



Holy Family Community School

Education is Opportunity

Policy for the Educational Provision for Students with Additional Needs

Title:	Policy for the Educational Provision for Students with Additional Needs
Approved by:	The Board of Management
Date:	23 rd October 2024
Responsibility for implementation:	The Board of Management, the Principal and all staff
Policy Review Date:	23 rd October 2027

1. Introduction

This policy document aims to outline the form that **Additional Educational Support** takes for students' additional needs in Holy Family Community School, Rathcoole and to clarify the philosophy which underpins it. It is based on the original policy written in 2004 and like its predecessors, it is written in the context of the Education Act 1998, especially sections 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 21 and 33 and Equal Status Act published in 2000. It seeks to take account of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act which came into law in 2004 but has yet to be fully implemented at the time of this policy review.

This policy review has been undertaken by the members of the AN Department as part of the continuing development of the school plan and in consultation with all staff, the Parents' Council, the Students' Council and some outside agencies. It was adopted as official school policy by the Board of Management on the 23rd of October 2024. This policy should be considered as a working document to be reviewed every three years.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy should be read with the information available on the school website which outlines the education normally provided to all students under the following headings:

- School Vision Statement
- Admission Procedures
- Curriculum
- Creating a Learning Environment
- Student Care
- Physical Education
- Extra-Curricular
- Co-Curricular

It is the aim of Holy Family Community School to promote an inclusive learning environment throughout the school. The educational objectives for students with additional needs are the same as for all students.

Four key objectives of particular importance and relevance are:

- Functional Literacy and Numeracy
- Functional social skills
- Development of skills that promote well-being of students
- Success in public examinations at the appropriate level

It is the policy of the school that the term **all students** in the vision statement includes students with additional needs. This policy document sets out to explain how the school works to achieve one of its principal aims, namely, to enable all students to access, participate in and benefit from the education **normally provided** in the school, to the fullest extent possible. To achieve this principal aim, students

who require **additional support** can only be adequately provided where the school is given the necessary additional resources by the Department of Education and Science.

3. Terminology

In 1994, the Learning Support Department was set up and the term then in use in the school for additional support provided for students with special needs was *Learning Support*. The word *Resource* was added some years later to allow for greater accuracy and in keeping with the language used in educational circles.

In past years, the term Special Educational Needs (SEN) was introduced and has been used in some titles, for example, the SEN Department and the SEN Coordinator. The new title “Additional Needs Department” has been adopted by the Department of Education and Skills. Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers will now be described as Special Education Teachers or SETs.

The term *support* continues to be the most generally used word in the school to describe the work of the Additional Needs Department as it respects the sensitivities of adolescents better than other terms. Respecting the sensitivities of adolescents is an important consideration in all kinds of additional support to students with additional needs.

4. Students with Additional Needs

Students with additional needs are:

Students whose additional needs prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education normally provided for students of the same age and / or students for whom the education normally provided is not sufficiently challenging i.e., exceptionally able / talented.

5. Admission to the School

Details on admission to the school may be found in the school’s Admissions Policy on the school website.

6. Physical Disabilities

It is school policy to make the school buildings, general classrooms and specialist classrooms as accessible as possible to people with physical disabilities and to take measures when necessary to ensure that these students have real access to the full curriculum.

7. Additional Needs Teams

General Additional Need Team

- Principal
- Deputy Principal(s)
- Additional Needs Coordinators (ANCOs)
- Link Teacher/ Additional Needs Teachers
- Mainstream Teachers
- Mainstream Teachers with Additional Needs Hours
- Guidance Counsellors
- Special Educational Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- Students

The AN general team will be responsible the identification of need, planning interventions and the monitoring of outcomes. Subject teachers will consider how to differentiate the learning programme effectively, to accommodate the needs of all students in the class.

Additional Needs Core Team

- Principal
- Deputy Principal(s)
- Additional Needs Coordinator (ANCOs)
- Link Teacher/ Additional Needs Teachers

The AN Core Team will meet regularly with a particular focus on guiding the deployment of available resources in the best interests of students with additional needs and in keeping with direction and guidance from the National Council for Special Education and the Department of Education and Skills (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). A member of the Special Needs Assistants team may be invited to participate from time to time.

