures within the school. Members of the team will provide support to subject teachers to meet students' needs within their classroom and subject areas.

In addition to working with the AEN team the AEN co-ordinator in collaboration with school management will engage in the following duties:

- Plan for the transition of students with special educational needs from primary school.
- Engage with feeder primary schools to support the transition of students with special educational needs (with the assistance of the HSCL to visit the relevant primary schools for the effective transfer of essential AEN information).
- Assist in the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject teachers, year heads and other relevant staff on an ongoing basis (staff meetings, compass).
- Create / update the AEN register / database.
- Liaise with external agencies, NEPS, NCSE, CAMHS, NBSS.
- Liaise with external professionals, OT's, S&L, psychologists, doctors.
- To work with "in house" supports such as HSCL, BFL, School Completion, Guidance counsellors in relation to AEN students.
- Assist in the preparation of applications to the NCSE for access to SNA support (see Appendix 2).
- To work with the schools SNAs.
- To chair and take minutes of all AEN meetings.
- To go through reports/assessments and update relevant data bases and school compass system.
- To continuously identify and allocate (where possible) support for students who require it but have no assessment.
- Assist in the preparation of applications to the SENO for access to a variety of suitable Assistive Technologies (AT).
- To ensure the effective use of AT (organise the equipment, specialised classes, eBooks).
- To meet with different subject departments, consult on supports and programmes.
- In collaboration with the in-school management team, deploy AEN staff.

- In collaboration with management allocate AEN resources.
- In collaboration with school management organise students and timetables.
- To meet and discuss individual AEN students with parents/guardians.
- Ensure that an efficient system of sharing information with teachers in relation to students' needs is in place (compass).
- Consult and support other programmes in the school such as LCA, JCSP (identification of candidates).
- Test relevant students. Plan and prepare applications for reasonable accommodations in the state exams (this has been delegated to a member of the AEN Team).

The AEN co-ordinator will work closely with the AEN team, the school principal, subject teachers, parents, HSCL, BFL, the guidance counsellor, the student support team and other support structures within the school.

APPENDIX 3

EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE

An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of this Circular. The decision to exempt a student from 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, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher/s, special education teachers and the student. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A STUDENT MAY BE GRANTED AN EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances referenced as 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 or 2.2.4 in Circular Letter 0055/2022.

2.2.1 A student moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student whose 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 either (a) or (b)

(a) who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment^[2] or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

2.2.2 A student who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time. 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) who, at the time of the application for exemption 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 A student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life.

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of students who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these students, consideration may need to be given to adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. In very exceptional circumstances, this means that consideration may need to be given to exempting them from the study of Irish.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life

AND

(ii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student

AND

(iv) who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach to language skills development and the communicative approach underpinning the Specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) and the Leaving Certificate Syllabuses for Irish.

AND

(v) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

2.2.4 A student in a recognised^[3] special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation^[4] and has been deemed eligible^[5] for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

(i) Where a student is currently enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has previously been enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that student is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

OR

(ii) Where a 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, an application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.

PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING AN EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

(a) Steps required for a valid application for an exemption from the study of Irish

1. A parent/guardian on behalf of a student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish.

2. The school staff shall mark the date of receipt of the application on the application form and issue an acknowledgement to the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student as relevant, upon receipt of the application.
3. At the earliest opportunity a school official should contact the applicant(s) and:
 - discuss the written application with the applicant(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (as outlined in section 2.2 above) N.B. If a parent/guardian, or the student where he/she is the applicant, does not confirm the sub-paragraph under which the application is based then the application is null and void and no further processing of the application will take place. Only criteria contained in this Circular can be considered as grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish and no other exceptional circumstances can be considered.
 - advise the applicant(s) of the steps involved in processing the application.
 - inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and the student on whose behalf an application is made of the implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
4. The application should be fully processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.
5. Where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted a signed Certificate of Exemption will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and a copy will be held by the school in the student's file. The record keeping requirements are outlined further at 2.3(c) below.
6. Where an application is refused, the principal must inform the applicant(s) in writing outlining the reasons for refusal and notifying the applicant(s) that the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

(b) Considering an application for exemption

In considering an application for exemption from the study of Irish the principal will

1. Review the application and any documentation provided by the applicant(s);
2. Consult with the student's class teacher/s;

3. Consult with the special education teacher and the assigned teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service where relevant;
4. Review school documentation for the evidence outlined in subsection 2.2.

