



Special Needs Assistant Policy

Introduction

Our Lady of Mercy College is a Catholic, all girls, voluntary secondary school which caters for students of all religions and backgrounds in accordance with current equal status legislation.

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 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

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont



working with other Christian traditions and all people of goodwill to advocate for the poor, justice, and environmental stewardship, respecting diversity.

Our Lady of Mercy College is under CEIST Trusteeship. The core values of CEIST are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people at the heart of our school: students, staff and parent. Its key principles focus on:

- 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.

Rationale

Special Needs Assistants (SNA) are recruited specifically to assist Our Lady of Mercy College in providing the necessary non-teaching services to students who have been granted access to an SNA as well as those students with assessed special educational needs.



In particular, SNA's play a very important role in the health and safety of the pupil(s) and in their social and emotional development. The SNA's are part of the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The SNA acts in a care and support role that is non-teaching in nature and works under the guidance and supervision of the Principal, Deputy Principal, and/or class teacher.

The role and duties of the SNA are outlined in DES Circular (0030/2014).

The SNA should:

- Support the needs of students in effectively accessing the curriculum
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the students
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM
- Liaise with AEN team regularly
- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal in relation to AEN
- Attend student support plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- Maintain an observation record/ record of support provided to their AEN student.
- Assist and escort students on school trips when requested.
- Facilitate sensory breaks and maintain a record of such breaks.
- Carry out, other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the students and the school
- Be re- assigned to other appropriate work when special needs assistants are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise
- Recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency
- Engage with parents of students with AEN as required and directed by school Management



- Treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential

Meetings

SNA's will attend AEN core team meetings as appropriate.

This Statement was ratified on September 20th 2024

Date of next review: September 2025 or at the discretion of the Principal.