



## **Additional Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy**

### **Introduction**

Our Lady of Mercy College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school, under the trusteeship of CEIST, which caters for students of all backgrounds and abilities. We aim to provide our students with an education that equips them for life and living in the modern world. We aim to challenge students to share with us the Christian vision of life. We have drawn up a Mission Statement that describes the kind of school we wish to be. We hope that every member of the school community will attempt to live by it and we intend that all of our decisions are informed by it and our school development plans based on it. In this policy the term 'Parent' is taken to include the term 'Guardian'.

### **Mission Statement**

The core values of Our Lady of Mercy College are respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually, and culturally, as a member of the school community and in the spirit of Mercy Ethos.

### **The Mercy Ethos**

Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Pupils, Parents and the wider community. Our school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1967 and became part of CEIST in 2007. Our current student population is approx 380



CEIST (Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust) was established by five Catholic Religious Congregations – Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – to provide a sustainable moral and legal trustee framework for post-primary Catholic education in Ireland. Rooted in the founding vision of its Congregations, CEIST emphasises the

## Our Lady of Mercy College



dignity and rights of individuals, empowers the vulnerable, and prepares young people to be agents of social transformation. The Trust is dedicated to fostering inclusive, hospitable, excellent, and compassionate learning environments inspired by Gospel values and the wisdom of its Founders. CEIST promotes collaborative school faith communities, supports staff in their essential roles, and addresses the evolving needs of youth. Engaging in ecumenical dialogue, CEIST values its Catholic identity while working with other Christian traditions and all people of goodwill to advocate for the poor, justice, and environmental stewardship, respecting diversity.

- Promoting spiritual and human development.
- Achieving quality in teaching and learning.
- Showing respect for every person.
- Creating community.
- Being just and responsible

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Our Lady of Mercy College provides the conditions and experiences which will promote the development of the full potential of each person including the spiritual, moral, physical, social, aesthetic, intellectual and vocational development.

We strive to ensure that every member of the school community is held in very high regard and their dignity, worth and individuality is respected. We aim to build a sense of community based on Christian values.

Our Lady of Mercy College welcomes students with Additional Educational Needs and this policy is written in that same spirit, where the uniqueness of the individual is recognised, and a partnership of learning is created. We strive to build a sense of community based on Christian values. The school's Code of Behaviour acknowledges this and aims to promote a culture of respect throughout the school.

### **Rationale**

The term 'Additional Educational Needs' is defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004) as 'a restriction in capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or

## Our Lady of Mercy College



learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition’.

This policy, and the philosophy that underpins it, reflects our current practice in the area of inclusion and support for students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) in Our Lady of Mercy College, while also taking account of developments in practice as they occur. Inclusion is about reducing barriers where possible to help all students within the school community to be fully included in the educational environment. Collaboration of all parties involved is a prerequisite of inclusion.

The purpose of the policy is to provide clear guidelines for the use of additional teaching resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to support students with identified needs.

The policy is implemented in the context of a revised model for allocating Additional Education Teaching (AET) resources which was introduced by the DES in September 2017, **Circular 0014\_2017** and **Circular 03/2024** which ensure that additional teaching resources are available to support students with the greatest level of learning need.

The following Legislative Framework also influences the policy:

- The **Data Protection Acts** (1998, 1998, 2003, 2018),
- The **General Data Protection Regulations** (2018),
- The DES **Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Students with additional Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools** (2017),
- The **Education for Persons with additional Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act** (2004),
- The **Equal Status Acts** 2000 and 2004,
- The **Education Welfare Act** (2000) and
- The **Education Act** (1998).

We value inclusion in our policies, practices and procedures so that all students in our school are supported in accessing the curriculum and being valued and respected as individuals. We value

## Our Lady of Mercy College



the wellbeing of our students and staff alike, and we work in a collaborative manner to support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.

Our Lady of Mercy College welcomes students with AEN and adheres to the following principles of the EPSEN Act:

- The education of people with AEN shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs,
- People with AEN shall have the right to avail of and benefit from appropriate education,
- People with AEN 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.