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal will be issued.

- i. The Certificate of Exemption will state the name and address of the school, the school roll number, the student's name, date of birth and the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted. A Certificate of Exemption is hyperlinked in the checklists within the Guidelines accompanying this Circular, published by the Department on the government website.
- ii. The arrangements for the student's learning will be explained to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- iii. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student should be informed of the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.
- iv. The application form, all supporting documentation, and a copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian consent for the retention and use of such records.
- v. In addition, where an exemption from the study of Irish is granted, the school should update the student's record on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD) as soon as possible to include the reason for that exemption.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Where an application for an exemption from the study of Irish is refused, an applicant can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee (IEAC). The IEAC will comprise three persons

who shall be selected from a panel of persons established and maintained by the Minister, having regard to the need for each IEAC to have available to it:

- Experience and skills in the provision of or inspection of special education in schools
- Experience and skills in the area of educational psychology and/or child and adolescent wellbeing and mental health
- Experience and skills in the leadership and administration of schools
- Experience and skills in the initial or continuing education of teachers of students with special educational needs.

The IEAC will make a decision on whether the exemption should be granted or not, inform the school of the decision and require the school to give effect to their decision. In making a decision the IEAC will consider the decision of the school and the grounds given for refusing the application, the criteria set out in this Circular and any supporting documentation that was available to the school, contained in the Student Support Plan(s) and any supplementary information provided to the school by the applicant. The appeal should be made on the appropriate form published on the Department's website.

The appeal must be lodged within 30 calendar days from the date of the written decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the applicant. Irish Exemption Appeal Form and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools can be accessed at www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/

RECORD KEEPING / REPORTING

All documentation concerning the application and processing process will be maintained in the Students file and be available for review by authorised Department of Education officials. The Principal will report relevant information concerning Irish exemptions to the Department of Education.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

Where a student has been granted an exemption from Irish due to learning needs, they shall attend support classes to address their learning needs. If a student is granted an exemption on other grounds they will remain in the Irish class and study where possible.

SHARING INFORMATION OF STUDENT'S CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the student (where s/he is the applicant) to ensure that a copy of the student's Certificate of Exemption is made available to Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed on enrolment into the school.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Further information including Application Forms, Guidance Information, and Appeals Form can be found on the Department of Education website at this link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/>

APPENDIX 4

CO-TEACHING IN COLÁISTE MHUIRE CO-ED

For school management co-teaching:

- Reduces pressures of trying to schedule teachers, students' free classes, and students' needs.
- Is more efficient: more students are served with team teaching than one-to-one resource.

For teachers' co-teaching:

- reduces pressure to "do all things at all times" i.e., one teacher sets up power-point and takes roll, while other teacher checks homework.
- Is a more efficient use of class time.
- Allows for more one-to-one interactions with students.
- Offers professional and moral support in and out of class.
- Makes for more dynamic teaching.

There are a few different models of co-teaching and more than one model may be carried out within the one day. These are:

- 1) Both teachers give introduction to the topic and explain different activities that they will host at different stations/areas.
- 2) The class divided in half with both teachers teaching the same lesson simultaneously.
- 3) Both teachers deliver the same instruction at the same time to both groups.
- 4) Teachers divide instructional content into several segments and present the content in two or more separate stations around the classroom. Teachers work with one group of children and then switch groups.
- 5) Station Teaching: Various learning stations are created, and the co-teachers provide individual support at different stations.
- 6) One teacher giving whole class instructions whilst the other working with one child or working with a small focus group. Small focus groups could be enrichment, pre teaching, re teaching, interest groups, special projects, extra support or assessment.
- 7) One teacher working with a small focus group, the other providing 1: 1 conferences with children where necessary.

For parents and students co-teaching:

- Creates a more inclusive environment.
- Allows more students get access supports.
- Allows for increased access to the curriculum (don't have to drop subject to pick up learning support).
- Provides services to students (i.e., every day instead of once or twice a week).
- Allows student needs addressed on the spot (don't have to wait for Resource class).