8. Model of Support

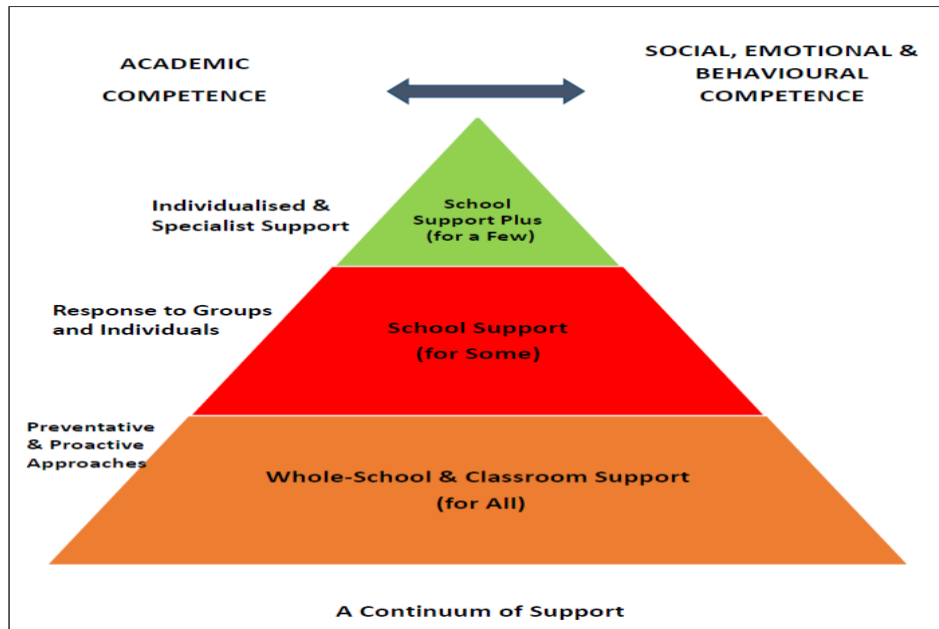
Planning, development and co-ordination includes a number of key strands:

- a. Identification of Needs and Response to Need***
- b. Creation and Maintenance of Student Support File***
- c. Deployment of Additional Education Resources***
- d. Maintenance of Records***

e. Supporting Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School and from Post-Primary School to Third Level

a. Identification of Needs and Response to Need

Students with additional needs will be identified and assessed as soon as is practicable. The 'Continuum of Support Framework' will be used to identify and respond to students' needs in a flexible way. The advice of external professionals will be drawn on as appropriate. The '**Continuum of Support**' suggests the following levels of support:



The school will collect evidence at each level of the Continuum - **See Appendix 1.**

b. Student Support File

Following the identification of need, a student support file will be created under the direction of the Additional Needs Co-ordinators (ANCOs) as required. This will clearly indicate the level of student need and nature of support desirable in the context of available personnel and other resources. The plan will set targets and actions to support the tracking of the student's pathway through the Continuum of Support and their progress.

Teachers providing support will document progress over time and will adopt the appropriate level of support in line with students' level of need. Following a period of intervention, a review will take place

between the staff involved (as relevant), the parent/guardian and the student. The nature and level of support will be modified if necessary and possible.

Support files will vary and may include one or more of the following:

- Student Profile
- Log of actions
- Planning and Review documents.

To support the communication of necessary information and promote a consistent approach across the school, all relevant teachers will have access to the information in student support profiles. This will be facilitated through recording key information on additional needs on each student's profile, which will be updated at the beginning of each school year (before the end of October) by members of the AN Team under the direction of the ANCOs.

c. Deployment of Special Education Resources

Special education resources will be deployed in the best interests of students with additional educational needs. Allocation of resources to students will be based on identified needs and in accordance with the student support file and guidance and direction from the NCSE and the Department. In this context, students with the greatest level of need will receive the most support in accordance with the 'Continuum of Support'.

The level of support will reflect the specific targets set for individual students in their support files and will be informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. When deploying teaching resources, the school will make appropriate provision for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective day-to-day organisation and oversight.

d. Maintenance of Records

Appropriate and adequate records will be maintained to ensure that sufficient information and details are available for reference and review. Records and files will be kept securely online using the school's Microsoft 365 account under GDPR guidelines.