### **Aims of Our Lady of Mercy College in relation to students with Additional Educational Needs**

- To provide, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level of inclusive education opportunity to all students with AEN.
- Ensure that all students with AEN are identified and provided for in a fair manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth, dignity and well-being are respected.
- Ensure that students with AEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum.
- Set high standards for students with AEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve their full potential.
- Fostering and encouraging positive partnerships with parents in order to achieve appropriate support at home and in school.
- Coordinate supports and advice from in relevant support sources
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of practice in support of students with AEN.
- Support and facilitate staff in engaging in relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

## Our Lady of Mercy College



### Interventions

- Under the 2017 model of allocation of support for students with AEN, a greater level of autonomy is provided to schools in managing and deploying additional education teaching support within schools - based on the individual learning needs (including literacy, numeracy, social, emotional and behavioural needs) of students, as opposed to being based primarily on a diagnosis of disability
- Students under this allocation model will be identified by the school for additional teaching support in accordance with the Continuum of Support Guidelines
- The allocation provides a single unified allocation for additional educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. This allocation allows Our Lady of Mercy College to provide additional education teaching support for all students who require such support in this school, within available resources.
- We endeavour to deploy resources based on each students' individual needs. Resources will be deployed based on the principle that students with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. Where possible, we aim to ensure that students who access support lessons are grouped according to similarity of need.
- The Principal and teachers will use their professional judgement in applying the principles and practices set out in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.

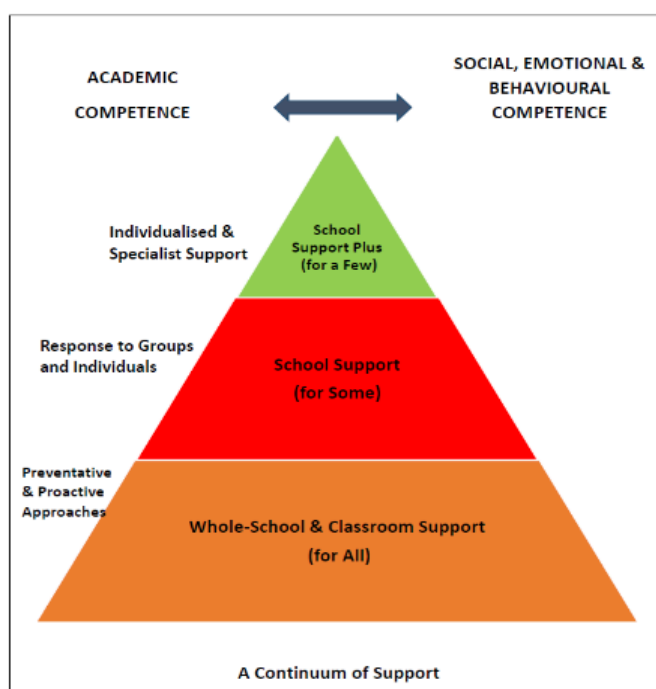
Teachers will be provided with opportunities to engage in Continuing Professional Development in the area of AEN, and encouraged to adopt classroom-based support strategies for students with

AEN

e.g.

<https://www.sess.ie/categories/general-learning-disabilities/mild-general-learning-disability/tips-learning-and-teaching>

## Our Lady of Mercy College



We endeavour to adhere to the following six principles, in so far as is practicable, to guide the AEN Support implementation process (These principles are further explored in the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, 2017):

### **Supporting Students with additional Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools: Implementation of the Revised additional Education Teaching (SET) Model, 2017**

*(See NCSE Toolkit: New additional Education Teacher (SET) Model - DES: 2017)*

1. Resources provided to support students with additional educational needs will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school.
2. Support provided to students with additional educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



3. The class/subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with additional educational needs.
4. additional education teaching support provided to schools should be used solely for the support of students with identified additional educational needs, including those students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The additional education teaching supports cannot be used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither can they be used to allow any additional education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.
5. Students with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these students should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
6. The school will aim to establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of students with additional educational needs.

Students with identified needs will be provided with relevant support, within our resource capacity, using the NEPS Continuum of Support model to prioritise students most in need of support.

Qualifying categories of AEN are as follows:

- ☐ Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia, Hyperlexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia),
- ☐ General Learning Difficulties (Borderline GLD – an IQ of 70-79),
- ☐ Emotional/behavioural difficulties (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder),
- ☐ Physical Difficulties (Dyspraxia, Hearing Impairment, Wheelchair-User),
- ☐ Speech and Language Disorders,
- ☐ Sensory Impairments (Visual, Hearing Impairments etc),

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- ☐ Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders/Pervasive Development Disorder,
- ☐ Assessed Syndrome (e.g. Downs Syndrome),
- ☐ ESOL – English for Students with Other Languages,
- ☐ Gifted Children,
- ☐ Genetic disorders.

Irish exemptions can be granted based on Circular 0055\_2022

### **Educational Interventions**

- Continuum of support, for students who need the assistance of an Additional Needs Assistant (ANA), by a student support plan (SSP) which is devised by relevant personnel, in consultation with the student and parent(s), and shared with the staff via shared AEN drive on google to staff,
- In-class support / support teaching by a suitably qualified teacher to support students with learning difficulties, e.g. Team-Teaching,
- Withdrawal of students, where deemed necessary, for individual or small group support by suitably qualified teacher(s),
- AEN Core Team will provide helpful information, available on via shared AEN drive on google, for each teacher to support students with AEN in their classes,
- Information on AEN will be updated by the AEN Coordinator and made available on via shared AEN drive on google to all teaching staff,
- Advice and consultation from the Guidance counsellor and Student Support Teams,
- Provision of the Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP) where deemed appropriate,
- Reduced curriculum where appropriate and in exceptional situations,
- Provision of other targeted interventions e.g. Check and Connect as appropriate.



## Our Lady of Mercy College



### **Additional Education Teachers Core Team**

The Core Team consists of:

- AEN Coordinator (s)
- Learning support teachers
- Additional Needs Assistants

It may occasionally be necessary to invite the participation of the following:

- Guidance Counsellor
- Principal/Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Student Support Teachers, on occasions.

Members of the AEN Core Team may visit feeder primary schools and gather relevant information on students with identified needs as appropriate.

### **Roles Within the AEN Core Team**

#### **The AEN Coordinator**

- The role of the AEN Coordinator is to oversee and coordinate all aspects of support for students with AEN
- To liaise with Year Heads and the Student Support Teams in the identification of students' needs
- To convene and chair meetings of the AEN Core Team
- The AEN Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, Deputy and Guidance Counsellor, ensures CAT-4 testing is completed for incoming First Years.
- Identifying students in need of testing
- Coordination of testing and liaising with relevant students, parents and the AEN Core Team in relation to such testing with a view to making applications for RACE
- Coordination of appropriate interventions for students with identified needs
- Liaising with Year Heads through Student Support Teams

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- Collating all relevant information from enrolment forms regarding individual students identified needs, including relevant information supplied from a student's Primary School
- Coordinating the process and applications for Reasonable Accommodations (RACE) in State Examinations
- Coordinating ICT devices for students with AEN, including devices for students' use during the State Examinations
- Updating and advising staff of current preferred teaching methodologies in relation to students with AEN
- Liaising daily with our Additional Needs Assistants
- Communication with whole staff and providing information for teaching, monitoring and evaluating students' progress and Reasonable Accommodations in the State Exams
- Liaising with other relevant professionals, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, visiting teachers, additional school or additional class teachers
- The AEN Coordinator will make available to staff some relevant tips for teaching and learning from the Educational Psychologists.
- Meeting and advising parents, where necessary.

### NEPS Liaison

- To liaise with the NEPS psychologist as appropriate, e.g. beginning of academic year.
- To organise meetings with NEPS psychologist in school as appropriate
- To attend consultation meetings with NEPS collaborating with AEN teachers in schools across the region.
- To communicate reports to the AEN team and staff are then notified of any AEN diagnosis received by a student as a result of a NEPS Assessment.
- To organise the completion of relevant documentation (parental consent forms, Rating Scales etc and hosts meetings between students, parents and NEPS as and when needed.

### The Additional Educational Need Teacher

- Supporting students with additional / identified needs. This may include supports / interventions from a range of the following areas: literacy, numeracy, social skills,

## Our Lady of Mercy College



organisational skills, behavioural interventions, speech and language support, English as an Additional Language support, wellbeing and life-skills

- Linking with subject teachers to ensure the most relevant aspects of support are implemented
- Supporting the work involved in applications for RACE
- Supporting the work of the AEN Coordinator in the areas of administration, testing, identifying students with additional needs, provision of appropriate interventions, monitoring and reviewing students' progress and liaising with subject teachers
- Applications for RACE in State Exams. Identification of students at the beginning of the school year in order that testing and other relevant procedures can begin in advance of department deadlines
- Conducting all relevant testing and liaising with relevant students, parents and the AEN Core Team in relation to such testing with a view to making applications for RACE in State Examinations.
- Relevant planning, record-keeping and communication with the staff in relation to teaching, monitoring and evaluating the progress of students with identified needs.

### **Student Support Teachers**

- The role of the Student Support teacher is to provide support for students with identified needs, through in-class / co-teaching support, small group teaching, small group and individual withdrawal from mainstream classes
- Assessing and recording students' needs and progress
- Completing relevant documents showing content covered
- Liaise with the relevant subject teacher(s) of students being supported regarding the students' needs and appropriate support interventions
- Liaising with the AEN Coordinator regarding the content, approaches and appropriate duration of all interventions and supports provided.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



### **Additional Needs Assistants: (Circular 30\_2014)**

- The role of the SNA is specific to the need of the student/students to whom the SNA is assigned.
- The safety of students with AEN is paramount in the role of the SNA. The SNA supports the students with AEN in a manner that makes the environment as safe and accessible as possible.
- The SNA is responsible for the care and well-being of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as promoting independence (Circular 30\_2014).
- At all times the wishes and preferences of students with AEN and their parents are taken into consideration by the SNA, subject to school resources. This is particularly important in the area of toileting and intimate care.
- To support the care needs of the student with AEN, where relevant, in a manner that values, respects and supports the student as well as fostering their independence in an age-appropriate manner.
- To provide organisational support to students identified with emerging needs.
- The SNA may be required to assist students with AEN on extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, field trips and other educational outings and tours.

### **Parents:**

- Parents are the primary educators of their children. It is the responsibility of parents to communicate clearly and accurately with the school authorities where they know or suspect any AEN related issues with their child. Parents are consulted and consent sought where screening, testing and profiling is conducted. The school operates in a collaborative manner with parents and aims to keep lines of communication open in relation to students' progress.
- Parents play a key role in supporting their child and the school in the identification of students' needs and supporting them in their ongoing learning and progress. Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- The school regards the partnership with parents as a very important one and is always open and responsive to expressions of concern made by parents. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend any meeting concerning their child's progress.

### **The school recognises its responsibility under section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 to:**

1. Inform parents of their child's additional educational needs and how those are being met.
2. Consult parents with regard to making all decisions of a significant nature concerning their child's education and invite them to participate in such decisions.

### **Students:**

Students are encouraged to set learning targets with their teachers and work towards the achievement of those targets. Students are encouraged to seek help and support if they encounter difficulty in their learning, and may request support, which is subject to school resources.

- We believe that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their own learning.
- Students are encouraged to adopt a proactive and independent approach to their studies.

### **Classroom Teacher:**

- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with additional educational needs.
- The teacher regularly checks students' information via shared AEN drive on google for updates on the AEN tab, and implements the advice and recommendations given there and in Psychological Reports and other relevant documents, as advised.
- The subject teacher seeks advice from the AEN Core Team, if necessary, and liaises with Learning Support teachers, as appropriate.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- This responsibility extends to all matters relating to the access, organisation and participation of students with AEN in educational outings and tours (see Educational Outings and Tours Policy). Throughout an educational outing the subject teacher assumes responsibility for all students in his/her/their care, including students with AEN. Where a class/subject teacher is not participating in the outing, the Organiser assumes such responsibility. At all times in advance of an educational outing the class/subject teacher will liaise with the Organiser to ensure that risks are minimised, full accessibility by taxi/coach and in the destination, premises are organised at the time of booking.
- It is particularly important that all teachers create a classroom environment that accommodates and takes cognisance of the students' difficulties and needs.
- The teacher plays an important role in the early identification of the learning difficulties that are present and may not have yet been formally identified. The teacher is alerted to the possibility and brings their concerns to the attention of the AEN Coordinator. The AEN Concern Slip should be completed by the teacher as a record of the concern, and entered into the AEN folder in the staffroom.
- All staff will be briefed by the Principal and AEN Coordinator at the start of the year in relation to the students with AEN.
- Shared AEN drive on google student profiles (AEN tab) are updated regularly throughout the year as information becomes available. Teachers should check the tabs regularly for updates.

### **Guidance Counsellor:**

The role of the Guidance Counsellor in relation to students with AEN consists largely of the following functions (*Post Primary Guidelines, p.79*):

- Regularly liaising with the AEN Core Team in relation to the needs of students with AEN
- Counselling in personal, educational and career development; Supporting the Well-being and Pastoral Care of students.
- Personal and social development.
- Career information management.
- Consultation with community organisations.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- Vocational preparation: job search skills, preparation for work experience.
- Referrals to other professionals and agencies when required.
- Participation in the Junior and Senior Student Support Teams.
- Liaising with Learning Support teachers who will conduct relevant testing for DARE applications.
- Evaluation of the Guidance and Counselling needs and services.

### **Year Heads:**

The Year Head has a pivotal role in relation to students in the Year Group who have AEN / identified needs and is involved on a number of levels. The role of the Year Head within the year group consists largely of the following functions:

- Regularly liaising with the AEN Core Team in relation to the needs of students with AEN / identified needs in their Year Group, as they arise (using the AEN concern slip).
- Involvement in the academic, pastoral, personal, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, interpersonal and physical needs of the student.
- To act as a link person for a student with AEN who has been referred to them by the AEN Core Team.
- Contributing to the Student Support Team meetings in relation to the identification of students' needs and the provision of appropriate support for students with identified or emerging needs.
- Liaising with SET teachers in relation to the preparation and review of Student Support Plans.
- Monitoring students' progress, including academic tracking, and liaising with the AEN Coordinator in relation to identifying students' support needs and areas of concern.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL) Teacher:**

- The EAL teacher works in collaboration with parents, Year Heads, teachers to identify pupils requiring language support and will assess their proficiency in English.
- Assessment tests will be administered to students to help inform programmes specific to students' individual learning needs.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- The EAL Teacher will record and monitor student progress and communicate with parents at parent teacher meetings as required.
- The EAL Teacher will work on a one-to-one basis with the EAL student or, alternatively, will support the student in the mainstream class or participate in team teaching of classes.

### **School Principal:**

- Ensures that systems are in place to identify students' needs and monitor their progress.
- Facilitates the Continuous Professional Development of all teachers in relation to education of students with AEN.
- Ensures that all school staff (teachers, SNAs) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensures the effective involvement of parents, students and external professionals/agencies.
- Responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with Additional Educational Needs. The Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers.
- Ensures that resources are deployed so the students with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support.
- Ensures that teaching methodologies are appropriately adopted to meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- Ensures that an appropriate Classroom Support process is being implemented, and may delegate the administration of this process to a member of the AEN Core Team.
- Appoints an Additional Educational Needs Coordinator from amongst the staff to oversee and ensure that students with AEN / identified needs are offered an inclusive, broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum as far as is practicable.
- In consultation with the AEN Coordinator the Principal ensures that a whole school approach to AEN and Inclusion, making all staff aware of their responsibilities in the area of AEN and to facilitate professional staff development in the area of AEN.
- Promotes the development of positive partnerships with parents of students with AEN.



## Our Lady of Mercy College



- Ensures that procedures exist for consultation with feeder Primary schools with regard to enrolment of new students with AEN.
- Informs the Board of Management of issues that are relevant to Additional Educational Needs.
- Advises new staff (during the school year) of students with Additional Educational Needs. This may be delegated to a member of the AEN Core Team or New Teacher Induction Coordinator.
- Is responsible for the distribution of the AEN allocation, as allocated by the NCSE.
- Advises the AEN Core Team of all incoming students with AEN.
- Overseeing the work of the AEN Core Team and provision of appropriate support for students with identified needs.
- Applying annually, with the necessary documentation, for resource hours / NCSE allocation, SNA access, assistive technology, school transport and necessary administration for the NCSE.
- Timetabling of AEN Core Team and provision of support for students with identified needs.
- Providing a suitable budget to cover costs of purchasing necessary materials to support students with identified needs, including some equipment, testing materials and support materials.

### **Board of Management:**

- To promote educational inclusion
- To ensure that resources being made available by the Department of Education for the additional educational needs of students are used effectively.
- To delegate responsibilities as appropriate to the Principal.
- To ensure a relevant policy is in place and is monitored on a regular basis.
- To provide a secure facility for the storage of records for students of AEN.

All roles are reviewed as the need arises.



### **Identification of Students with Additional Educational Needs**

The AEN Core Team will make available to staff some relevant tips for teaching and learning from the Educational Psychologists. Relevant support materials and guidelines are available in via shared AEN drive on google documents (e.g. NCSE and NEPS materials).

Information regarding incoming First Year students with AEN is sought before the student starts school. Relevant members of the AEN Core Team, Guidance Department and the Principal meet to discuss needs of incoming First Years prior to their arrival in school.

Information and documentation is gathered from the Primary School with the permission of the parent of the specific student. This information is collated by the AEN Coordinator. External professionals may contribute relevant information in support of the students with AEN, and with their parents' consent.

Relevant information is placed on the student information via shared AEN drive on google for the attention of their teachers.

Data from standardised tests and regular subject assessments, available via shared AEN drive on google, is used to help identify students' needs.

In many cases a student's needs are resolved through the provision of differentiated work suited to meet their needs – this is the responsibility of the subject teacher. For those students whose progress continues to cause concern referral to the AEN Core Team by the subject teacher or Year Head, using the AEN Concern Slip system.

Where screening or standardised tests are conducted by the AEN Coordinator or member of the AEN Core Team, instruments as advised in relevant DES Circulars will be used (see Circular 0067\_2020).

If the AEN Core Team decides that the student would benefit from further intervention they will assess the student's needs. Parents are involved at the stage of identification, and consent is sought prior to any testing taking place (see enrolment form). The result of the assessment may indicate that a student needs additional support to adequately access the curriculum. In this

## Our Lady of Mercy College



case the student's needs are supported but a number of different structures available which may include:

- Differentiated teaching, learning and assessment, relevant to the students' needs
- Monitoring by Year Head
- Mentoring/monitoring by Learning Support Teacher
- Differentiated work as appropriate
- Study skills given by a member of the AEN Core Team or Guidance Counsellor
- Referral to Guidance Counsellor where appropriate
- Referral for a formal educational assessment to (NEPS)
- Referral to an outside agency that may be equipped to meet the needs of the student in relation to a family or other personal matter
- Intervention-led supports may be put in place and the student's progress monitored. These may include interventions for literacy, numeracy, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties
- In some instances, there may be limited and short-term subject-specific support provided.

### **The Continuum of Support Model:**

The continuum of support enables the school to identify and respond to students' needs in a flexible way. AEN supports are deployed and utilised using the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Continuum of Support Framework. Resources, skills and staff are deployed so that:

- The learning, well-being and care needs of students are met through whole-school and classroom planning and support, which include preventative and early intervention approaches (i.e. 'whole-school support' / support for all).
- 'Targeted-school support' is provided to students with additional needs who require additional support over and above that which can be provided through whole-school support (support for some).
- 'Intensive-school support' is provided to a smaller number of students with the greatest level of additional care needed to assist in enabling them to achieve their individualised goals in school (support for few).

## Our Lady of Mercy College



### **Accessibility - Supporting Students with Access Needs**

The school authorities will make every reasonable effort to accommodate and support students (and visitors) who have access needs. Examples of this are as follows:

- Wheelchair – accessible doors are installed at the oratory entrance to the school.
- Access to, from and around the building is facilitated through access ramps, where required, even surfaces and the use of a lift to the upper area.
- There are two well-equipped wheelchair-accessible toilets/bathrooms.
- Assistive Technology and other equipment may be purchased for students with SEN, as recommended by their Occupational Therapists and other professionals if approved by the DES.
- All staff may use fonts which are more easily accessible to students and parents with Dyslexia (e.g. Arial, Calibri or Comic Sans) in handouts, worksheets, notes, letters etc. In addition, coloured background paper may be used where possible for written materials supplied to students with Dyslexia, and coloured slide backgrounds used in visual presentations.
- A classroom is open at lunchtimes to facilitate quiet reading. This facility is accessible to all students and may be enjoyed by some students who have Autism.

### **Intimate Care of Students**

**Definition:** Intimate Care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of the individual student. Parents have a responsibility to advise the Principal and SNA of the intimate care needs of an individual student. Staff have a responsibility to work in consultation with the students concerned and their parents.

**Some examples** of intimate care: feeding, washing, oral care, dressing/undressing, toileting etc.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



**Principles** of intimate care: Every student has the following rights:

- To be safe
- To personal privacy
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be valued as an individual
- To be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
- To express their views on their intimate care in accordance with their age, ability and stage of development, and to have their views taken into consideration
- To have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

The school authorities recognises that the intimate care needs of individual students are particular and individual to students. Every reasonable effort is made to support students in this area in a manner that respects their safety, dignity, well-being, privacy and independence. Intimate care may be carried out by two staff, where appropriate.

At all times the wishes and preferences of the individual student (Student Voice and Student Choice) and their parents will be taken into consideration in supporting the student in their intimate care needs, including toileting, notwithstanding professional adherence by SNAs and others to safety and health requirements and advice from relevant professionals.

There will be flexibility in the deployment of SNAs to support students' intimate care needs in accordance with the wishes and preferences of the particular students and their parents, subject to school resources. At all times, safety is paramount and will be exercised by those supporting the students in this area. The relevant professional code of conduct must be followed by those involved in the intimate care support of students.

Any concerns regarding intimate care of students must be reported to the Principal immediately, and parents informed.



### **Students with AEN Participating in Educational Outings and Tours**

It is the wish of the school authorities that all students may be permitted to access and participate in educational outings and tours. Every reasonable effort is made to support students with AEN in participating fully in such outings and tours.

It is the responsibility of the subject/class teacher to provide for the inclusion of our students with AEN on all school outings, trips and tours that are organised. It is the responsibility of the subject/class teacher to obtain parental consent for the students to participate in outings, trips and tours.

For students that have been allocated a SNA it is the role of the subject/class teacher to inform the SNA of the outing/trip/tour. The SNA may inform the teacher of any concerns etc. and this will result in both closely planning to cater for the needs of the student with SEN. However, the ultimate responsibility is with the subject/class teacher.

It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to ensure that all necessary access and participation arrangements are in place at the time of booking the outing/tour, including access to buildings, open areas and toilets. The teacher must ensure that the venue has appropriate wheelchair access and suitable toileting facilities to accommodate the particular dimensions of the wheelchairs involved. This will require from the subject teacher specific communication with the student, parents, the SNA, a local Taxi Company (e.g. giving specifications of wheelchairs, including over-sized or motorised wheelchairs), the Coach Company, other organisations (eg. Irish Wheelchair Association / Muscular Dystrophy Ireland etc.) and the destination organisation to ensure ease of access and participation by all students, including students with AEN (see Educational Outings and Tours Policy). Where a generic outing/tour is organised (i.e. not subject-related), it is the responsibility of the outing/tour Organiser to ensure that all such arrangements are in place and the roles outlined above for the subject/class teacher are fulfilled. Where a student has a medical condition or additional need which requires medication or other equipment / supplies, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that these are made available to the organising teacher before the outing/tour commences, and that all relevant information is supplied to the organising teacher. The parent should also liaise with the SNA,

## Our Lady of Mercy College



where relevant. Students must bring with them any equipment which may be required e.g. inhaler, epipen, insulin, juice drink.

### **Models of AEN Provision:**

The identified needs of the students, within the allocation of resources available to the school, dictate what type of intervention strategy is most appropriate. The key areas of support are in literacy, numeracy, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties where there are identified needs. In assessing and deciding which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context, the following options are considered.

- Cooperative teaching strategies / support teaching / co-teaching
- In-class support from a supporting subject teacher / SET teacher
- Small group withdrawal
- Peer support / paired reading
- Individual curricular review/ reduction
- Individual withdrawal
- Appropriate levels at assessments / examinations in consultation with parents, students, class teachers and management.
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes.

It is school policy that all students study Irish to Leaving Certificate, with limited exceptions. All students with AEN are offered the opportunity to study Irish at Our Lady of Mercy College. However, in some individual circumstances students with learning difficulties, specific or general, may be exempted from studying Irish, in accordance with CL 0055\_2022. This exemption process is done in consultation with the AEN Core Team, Guidance Counsellor, parents, individual students, Irish teacher, NEPS Psychologist and School Management.

Students with identified needs will receive first priority in the allocation of supports – those with the greatest level of need being prioritised for the greatest level of support.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



### **Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting**

All students with AEN in Our Lady of Mercy College are monitored on an ongoing basis. The data from assessments is monitored by subject teachers and Year Heads. Assessment may be formal, informal, summative or formative.

Incoming First Year students will engage in some of the following assessments:

- Standardised literacy/numeracy assessments.
- Standardised Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT 4).

The data gathered from all assessments (e.g. subject assessments) help to inform the AEN Core Team of the identified needs of students.

### **Further testing may include:**

- Any formal assessment approved for use in the current academic school year and subsequent years. Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools will be in accordance with The Department of Education and Skills Circular 0067\_2020. Other professionals working with the school may formally assess students having obtained the necessary permission from parents prior to testing.
- Third and Sixth Year students complete mock Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations.
- Exam classes are given opportunities to complete mock oral examinations.

The following publications may also be consulted in conjunction with Circular 0067\_2020:

- National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) School Guidance Handbook: <http://schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie/document-detail/BestPractice-Ethical-and-Legal-Considerations-in-Psychometric-Testing-forGuidance-Counsellors/39>
- National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) School Guidance Handbook:



## Our Lady of Mercy College



<http://schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie/document-detail/A-Guide-for-postprimary-schools-in-developing-a-policy-for-the-use-of-assessment-instrumentsincluding-tests-and-webased-resources/54>

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Resource Pack for Teachers:

[http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/NationalEducational-Psychological-Service-NEPS/neps\\_post\\_primary\\_continuum\\_resource\\_pack.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/NationalEducational-Psychological-Service-NEPS/neps_post_primary_continuum_resource_pack.pdf)

- Department of Education and Skills Inclusion of Students with additional Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines:

[http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-ReportsPublications/EvaluationReportsGuidelines/insp\\_inclusion\\_students\\_sp\\_ed\\_needs\\_pp\\_guidelines\\_pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-ReportsPublications/EvaluationReportsGuidelines/insp_inclusion_students_sp_ed_needs_pp_guidelines_pdf)

- Department of Education and Skills School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Post- Primary Schools:

[http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/postprimary/wpcontent/uploads/2012/11/sse\\_guidelines\\_post\\_primary.pdf](http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/postprimary/wpcontent/uploads/2012/11/sse_guidelines_post_primary.pdf)

- Circular Letter 0025/2012:

<http://www.education.ie/en/CircularsandForms/ActiveCirculars/Implementation-of-the-National-Literacy-andNumeracy-Strategy.pdf>

- Link to the State Examinations Commission's Guide on Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE):

[https://www.examinations.ie/schools/cs\\_view.php?q=fd8bb6c95031c7af7bc67154c68381c5656a4829](https://www.examinations.ie/schools/cs_view.php?q=fd8bb6c95031c7af7bc67154c68381c5656a4829)

### **Informal Assessments:**

- End of unit/chapter assessments by class teachers
- In-class questioning by class teachers
- Assessing homework/project work by teachers
- Assessing Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Tasks by teachers
- The responsibility for many aspects of formal and informal assessments lies in the first instance with the subject teacher

## Our Lady of Mercy College



- The AEN Core Team, through referrals, organise testing of students in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Students may be asked to self-assess
- Peer-assessment is conducted under the teacher's guidance

Assessment Data is used to:

- Track student progress
- Highlight students' academic and/or cognitive potential
- Identify learning needs of students

### **Recording Assessment Data:**

- Teachers record assessment marks (e.g. subject assessments, CBA results) in their journals / subject area google drives / VSWare.
- House Examination results as well as comments from each individual teacher are included on the school report to parents which are posted after formal house exams and at the end of the school year.
- The AEN Core Team maintains files/profiles for the students with whom they work.

### **Access to Assessment data:**

- The school is aware that some assessment material is of a sensitive nature and therefore it is treated confidentially and only made available to appropriate personnel, taking due cognisance of Data Protection Requirements.
- The AEN Core Team manage a significant amount of the assessment information for students with identified needs. Relevant information is disseminated as appropriate by the AEN Team.

## Our Lady of Mercy College



### **Monitoring Arrangements:**

- The responsibility for monitoring student progress lies with the subject teacher. Subject teachers may liaise with Year Heads and/or the AEN Core Team if they have a concern about a student. An AEN concern slip might need to be completed by the relevant teacher/Year Head.

### **Evaluation:**

- The successes of any intervention strategies are monitored on an ongoing basis through formal and informal assessment.

This policy has been reviewed, amended and ratified by the Board of Management

September 20th 2024 *For and on behalf of the Board of Management*

**Our Lady of Mercy College**