Appendix 5

Post-Primary Provision Map 24/25

| Area of Need ² | Whole-School & Classroom Support/ Support for All <i>Interventions delivered at whole-school level to support and promote positive behaviour and learning for ALL</i> | School Support/ Support for Some <i>Interventions delivered at School Support/ Support for SOME level to support students with SEN AEN who are in receipt of additional interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework</i> | School Support Plus/ Support for Few <i>Interventions delivered at School Support Plus/ Support for Few level to support students with AEN who are in receipt of additional interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework and external professionals</i> |
|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Social and Emotional Learning</i> | Academic Tracking Teacher observations Student referral forms Drop Everything and Read Student voice Cooperative groupwork Well-being committee Well-being week Cycle against suicide initiative After school fitness classes for staff and students Range of speakers organised throughout the year PE offered to all classes Le Cheile group to offer peer support Primary Transition Programme (Belonging Plus) Student Passports School Induction Anti-bullying policy Well-being programme Class tutoring and journal monitoring | Guidance referral system Student Support team AEN department referral Social games group Internal guidance teacher counselling Diagnostic informal assessment SSPs/BSPs Social Skills Training Retracking Programme Why Try Friends for Life Small group withdrawal Mindfulness Teacher and SNA observations | Individualised school support plans JC L2LPs Input from NEPS / NCSE/ CAMHS Reduced timetables for students having difficulty Individual in-school counselling Individual guidance counselling SSPs/ BSPs Reduced subject load BFL teacher SCP |

² Area of need will include students who are identified as having additional needs at school level (i.e. without a psychological report) and those whom have an identified disability with a report from external agencies like, for example, ASD, ADHD, Dyspraxia.

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| | SPHE Curriculum Student Support Team Student Support Team Career Guidance Record systems Mental Health Awareness Week Activities Positive Quotes/students work/ photographs/poster displays. Critical Incident Response Team Parental engagement Student voice | | |
| Social and Communication Skills | Emphasis of oral communication in new JC curriculum Cooperative group work Differentiated questioning Scaffolding/ recasting/ imitation and expansion Reach for the Stars SPHE curriculum Wide range of after school sports offered (soccer, Hurling, Basketball, camogie etc.) Range of non-competitive school sports offered (badminton, table tennis also students have access to the gym suite in the DOME) Well-being committee Public speaking – debating School play Field trips inc. foreign trip Friends for Life Programme Social Outings Gaisce award (TY) Le Chelie mentoring Group for 1 st year students School Choir Sports teams Student Council initiatives Chunking tasks Music Generation | AEN department referral Specific focus on oral communication with JC students in AEN classes Social games group Smart board used in AEN classroom for social games LCA curriculum for 5 th and 6 th Music Generation workshops Art Therapy Talkabout programme Social Skills Groups Social Stories Lunch time clubs, peer mentoring Role play Speech, language and communication interventions SSPs/BSPs | Individualised school support plans JC L2LPs Input from NEPS / NCSE/ SLT Reduced timetables Individual in-school counselling SSPs/BSPs Student interviews Social, Emotional, Behavioural and Adaptive functioning assessment. |

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| | Whole staff CPD | | |
| Self-management and/or Organisational skills | Organisational skills Classroom routines Graphic organisers, mind maps, Handouts Homework policy Team Teaching Journals - timetable, school codes of behaviour Colour coded timetables Class tutor system Computer Club 2-day induction 3-week transition timetable Incoming 1 st year primary school visits Visual Supports/ Visual Schedules Flag system on Compass Lockers- designated areas. | Movement breaks Timers AEN department referral Highlighted group of 1 st years who need extra support in organisation facilitated by SNA – staff survey leading to peer/tutor support LCA curriculum for 5 th and 6 th Colour coded timetables, books, Checklists and study plans. A3 Ziplock Folder used for subjects (all material and equipment needed for subject) Social stories Self-monitoring checklists Alert programme SNA locker support SSPs | JC L2LPs Self-monitoring checklists OT Programme SSPs SNA supports to encourage independence. AFLS Assessment |
| Study Skills | Mind mapping & Graphic organisers Highlighting and summarising strategies Homework club Study skills classes Pre-mock in preparation for Mocks and State exams Study skills seminars After School study Learning to learn strategies- explicit teaching of metacognitive skills- NBSS resources | Subject revision checklist development Differentiated handouts Visual representing Summarising techniques Checklist creations Skim and scan Explicit teaching of time management and scheduling strategies Study skills focus in AEN classes prior to school exams Colour coded study plans Sequencing training Comprehension strategies SSP | Individual study skills development SSP |