Individual Student Files will include:

- Application/ Enrolment Form

- Test Results – formal assessment tests and informal class tests
- Psychological Report (where relevant)
- Referral Form/s from teachers
- Records of conversations and meetings regarding the student
- Records of communication with parent, teacher or other party

Whole-school Records will include:

- A database of assessment test results which will be compiled and or updated each year to inform planning at whole-school level, subject department level, teacher level
- The AN Registers which will be prepared and maintained by the ANCOs each year (these will include the list of students in need of/receiving support, the nature of AN support, teachers assigned to provide support and for how many hours, SNA support)
- Student data and information will be stored in a secure location to ensure confidentiality but will be accessible to relevant parties (e.g., members of the AN Team and the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), Psychologists, Inspectors, Parents/Guardians) on a need-to-know basis via a member of the AN Team)
- Class Profiles which will identify AN in particular classes, outline strategies and responses and keep records of progress (see Appendix 5)
- Summary notes of all AN Core Team meetings
- Summary notes of meetings by the AN Co-ordinators and/or AN team member.

Paper files will be maintained as relevant. Some student details will be stored on VSware the primary student database. Student details that need to be accessed easily by a number of staff will be stored on the school's ICT platform, TEAMS/OneNote in a manner that is GDPR compliant. Student files will be retained for 7 years after the student has left the school.

e. Supporting Transition from Primary to Post-Primary

The Transition Programme (primary to post-primary) fosters a climate of support that is flexible and responsive to individual student needs including those with additional needs. The priority is to treat the admission of all students with sensitivity and maintain a realistic outlook. The Transition from primary to post-primary school includes:

- An Open Evening/Information Session to be held, preceding enrolment
- Contact between a member of the AN team and the parent/guardian (phone and/or a meeting) to discuss student needs and options available
- Student visits to the school as necessary, or other familiarisation activities
- Staff visits to local and feeder primary schools to assist the school in identifying students who will require additional support for learning

- The collation and review of the assessment tests outcomes by AN Department, (before the end of the previous school year or within two weeks of a student commencing school)
- Invite to parents/guardians to advise of additional educational needs or medical needs and to include psychology/medical reports when accepting a place
- A mentor system where students are supported by senior students in some simple activities on an agreed basis.

9. Grievance Procedure

Parents / Students who are concerned and who wish to discuss or make suggestions about any aspect of educational provision should approach the relevant teacher, tutor, year head or Additional Needs Coordinator. If necessary, an issue can be dealt with by the Principal, Deputy Principals or Board of Management. Grievance Procedures are outlined on the school website.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Monitoring the whole-school policy for AN and its implementation will be an ongoing process. It will be incorporated into the work of the AN Core team and will seek to ensure that day-to-day decisions and practice meet the changing needs of the students. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Board of Management.

The school has membership of:

ILSA Irish Learning Support Association

IATSE Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education

Appendix 1: Identification of Needs

Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Whole-school and Classroom (Support for All)	<p>At this level the Continuum of Support contains a range of ideas and resources to assist in identification, intervention and monitoring of outcomes. The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students in the class. Identification of those needing additional support can be informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intake screening• Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport• Teacher observation• Teacher assessment• Learning Environment Checklist• Student Support Team involvement• Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy• Student consultation• Parental consultation <p>Where students continue to present with significant difficulties, despite whole-school interventions (such as differentiated teaching, a mentoring programme or social skills group), <i>School Support (for Some)</i> is initiated.</p>
School Support (for Some)	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher observation records• Teacher-designed measures /assessments• Parent/student interview• Learning environment checklist• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>Support at this level can take many forms, for example: team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, peer mentoring, inclusion in social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems.</p> <p>A Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>

School Support Plus (For a Few)	<p>At this level, subject teacher(s), parents and special education teachers, in collaboration with outside agencies (as required) engage in a more detailed and systematic approach to information gathering and assessment. This involves using a broad range of formal and informal assessment and diagnostic tools, including teacher observation, student interview, measures of cognitive ability and social, emotional, behavioural and adaptive functioning, as appropriate.</p> <p>Data generated from this process are used to plan an appropriate intervention and serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A Support Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised, and to involve longer term planning and consultation.</p>
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Appendix 2: Allocation of Additional Support

