

Introduction

“Additional (Special) educational needs means in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition...” Education for persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

The rationale for this policy is to provide a clear and structured framework for AEN provision within Ardscoil Rís. This policy, in line with current circulars, will help to ensure that resources and supports available to the school will be utilised to their optimum by the school community. This policy will comply with current legislation and provide an inclusive education for all students in this school. It will also assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their son in our school (see Ardscoil Rís Admissions Policy). We welcome all students and acknowledge that diversity will enrich our school.

The Ardscoil Rís AEN policy follows principles of inclusivity by responding to diverse educational needs and facilitating access of students to a broad and balanced curriculum and the opportunity to receive an education appropriate to their needs.

Aims of the AEN Team

- To provide learning support in line with the current model of provision which endeavours to identify and meet the needs of our students and monitor the outcomes. It is based on a continuum of support where students with the highest level of need, get the highest level of support.
- To liaise between parents/guardians, students, subject teachers and outside agencies to foster an environment where students with diverse needs can be facilitated in participating and learning to their potential.

Transition from Primary school to Ardscoil Rís

We seek to identify and assess students with learning difficulties as early and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that we can properly address those needs. This process will include, where applicable, a visit by members of staff to local primary schools.

Upon admission into the school, parents/guardians can contact the AEN team who are available to consult with parents/guardians and to advise of the school provision.

To encourage friendships and familiarisation with our school, there is a team bonding day and Student Council activities for incoming 1st year students in the first two weeks of starting school.

Parents/guardians of a student with AEN are advised to provide any necessary documentation once enrolment is confirmed to help ease the transition process for their son.

Ardscoil Rís Additional Educational Needs Policy

The ability of the school to respond to the AEN of any student applying for admission is dependent on appropriate facilities and resources to allow the school to meet that need.

Identification of Needs

The school identifies AEN using several means. Standardised testing, feedback from primary schools, Educational Passports, supporting documentation from outside agencies, term assessments and teacher feedback, are all part of the identification process.

Students who have low scores in the CAT4 Tests (Standardised assessments completed by the student as part of the transfer programme) and in the Maths Competency Tests may be offered Learning Support. Parents/guardians of these students will be consulted with a view to accommodating their child in a Learning/Subject Support Group.

Students where English is not their first language can have access to language support within the resources available within the school.

During the school year, students who are identified by teachers, parents/guardians, or who request it themselves can be accommodated within existing groupings if deemed appropriate. Results of end of term assessments given by subject teachers are shared with the Learning Support team.

Modes of Provision of Learning Support

The Continuum of Support framework is used to enable us to identify and respond to our students' needs in a flexible way, which has also been our normal practice to date. It enables us to continue to gather and analyse information and to put supports in place, where necessary. This support will then be reviewed for individual students by the AEN Coordinator. Support is based on the identification of an additional educational need.

There are three levels of support:

Level One: SUPPORT FOR ALL: Whole school and Classroom support - this will focus on preventative and proactive approaches through testing, providing information for students, staff and parents, alongside whole class support.

Level Two: SUPPORT FOR SOME: This will focus on providing school support for small groups and some individuals on a weekly timetabled basis, or short-term intervention.

Level Three: SUPPORT FOR A FEW: This will provide individualised and specialist support for a number of students on a regular timetabled basis. This will include regular meetings with the individual student's AEN contact teacher.

Provision for all students is based on the NCSE Continuum of Support. Individual withdrawal is needs and resourced based and is used only where a student requires specialised individual support. Withdrawal for small group resource work may occur during Irish (if the student has an exemption from Irish), based on student need and the school's resources. Groups are arranged based on similar

need profiles and the capacity to withdraw students at the same time.

Individual files are kept on each student identified as having AEN. Information in the files includes psychological reports, assessment results, correspondence between the school, parents/guardians and other relevant agencies, and applications for support.

Emotional and Behavioural Needs

Behavioural Management Programmes if required, are drawn up in collaboration with the AEN team, Subject teachers, SNAs, Parents/Guardians, and students.

Students with Exceptional Ability

Students who are exceptionally able or talented are those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve high performance in various areas are encouraged to use these talents to their fullest, through curricular and extra-curricular activities, and may be supported by the school, through additional subject choices and encouragement to demonstrate their talents in the various clubs available within the school. Students may also be encouraged to attend the Centre for Talented Youth in DCU.

Roles and Responsibilities

The support of AEN students is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experience.

Board of Management:

The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards students with special needs. It will be updated regularly on the provision of AEN resources to the student cohort i.e. funding, equipment and personnel, and will consider the inclusivity of all students when making fundamental decisions regarding the working of the school. The Board will ensure that a working AEN policy is in place, will review this policy regularly and will make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Principal and Deputy Principal:

The Principal and Deputy Principal of the school will assume responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Additional Educational Needs in co-operation with the Board of Management, AEN team and staff.

The Principal is also responsible for the granting of Irish Exemptions and will facilitate the continuing professional development of staff involved in AEN, where necessary.

AEN Coordinator:

The AEN Coordinator will work closely with the school management team in coordinating the school's provision for the inclusion of students with AEN. The AEN Coordinator will also work closely with the AEN team, SNAs, Teachers, Parents and students to coordinate provision for students with AEN and to develop Student Support Files. The AEN Coordinator will facilitate the operation of the AEN policy, inform, advise and support colleagues in order to facilitate differentiated lesson planning, liaise with external agencies in relation to AEN, oversee the storage of AEN records, facilitate AEN meetings etc.

Subject Teacher:

The subject teacher has been explicitly recognised as having the primary responsibility for the progress & care of all students in their classroom in the DES Circular 0014/2017 and the Post Primary Guidelines. It is the teacher's responsibility to identify and refer a potential student for additional resources/supports, and to acquire knowledge of the educational needs of their students, in collaboration with the AEN Coordinator, to enable them to differentiate the curriculum for those with AEN.

Special Education Teacher (SET):

The SET provides direct teaching and educational support to the individual student, and to small groups of students requiring additional support. These teachers collaborate with the AEN Coordinator as well as parents and outside agencies in providing Student Support Files. They will liaise with subject teachers, the AEN Coordinator and SNAs to provide input to the student with AEN, according to the diagnosis given.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs):

SNAs will support individually allocated students with Care Needs and with AEN within the school in terms of physical, emotional, social and cognitive support. They may also offer learning support to small groups of students within the class, under the direction of the Subject teacher. The SNA will closely liaise with both the AEN Coordinator and the class teacher to facilitate students with AEN. All students are entitled to their breaks and to this end students with AEN are supported and monitored by the SNAs and the teachers on supervision duty.

Collaboration with External Agencies:

These agencies may include but not limited to any combination of the following; Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, H.S.E. personnel, Doctors and Psychiatrists, Visiting Teachers, Social Workers etc.

The EPSEN Act (2004) assures interlinking provision between the National Council for Special Education Needs (NCSE), The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), and the Health Executive and school. In accordance with this act, the school will work with the local SENO, the local NEPS psychologist, the local resource teachers for Travellers, the Blind and the Hearing impaired, and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of any student. Case meetings with relevant professionals will be held in the school, with the permission and knowledge of the student's parents/guardians (and their attendance) to determine the best approach and provision for the students in question. The arrangements for such meetings will be Coordinated by the Student Support Team and permission sought from the parents/guardians in advance. Notes from such meetings will be recorded and maintained in the student's file. It is recognised that these agencies can deliver valued expertise and advice regarding the many and varied needs of the students and the AEN support team will facilitate and liaise with any of these personnel to establish the specific needs of and necessary resources for the student. This information will then be disseminated the teaching and support staff.

Ardscoil Rís Additional Educational Needs Policy

Facilities and Resources

AEN 'resources' can include textbooks, reading and writing programmes, assessment/diagnostic testing tools, library books, oral language development materials, ICT and varied other materials. These materials will be primarily used by the AEN team but may also be made available to individual teachers following consultation with the AEN Coordinator.

Recommendations from psychological reports will be kept in the student support files. A summary of these recommendations will also be available to teaching staff on the confidential Shared digital AEN drive.

Timetabling

The provision of AEN support may include withdrawal of students from class and/or in-class tuition. These students may have an exemption from Irish, in which case they may be timetabled for resource/learning support during those periods. Effort will be made to ensure that students do not miss out on the key curricular areas. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted to ensure that class disruption be minimised.

Allocation of hours for AEN

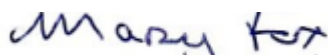
The NCSE have allocated hours to Ardscoil Rís regarding Additional Education Teaching Allocation. These hours will be allocated by School Management to respond to the needs of students with Additional Educational Needs where teaching resources are available. Supports provided to students are based on identified needs and are informed by regular reviews of progress. Where possible students with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these students will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support. All members of the AEN department will have access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of students with special educational needs.

Health and Safety Issues for Students with AEN

Some students may need one to one supervision during break times, and this is provided by SNAs, and supervising teachers, where required. SNAs generally accompany students with AEN on school outings such as games and tours. Issues relating to Health and Safety of all students are referred to the BOM. Students who have AEN are subject to the Ardscoil Rís Code of Behaviour in the same way as other students.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management 20th March 2025.

Signed:



Date: 20th March 2025

Mary Fox, Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed:



Date: 20th March 2025

John McHugh, Principal