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| Life Skills | <p>Computer Club at lunchtime</p> <p>School Bank (BOI)</p> <p>LCA</p> <p>LCVP for 5th and 6th year students</p> <p>Organisation of School trips/events</p> <p>Work experience</p> <p>C.V. creation</p> <p>Wellbeing programme</p> <p>Gaisce Awards</p> | <p>AEN department referral</p> <p>LCA curriculum for 5th and 6th year</p> <p>Mindfulness</p> <p>Transition Support Plans</p> <p>Typing skills</p> <p>Self-care skills</p> <p>Conflict resolution skills</p> <p>Social Stories</p> <p>Driver Theory Test</p> <p>SSPs</p> | <p>Individualised school support plans</p> <p>Collaboration with outside agencies e.g. Occupational Therapist</p> <p>JC L2LPs</p> <p>SNA support for some students with complex needs</p> <p>Work experience</p> <p>CAMHS and NEPS support/ intervention</p> <p>Transition Support Plans</p> |
| Behaviour | <p>Merit system / Reward slip</p> <p>Code of Behaviour-</p> <p>Schoolwide Positive</p> <p>Reach for the Stars</p> <p>Use of Journals and incident sheets</p> <p>Referral forms for Student Support Team</p> <p>Merit systems, Rewards, Praise for positive behaviour</p> <p>Parent/guardian communication</p> <p>Team Teaching</p> <p>Student support team</p> <p>Staff monitoring lunch/break times</p> <p>Behaviour Support</p> <p>Home visits HSCL</p> | <p>AEN department referral</p> <p>Report sheets</p> <p>Seating plans encouraged throughout school</p> <p>Student behaviour contracts</p> <p>Check and Connect</p> <p>Class behaviour plans</p> <p>BSPs</p> | <p>Individualised school support plans</p> <p>Collaboration with outside agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer</p> <p>Year head liaison, go to person for students needing time out of class.</p> <p>Timetable modification</p> <p>Behaviour target setting and review</p> <p>CAMHS instructed initiatives</p> <p>NCSE (NBSS) tailored behavioural and academic programmes</p> <p>BFL teacher</p> <p>Regular check in - check out throughout the day</p> <p>BSPs</p> <p>SCP School refusal Intervention</p> <p>HSCL linking and support people at home</p> |
| Language | <p>Multi-sensory approach to subject teaching</p> <p>Keyword displays in classrooms</p> <p>Teaching the language of subject/s,</p> <p>Word banks</p> <p>Class discussions and debating</p> <p>Orally presenting work</p> <p>Role play</p> <p>Mock interview and oral preparations scaffolding information in classes and</p> | <p>AEN department referral</p> <p>Keys words journal</p> <p>Mind maps, graphic organisers</p> <p>oral descriptive and expressive skills development</p> <p>EAL Liaison teacher</p> <p>Withdrawal from third language / Irish (if exempt) class for extra support with English</p> <p>Sight word building</p> <p>EAL support</p> | <p>AEN language development linked to Speech and language therapist or identified needs.</p> <p>SSPs</p> |