Table 2: Planning Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Students with Additional Educational Needs	
Action 1: Identification of students with additional educational needs	<p>Review existing information on students' needs, using school-based data, and information from primary schools, parents and external professionals.</p> <p>Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all students with additional educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
Action 2: Setting targets	<p>Based on identified needs, set clear targets at Support for All, School Support and School Support Plus levels of the Continuum of Support.</p>

<p>Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches</p>	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each student on the Continuum of Support.</p> <p>Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching, small group and individual teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence informed.</p>
<p>Action 4: Organising Early-Intervention and Prevention Programmes</p>	<p>Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/ prevention programmes to address concerns.</p> <p>Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.</p>
<p>Action 5: Organising and deploying Special Education teaching resources</p>	<p>Cross-reference the needs of students at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met through in-class/team-teaching, small group and individual support to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches</p> <p>Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these students and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that students with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.</p>
<p>Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress</p>	<p>Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all students in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Whole-School (Support for All) level by all teachers - At the School Support (for Some) and School Support Plus (for a Few) levels by subject teachers and special education teachers

Appendix 2: Roles of AN Team

The Role of the class teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in their class. All class teachers must strive to create a classroom environment that is inclusive by recognising learning difficulties that are present and takes actions to accommodate these learning difficulties. The class teacher also plays an important role in the early identification of pupils with AN. The class teacher should be alert to the possibility of general and specific need and bring any concerns to the attention of the AN Dept. A key element of AN provision is that there is a high level of consultation, communication and co-operation between the class teacher and the AN Department. There should be communication between the class teacher and the in class/Additional needs teacher about students with additional needs, difficulties, targets and learning strategies. The class teacher should be aware of the needs, targets and strategies for any student with AN within their classroom. The class teacher is welcome to and should be consulted in the process of setting learning targets and drafting SSF. The following criteria applies to the Class Teacher:

1. Has primary responsibility for the progress of all the pupils in his/her class.
2. Be alert to and refer on any possible students with AN (via referral form to ANCOs).
3. Facilitate access to the curriculum for students with learning difficulties.
4. Be aware of students with AN and be knowledgeable of the information available regarding students with AN.
5. To read relevant support material provided including information on SharePoint e.g., AN Register, if required, for guidance.
6. Exchange information with the AN support teacher on the student's progress as required.
7. Assist with the provision of accommodation in House and State Examinations where possible
8. Advise students on Options and Subject Levels
9. Partake in a whole school approach to Learning Support.

The role of the ANCOs

The ANCOs are responsible for coordinating the AN provision within the school. This role includes:

(A) A teaching role

- Direct teaching of students with learning difficulties.
- Assist in providing education to meet the needs of students who present as having learning difficulties.
- Profile and plan for students.
- Set targets and plan for reviews. Preparing students approved for reasonable accommodation, for house and state examinations where possible.

(B) Consultative Role

- Facilitate a whole school approach to AN provision.
- Assist and be primarily responsible for the school's policy on AN.
- Work with AN teachers and co-teachers on curriculum strategies.
- Provide information on individual students.

- Consult students, teachers, parents, specialists on specific needs and targets for students with AN.
- Engage in ongoing CPD and organise staff development in the area of AN and Learning Support.
- Consult and develop lessons, strategies and targets with all teachers engaging in learning support teaching.
- Advise students on subject options.
- Consult school management and work with organisations such as the NCSE/NEPS to prioritise Learning Support and Resource provisions.

(C) Advocacy role

Support students in accessing the curriculum and assessment structures.

- Support students transferring from Primary to Secondary School.
- Advocate for maximum access to appropriate support for all students with AN.

(D) Assessment role

- Plan for the entrance exams process.
- Administer testing/ accommodate external testing where necessary.
- Certification for subject exemptions or subject reductions.
- Seek to identify students with specific learning difficulties.
- Organise the continued testing of pupils as required.
- the suitability for in class support or withdrawal of students (based on a needs basis determined by the SENCO and Principal)

(E) Liaison role to liaise with the following:

SENCO.