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| | <p>using visuals to support where and when possible. Think/Pair/Share.</p> <p>Wait time</p> <p>JC CBA</p> <p>Team Teaching</p> <p>Visual Supports</p> <p>ICT/Coding</p> <p>Vocabulary Enrichment Programme</p> | Vocabulary Enrichment Programme | |
| Literacy | <p>Textbook reading age review</p> <p>Drop Everything and Read</p> <p>Multi-sensory approach to subject teaching</p> <p>Sharing of learning intentions / keywords</p> <p>Integration of technology into subject teaching</p> <p>Keywords journal banks, Key exam terms in journal, Book in a bag</p> <p>Library committee / membership / classes have access to it</p> <p>Public speaking – debating offered</p> <p>Standardised Intake tests</p> <p>Primary school liaison</p> <p>Follow up CAT4 test</p> <p>AFL,</p> <p>Vocabulary Enrichment Programme,</p> <p>School newsletter.</p> <p>Library access to books for students reading ages, dictionaries, use of ICT.</p> | <p>AEN department referral</p> <p>In-class teacher support/ co-teaching</p> <p>Classroom content notes provided</p> <p>Continued NGRT test follow up for students scoring below average</p> <p>IWB used in AEN classroom</p> <p>Non Irish</p> <p>Small group withdrawal</p> <p>Individual classes timetabled</p> <p>RACE accommodations for state exams</p> <p>CatchUP Literacy program</p> <p>Toe by toe program</p> <p>LCA curriculum for 5th and 6th</p> | <p>SSPs</p> <p>Individual classes timetabled</p> <p>SNA's allocated to assist in class</p> <p>RACE accommodations for state exams</p> <p>CatchUP Literacy program</p> <p>Toe by Toe program</p> <p>SNIP</p> <p>NEPS struggling readers strategy supports</p> |

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| Numeracy | <p>Multi-sensory approach to subject teaching</p> <p>Sharing of learning intentions</p> <p>Integration of technology into subject teaching</p> <p>Notes/ content available on google classroom</p> <p>teaching of vocabulary, Keyword banking,</p> <p>Staff training in highlighting Numeracy across the curriculum</p> <p>Intake screening</p> <p>Follow up CAT4 testing</p> <p>Numeracy board, puzzle of the week, Maths week,</p> <p>Numeracy links identified in all subject areas, AFL, diagnostic pre and post testing.</p> <p>Use of ICT</p> | <p>AEN department referral</p> <p>Small group withdrawal</p> <p>Individual classes timetabled</p> <p>In-class teacher support</p> <p>Notes handed out</p> <p>Access to real life situations</p> <p>IWB used in AEN classroom</p> <p>LCA curriculum for 5th and 6th</p> <p>Pre-teaching class topics</p> <p>Social maths/ functional maths</p> <p>SSPs</p> <p>Concrete materials</p> <p>Paired maths</p> | <p>SSPs</p> <p>SNA's allocated to assist in class</p> <p>Individual classes timetabled</p> <p>Tailored maths initiatives</p> <p>Organisational skills</p> <p>Sequential development</p> <p>Scaffolding</p> <p>Pre-teaching class topics</p> <p>Social maths/ functional maths</p> |
| Physical and/ or Sensory | <p>Teachers made aware of students' difficulties</p> <p>Compass Flags used to inform of any student issues,</p> <p>Seating plans, quiet time,</p> <p>multi-sensory teaching approaches encouraged</p> <p>Annual audit of sensory and physical environment</p> <p>Primary school liaison prior to enrolment</p> <p>Building is fully accessible with lifts and ramps</p> <p>Corridors are wide</p> <p>Adequate natural light in building</p> <p>Green space around building</p> <p>Building is clean and safe</p> <p>Range of modern PE equipment</p> <p>Access to school gym</p> <p>DOMÉ</p> | <p>Movement breaks</p> <p>Additional toilet and changing facilities with space for wheelchairs</p> <p>Computer typing skills program used for those with laptops</p> <p>Base classrooms allocated for students with movement difficulties</p> <p>Sensory room</p> <p>Sensory breaks</p> <p>Stress balls</p> <p>Fidgets</p> <p>Weighted blanket</p> <p>SSPs</p> | <p>SSPs</p> <p>SNA allocated to student with mobility needs</p> <p>Collaboration with outside agencies e.g. Occupational Therapist / HSE</p> <p>Student with visual impairment situated in base class with access to computer and digital magnifier</p> <p>Teachers using auditory system for students with hearing impairment</p> <p>Additional teacher in PE classes for students with mobility impairment</p> <p>Occupational therapy</p> <p>Physiotherapy</p> <p>SSPs</p> <p>Sensory Room</p> |

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| | use of music, | | |
| Medical | Compass Flag to let staff know if a student has a medical condition. Identified staff to administer general first aid and monitor for signs of illness. | Identified staff administer medication as directed by GP. SNA trained in Diabetics, Peg Feeding and Catheterization of students with spina bifida | GP/ HSE external monitoring SNA support |