- NEPS.
- Psychologists, Occupational Therapist and other agencies.
- Parents, internal support groups, the relevant class teachers and outside bodies.
- DES.
- Care Team - Guidance Counsellor, House Leaders and the SPHE coordinator.
- Teachers regarding the timetable.
- Outside agencies that are supportive of student development.

8.4 Special Needs Assistants

The school has a team of trained and qualified Special Needs Assistants who provide a valuable form of additional support for students with additional needs. Their work includes:

- Assisting students in moving through the building and ensuring that students are in the right place at the right time.
- Keeping students safe through observation of students, identification of and monitoring of patterns of behaviour and intervention when necessary.

- Supporting students and teachers in practical ways for example, by preparing teaching materials in braille, setting up and maintaining equipment in good working condition, such as assistive technology, acting as scribe – support is individualised to cater for the needs of the student.

Liaising with Year Heads, Tutors, teachers, parents and the AN Coordinator and contributing to the creation, review and implementation of support plans for students with special needs.

Assisting in the drafting, implementing, monitoring and review of Personal Pupil Plans and Student Support Files.

Appendix 3 Categories of Need

To date the school has provided for the following categories of students with additional needs:

Borderline Mild General Learning Disability

Mild General Learning Disability

Moderate General Learning Disability

Emotional / Behavioural Difficulties including ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder)

Specific Learning Disabilities including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia

- Physical / Sensory Impairment including Blind, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired
- Forms of Physical Disability that require the use of a wheelchair
- Speech and Language Communication Disorders
- Students on the Autistic Spectrum including those with PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Delay – Not Otherwise Specified) (change in terminology 2022)
- Students whose learning difficulties clearly results from socio-economic disadvantage
- EAL students
- Exceptionally Able / Talented

The school has no experience to date of providing for students with the following additional needs:

- Down's Syndrome
- Severe/Profound General Learning Disability

Need to look at these in relation to support for all.

Appendix 4 RACE & DARE

4.1 Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)

The Additional Needs Department applies for reasonable accommodations in state examinations for a number of students with additional needs each year. Strict criteria are laid down by the State Examinations Commission to ensure eligibility for the scheme. Testing and screening for Junior Cycle RACE is ongoing from Christmas of second year to Christmas of third year. For Leaving Certificate students, the testing and screening cycle takes place from August to October of sixth year. The most commonly accessed accommodations are:

1. A waiver in spelling and grammar
2. Assistance of a reader
3. Use of a digital recording device
4. Use of a word processor
5. Access to a separate or small centre.

It should be noted

- that the fact that a student availed of an “accommodation” is indicated on his / her results’ certificate.
- that an “accommodation” availed of in the Junior Certificate may not be granted for the Leaving Certificate.

4.2 Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

The Additional Needs Department works closely with the Guidance Department in the school in preparing students with additional needs for the transition from secondary school into life after school. Sixth year students may be referred by the Guidance Department to the SEN Coordinator, if appropriate, for the preparation of applications to third level colleges through the DARE scheme. Applications are prepared between February and April.

Appendix 5. External Agencies

NEPS’ Psychologist (National Educational Psychological Service)

The Additional Needs Department is in regular contact with the NEPS’ Psychologist who offers support for all students, with particular reference to students with special needs. The Psychologist supports these students:

- by offering advice to students and to their parents as well as teachers
- by supporting the school in the use of the NEPS Continuum of Support
- by meeting with students

- by carrying out psychological assessments
- By referring a student on for further assessment with external agencies.

The Psychologist serves several schools in the general area and visits the school regularly during the year. Parents may choose to have their child privately assessed.

Other agencies which support the school are:

- The Visiting Teacher Service – Visiting Teacher of the Blind and Visiting Teacher of the Deaf.
- Department of Child Psychiatry, James's Street, Dublin 8
- Child and Adolescent Services in Clondalkin, Lucan and Kill and Co. Kildare.
- Lucena Clinics
- Primary Care Services
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- Various medical specialists, for example, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists.