

MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL MOUNTHAWK



**SUPPORTING STUDENTS
WITH ADDITIONAL and SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Review October 2025

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.a. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under the Trusteeship of CEIST. We are a co-educational school. The school population is 1,300 students (approx.).

1.1.b. AIMS

Our aims in developing this formal policy are to:

- Identify and codify the current procedures and practices in the school in relation to the provision of the constitutional rights for children who have a disability or who have other special educational needs as they relate to education.
- Affirm that students with special educational needs have the same right to avail of, and benefit from education as students who do not have those needs.
- Provide for the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the decision making process in relation to their children.
- Comply with current regulations and legislation in this area
- Establish a formal process and means of addressing students' needs in relation to education in the school.
- Ensure that students with AEN are supported in the school in a fully integrated manner to access the curriculum.
- Co-operate and work closely with the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE) and other agencies with regard to the education of students with special educational needs. Ensure that students with special educational needs are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is developed and respected.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with additional/special educational needs.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.

1.2 OPERATING CONTEXT

1.2.a. MISSION STATEMENT.

Our commitment to supporting students with special needs is an aspect of our general commitment to developing the whole person as stated in the school Missions Statement and our commitment to an inclusive education for all students in the school:

'Mercy Mounthawk Catholic Voluntary Secondary School is a witnessing community which fosters:

- *The full potential of all staff and students*
- *A positive partnership between all members of the school and wider community*
- *The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.'*

This commitment is understood within the context of the CEIST charter which states that:

'The educational needs of the students are identified and suitable programmes

and curricula are provided to meet the breadth of needs identified so that all students can participate with dignity and confidence.' (CEIST Charter p.14)

1.2.b. The Legal Context.

This policy is prepared with reference to the following legislation: The Education Act 1998 (EA), the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (EWA), the Equal Status Act 2000 (ESA), The Equality Act (2004), The Disabilities Act (2005), The Data Protection Act (2018) and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2000-2004 (EPSEN) - sections activated by S.I.).

This policy has been reviewed and edited cognisant of the advice given in the *Guidelines on Individual Education Plan Process* (2006), '*Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines*' (DES 2007) , the National Council of Special Education (NCSE) Report '*Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs*' (NCSE 2014), Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle (2017) Circular 0064/2024 *The operation/application and deployment of Special Education Teacher resources* in conjunction with the updated Guidelines for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* Dec 2024, Indicators of Effective Practice for Post Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes 2024, Circular 0081/2024 *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations* in conjunction with the Guidelines for *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations*. Indicators of Effective Practice Section 3 Examples *Student Support Files for Post Primary schools 2025* and Special Education Teaching Support in Primary Schools Guide for Children and guide for young people

In the context where the Board of Management notes that the Department has not activated all aspects of the EPAENAct, The AEN Department will endeavor to implement the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools 2024 in the development of Student Support Plans in as far as resourcing allows. The implementation of these Guidelines is proceeding on a phased basis on the adoption of this policy.

1.2.c. The context of the School Admissions Policy.

This school sees itself as respecting 'the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God'. We are a Catholic school and therefore 'an inclusive community' dedicated to the needs of all sections of society and will, therefore, promote participation and benefit for all, in as far as the school can fulfil the needs of an individual student,

'Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council. Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b)." (*Schools Admissions Policy Section 3*)

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Youth will establish a class to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who are in possession of psychological report that explicitly states that they require the support of such a special class. The admission to this class is subject also to the sanction of the NCSE. (*See section 6.5 below*)

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

1.2.d. Definition of Special Needs used in this policy

In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) the term “special educational needs” is defined as:

‘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’.

(Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1) (EPAEN2004, 1)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/A3004.pdf>

While this definition in the act does not refer to students with emotional/behavioural difficulties, section 7 (4)(b) of ESA 2000 does indicate a category of special need in this case and the school will be mindful of such students also in providing support for special needs in this policy.

Furthermore, EA 1998 recognises ‘giftedness’ as a special education condition and the school recognises that children who fit into this category have learning needs that that school will endeavour to respond to. See section 4 below on the provision for ‘more able’ students.

1.2.e. Inclusion

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the NCSE has been adopted. Inclusion is defined as a process of:

- addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities
- removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school. http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/NCSE_Inclusion.pdf

In line with the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* 2024, we include young people meaningfully in mainstream mixed ability class groupings. This helps ensure high expectations, and enables young people with special educational needs to learn alongside their peers.

1.2.f. Rationale

Effective provision for students with AEN in Mercy Mounthawk is part of an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all students and meaningful collaboration between the school, parents/guardians, and students. *As outlined in the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes*, The special education teaching allocation provided to schools is an additional resource, which is ring-fenced for the sole purpose of providing additional support to young people whom the school has identified, through the problem solving process, as having special educational needs.

This policy should be viewed as an ‘evolving’ working document and should take account of developments in practice as they happen and of resources available to the school at the time

SECTION 2. PRINCIPLES underpinning our PROCEDURES

2.1 Categories of ALN/SEN:

In Mercy Mounthawk, we welcome students with a wide variety of special educational needs and additional learning needs. We utilise supports based on the presenting needs of the student, including those students who may not have a formal diagnosis of any SEN/ALN. The key premise of the special education teaching allocation is that resources are deployed to address young people's special education needs. Importantly, those with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.

The EPAEN Act recognises that special educational needs may arise from four different areas:

- physical
- sensory
- mental health
- learning disability or from any other condition that results in the child learning differently from a child without that condition.

We also understand that a child can have an additional need but not have any educational needs arising from that which require additional supports in school.

Allocation of hours to the school may also be utilised to support those for whom English is an addition language (EAL). There are separate resource allocation processes, external to the special education teaching model.

Schools use the Continuum of Support framework to identify needs and to plan, implement and review intervention for all young people. This is consistent with a unified and coordinated approach to planning.

Additional supports may be offered to students who are in the category of exceptional ability.

2.2 Guiding Principles:

- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students, including those with additional needs.
- Students with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and where possible, those students will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- We advocate a 'strengths-based' approach to supporting learning and behavioural needs.
- Mercy Mounthawk has a core team of teachers who coordinate the identification of needs, plan the support, and monitor and review the needs of pupils with SEN.
- A collaborative, whole-school approach to support provision is reflected in our Year Team structure and student support structure in the school.
- Supports provided to students will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school. Supports on offer may vary from year-to-year, depending on resources available at that time and on the changing needs of the students in the school.
- Support is delivered through a variety of approaches, including offering appropriate curricular options, team-teaching/co-teaching, small group support, and 1 to 1 support.
- Supports provided to students will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with teachers, parents, and students) as

outlined in the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* Dec 2024

- Staff members will be actively encouraged to access available Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support the diverse needs of students.
- Students and their parents/guardians will be involved where relevant in decision making process and planning of support.
- The AENteam ensure that supports are not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole -school and community practice.

2.3 AEN Department and Core Special Education Teaching Team

Members of the special education teaching team have the necessary experience, interest, and access to professional development to support the diverse needs of young people with special educational needs. Those young people with the greatest level of need have access to additional support from members of the special education teaching team with the relevant experience and expertise. Responsibility for various aspects of provision is distributed amongst the team.

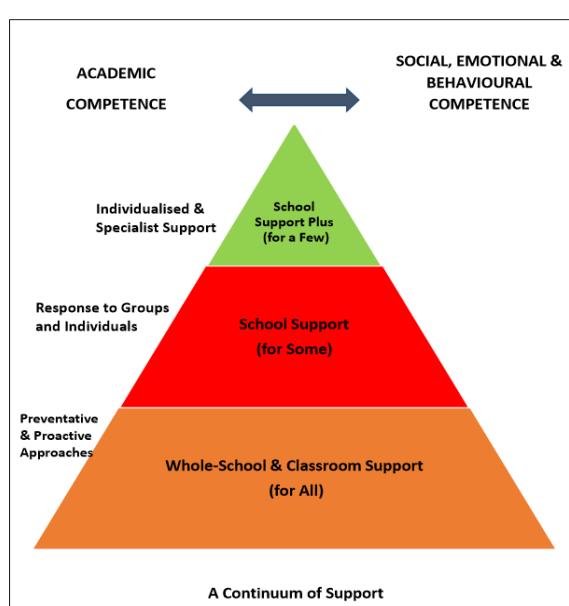
In accordance with our policy of full inclusion of all students, the AEN Department and Core Special Education teaching team:

- Contributes to the development of an inclusive school culture, demonstrated through ethos, values and inclusive school policies and practices.
- Promotes inclusive, whole-school preventative and proactive teaching and learning approaches.
- Contributes to the ongoing development of inclusive school structures and systems in the organisation of provision for young people with special educational needs, including informing timetabling of additional supports.
- Liaises closely with the principal on the development, implementation and monitoring of whole-school approaches to the education of young people with special educational needs.
- Develops whole-school procedures for the selection of young people for additional special education teaching support using the Continuum of Support and the problem-solving process.
- Uses the School Provision Plan for Young People with Special Educational Needs to record relevant information relating to young people receiving additional support at the levels of School Support-Some and School Support Plus/Few, in order to track provision and progression across the Continuum of Support.
- Co-ordinates information gathering, screening and testing.
- Contributes to transition planning for young people with special educational needs.
- Ensures that all young people identified with special educational needs, who receive additional teaching support, have their needs documented in a Student Support File. Ensures that a Student Support Plan is developed and included in the Student Support File.
- Distributes responsibility within the team for the development, implementation and review of Student Support Plans.
- Supports the communication of information regarding the young person's special educational needs to relevant staff.
- Establishes procedures and protocols for liaising with other agencies, including the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Inspectorate and other allied health professionals.
- Collaborates and co-ordinates provision across school support structures including Guidance Counsellors and is represented on the Student Support team.

- Each special education teacher in the team is responsible for the development, implementation and review of Student Support Plans for the young people with whom they are involved in providing direct additional special education teaching support. Where more than one teacher is involved in providing the additional teaching support, one special education teacher takes the lead in the planning process
- and in the coordination of supports for that young person.

2.4 General philosophy of education within the AENdepartment

The structuring of interventions in AEN in the school is approached cognisant of the framework of support as outlined in the DES guidelines and the key actions in the provision of special education teaching support as outlined on pgs 18 & 19 of the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes*: This framework recognises that needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their individual needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress. (Guidelines for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* Dec 2024 pgs 29 & 30)



Support for students in the school is contextualized within the school's Wellbeing Policy. In terms of **Support for All**. The support is provided on a whole school basis in the classroom by subject teachers. It is the philosophy of the school that each subject teacher is responsible for the support of all students in their class. The AEN department provides support to class teachers in understanding the needs of students in their classrooms, and the difficulties that AEN students may present with in specific subject areas and in leading all students, including those with learning needs, in the learning process.

The provision of Subject Classroom Support for All is the responsibility of the subject teacher.

An outline of Whole School Provision Mapping for AEN is given in Appendix 3 of this policy.

In terms of the *Support for Some*, the AEN department co-ordinates the provision of additional targeted teaching and learning supports in response to the special educational needs of small groups and/or individuals. This level of support involves the allocation of one or more special education teachers.

Finally, those students in the *Support for Few* category involves the provision of highly individualised, intensive and targeted additional teaching and learning supports for young people, whose special educational needs are enduring, and significantly impact on their learning and participation in the school environment. **This level of support involves the allocation of one or more special education teachers.**

In each case we use the seven-step process in accordance with the Guidelines (2024) and outlined in the table below.

1. Identify the young people with special educational needs
2. Initiate the Problem-Solving Process
3. Record level of Continuum of Support at which special education teaching support allocated
4. Organise and deploy special teaching resources
5. Develop Student Support Plan
6. Identify appropriate evidence-informed intervention
7. Review

Key actions in the provision of special education teaching support		
1	Identify young people with special educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing information on young people's needs, using school-based information, and any information from parents/guardians, and external professionals, where appropriate. Engage in additional screening and information gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches. These may include teacher observations, information on social and emotional development, standardised tests, and/or criterion-referenced tests/checklists. Identify all young people with special educational needs in the school.
2	Initiate Problem-Solving Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate the collaborative problem-solving process to clarify concerns in consultation with the young person, relevant teachers, and parents/guardians.
3	Record level of Continuum of Support at which special education teaching support allocated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once needs are identified, and the level of support required is established, record at which level of the Continuum of Support special education teaching supports are allocated. Special education teaching support is allocated at levels of School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few. Special education teaching supports are allocated based on identified needs. Open a Student Support File for all young people receiving special education teaching support. Special education teaching hours are recorded on the School Provision Plan for Young People with Special Educational Needs (Appendix 1).
4	Organise and deploy special education teaching resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-reference the needs of young people at School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few levels, and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Deploy special education teachers to teach groups/individuals and agree duration, frequency and location of the additional support provision. Ensure that the young people with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support, ideally from special education teachers with the most relevant expertise.

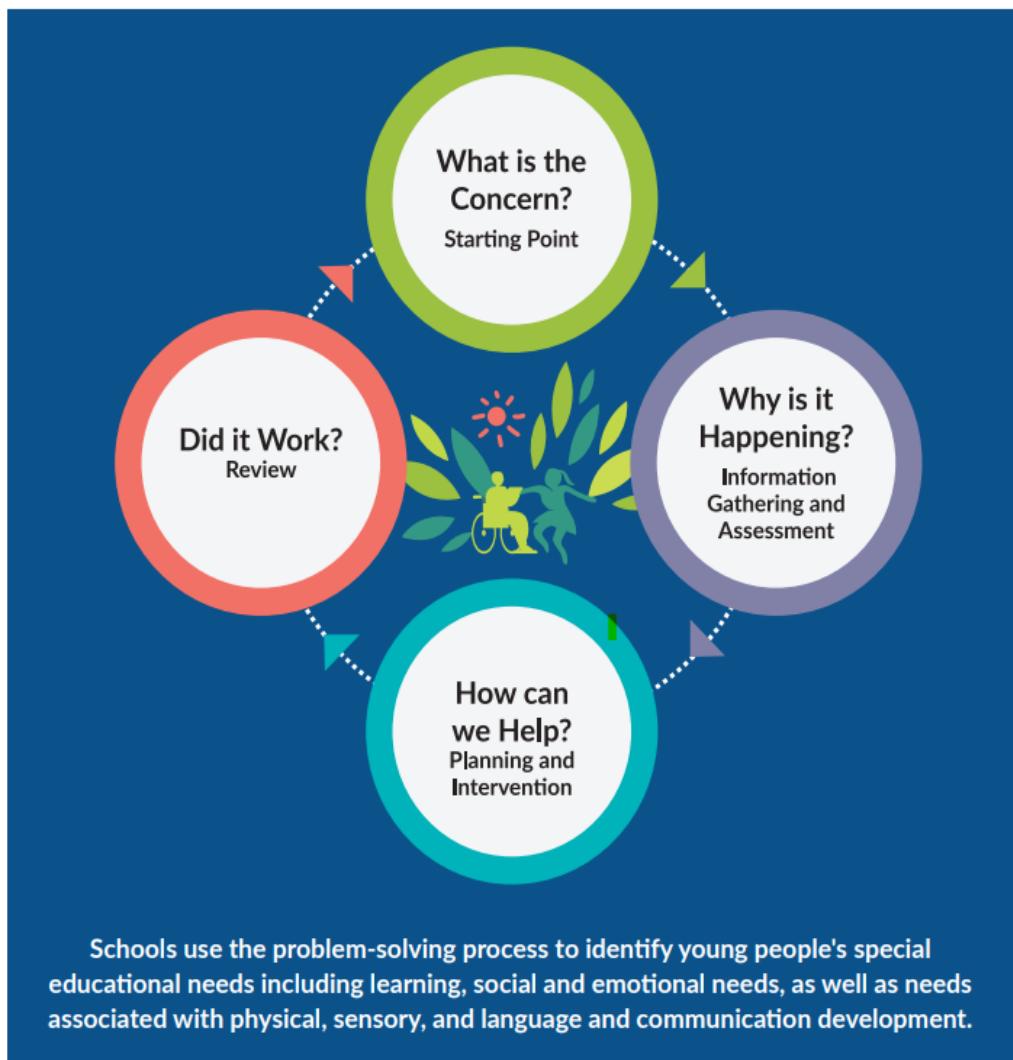
5	Develop Student Support Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/update and agree a Student Support Plan for young people with special educational needs at the levels of School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few. Identify priority learning needs. Following identification of priority learning needs, set SMART targets for each young person aligned with their special educational needs, in the Student Support Plan.
6	Identify appropriate evidence-informed intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for young people with special educational needs. Consider teaching and learning approaches best suited to promoting meaningful participation and engagement, such as mixed-ability grouping, team teaching, and/or small group/individual teaching support. Update the Student Support Plan to reflect monitoring and recording of response to intervention.
7	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following an agreed period of time, a collaborative review of the young person's response to intervention takes place. Based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made whether to continue with, or amend targets. Based on the young person's response to intervention, a collaborative decision is made whether to continue to allocate support at the identified level of the Continuum of Support.

Guide to the allocation of special educational teaching resources pg 18 & 19 Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes

2.5 The Problem Solving Approach

In each case we use the **Problem-Solving Process** in accordance with Guidelines for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* Dec 2024 p. 34

The problem solving process provides an approach to identifying, supporting, monitoring and reviewing special educational needs, where a concern is identified in relation to a young person. The problem solving process is applied across the Continuum of Support to ensure that interventions and supports are aligned to the identified strengths and needs of the young person, are commensurate with the level of need, and are reviewed regularly. The problem-solving process is a four step cyclical process of identification, assessment, intervention and review. The process poses four questions as illustrated in the figure below.



SECTION 3. GENERAL PROCEDURES

3.1 THE IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

The identification of needs is structured along the continuum of support. At the level of support for all or Whole-School and classroom support the identification of needs in an initial screening and is informed by the range of inputs identified in Table 1 of the guidelines 2017 (p.10).

- *Intake screening*
- *Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport, see Primary Circular 0027/2015 at www.education.ie.*
- *Teacher observation*
- *Teacher assessment*
- *Learning Environment Checklist*
- *Student Support Team involvement*
- *Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy*
- *Student consultation*
- *Parental consultation*

3.1.a The Transfer Process

We seek to identify pupils with learning difficulties as early as is possible in the transfer process in order to ensure that we can properly answer needs. Therefore the school opens a dialogue with parents and with the former school(s) attended by the student as early as possible, requesting all relevant information and reports in order to properly identify and assess needs. (EWA, 7a)

This dialogue begins on Admissions day, when parents are asked to bring any Educational Assessments and discuss the students' needs with the members of the AENDepartment who attend that meeting. On the same day, all incoming first year students are given a Standardised Reasoning Test (verbal and numerical). The results allow for the identification of students who may have learning needs and who have not been identified by their parents or in Primary school. Members of the AEN Department are then in a position to contact the feeder National Schools and the parents for information.

Based on this identification process, school management may request the SENO to provide resources such as, specialised equipment, furniture, adequate accommodation, transport etc. so as to enable the school to discharge its duty adequately.

3.1.b. Further Identification of students with special Needs.

Further to the procedures in section 3.1 above and in accordance with section 14.1(e) EPAEN2004, the school shall ensure that '*teachers and other relevant employees of the school are aware of the importance of identifying children and students who have special educational needs*'.

- (i) On entering the school, all students undergo Standardised screening tests (c.f. 3.1.c) on the basis of which the AEN team will identify student needs (especially in those not already having a report/identified need) and they will then engage in the problem solving process.
- (ii) During their time in Mercy Mounthawk students may be assessed to check eligibility for reasonable accommodation for state exams (see section 3.3.b) and to monitor progress. All parents will be made aware of this process at the beginning of the academic year.
- (iii) Teachers may refer students to the Additional Needs Team on the basis of concerns regarding a young person's learning, wellbeing and/or social-emotional development. Teachers will use the Teacher Preparation Form (**Appendix 15**) to relay concerns to AEN team, the Year Head or the Deputy Principal regarding students in their classes. Such information is used to identify students who may need intervention. The Problem-Solving Process outlined in 4.2.b will be used to determine if there is a need for them to be provided with further support. Referrals may also be made by the Year Teams subsequent to a casework meeting.

3.1.c Assessments

As outlined in 0035/2017, p.2, the school uses three types of tests: Standardised ability tests, Standardised achievement tests and Diagnostic tests.

Incoming assessment

All incoming students sit a standardised reasoning test (either the CAT4 or DRT). Bearing in mind the mixed ability composition of classes in 1st year, this assessment is used to assist in the identification of possible learning needs and to indicate particular learning aptitudes students may have.

Parents can receive their son's/daughter's results by contacting the school. Teachers are also provided with the results of these tests through the Schools' MIS (Management Information System) where the results are logged. This is to assist teachers in supporting student learning in their subject classes.

Screening tests

All 1st year students are screened in literacy and numeracy using a range of standardised (reading, spelling) tests. This screening is used in conjunction with the initial assessment results to

- identify students who do not already have assessments but have a literacy need
- to establish the reading and numerical ages of the students so as to assist in planning and tracking of students.
- to provide a base level from which to evaluate the effectiveness of subsequent intervention in learning support. This process also sets a base line on which academic tracking of the students can be based.
- to provide a base level from which to track student progress in literacy and numeracy in the context of the literacy and numeracy SIP.

Diagnostic testing

Members of the-AEN team may conduct diagnostic tests in order to map progress of students throughout the year. This will feed into the student support plan for those students already identified on the continuum of support.

3.2 HOW DO WE MEET THE NEEDS?

How the Allocation of Special Education teaching supports is structured in Mercy Mounthawk

3.2.a Access to Additional Support

Having identified a student's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, the second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies. Students may be allocated support at different levels: *Support for Some* and *Support for a Few*.

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>
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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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3.2.b Organisation of Class Grouping and Learning support.

General structure of class groupings

- In 1st year a mixed ability policy is in place for all classes.
- In 2nd and 3rd year, classes are divided into two bands to split the timetable for timetabling purposes. Within each band, base classes are mixed ability. Classes in options are of mixed ability and core subjects are streamed where this is possible and desirable.
- Transition year operates on a mixed ability basis.
- In 5th and 6th year, the base classes are constructed on the basis of options for courses such as L.C.A-and are usually mixed ability. Students are set into **higher and ordinary** class grouping, in as far as possible, for subject blocks in English, Irish, Maths and Languages.

3.2.c METHODS OF PROVISION FOR SEN.

Currently there is a mix of modes of provision of support in operation following the model of support for few, some and all.

- **Team Teaching In Subject Classes** (*Support for All Some and FEW*)
Increasingly the core model of provision *for the Some and the Few* is through team-teaching, where the support teacher goes into the classroom supporting the teaching and learning of individuals or small groups in the general classroom.
- **Small Group Withdrawal** (*Some and few*) is utilised to provide more specialised support. The organisation of these groupings is decided upon by the AEN Team. Keeping in mind that needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support at different times of the year depending on their individual needs, withdrawal of students is provided dependent on the needs that arise.
Where the needs are known at the start of the year, groups are arranged on the basis similar need profiles and the capacity to withdraw students at the same time.
Very often this support is targeted at skills acquisition in computer use or reading pens etc
- **Group Provision** is used also on occasion where groups of students are given support in clusters relevant to their particular needs.
- **Individual Withdrawal** (*few*) is used where a student requires specialised individual support and may also be connected with an SNA or the Special Autism class staff.
- **Reduced Curriculum.** A small number of students, whom it is deemed, after consultation with the NEPS psychologist, parents and teachers, cannot sustain a full curriculum, have their curriculum reduced. The class periods available as a result of

reduced curriculum are employed to give subject support and literacy/numeracy support and/or the student may have access to an SNA as part of SSP.

3.2.d Use of ICT to support AEN students

Regard has been given to the development of ICT facilities for the AEN students in the school.

By individual students

Applications are made to the SENO for students who require adaptive or assistive technology on the basis of Educational Assessments or O.T. reports. Training in the use of these technologies and software is facilitated through the visiting teachers or through withdrawal in groups.

By the department

An interactive whiteboard has been installed for use in the AEN department.

The department maintains a database of students with AEN. Student Support plans are now developed and stored using an online database and communicated to teachers via their access to THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) .

RACE

Where reports state that access to assistive technology is required for state exams an application is made in conjunction with parents to the State Exams Commission.

3.3.e Curricular Provision

The school seeks to provide a broad curriculum, which is designed to meet the varying needs and abilities of the students in Mercy Mounthawk. We provide the traditional Junior Certificate programme with a broad range of subjects, both academic and practical. All subjects are available to all students in an open choice structure. Option blocks are designed on a 'best fit' basis. All subjects are offered to higher and ordinary level where available and at Level 2 where relevant. We provide the basis in the JCT for 10 full subjects or 9 full and two short courses and the menu of short courses has been developed to provide choice for a student who excel in physical, practical or artistic ways.

Curriculum is reduced for AEN students only after consultation with NEPS, parents and teachers on the basis of an SSP or IBP or PPP or on the basis of continuing complex needs resulting in school refusal, mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns etc.

In Senior cycle, we offer the full suite of Senior Cycle Programmes; Traditional Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied in order to provide for the full range of abilities.

3.2.f Support Programmes within the school

Teams which support inclusive practice in Mercy Mounthawk are:

- AEN Team
- Student Support Team
- Critical Incident Team
- Guidance Team
- Year Team
- Wellbeing Team

'Equality of Opportunity' programme - STEAM ACADEMY – see section 6 below.

3.3 HOW DO WE MONITOR AND RECORD OUTCOMES

Students' progress is regularly and carefully monitored. (See Appendix 9 & 10)

- This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation and reports from subject teachers, form tutors and year heads) that allow students to demonstrate their progress.
- This leads to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe.
- In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, we review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review may include measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for students.

3.3.a Retesting and tracking

The AEN department has in place a process for tracking student improvement as a result of interventions. Each year as part of the process of reviewing the targets for a student, progress in relation to goals set is evaluated and monitored using appropriate observations, checklists, samples of work and reports from subject teachers, testing and retesting.

SECTION 4. Student Support Plans

STUDENT SUPPORT PLANS—see appendices 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 &12

4.1 Guiding Principles

When students are identified through the process outlined above, a Student Support Plan is created (if required) for each of those students in the support for some and few categories in response to their individual needs. Student Support Plans will be created through a collaborative process, which may include some or all of the following: the AEN Team, Student Support Team, Year Head/Tutor, Guidance Team, Subject Teachers, Parents, SNAs, the student and sometimes external professionals.

The Student Support Plan will allow the relevant staff to document progress over time and it will assist us in providing an appropriate level of support to students in line with their level of need.

The school AEN team, in consultation with subject teachers, plan their interventions carefully to address students' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Student Support Plan. (See Student Support Plan Templates appendices 8, 9 and 13). Short-term planning reflects the support plan targets and will break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each student's specific needs.

Recommendations from Student Support Plans for each student will be made available to all teachers through appropriate procedures and in line with GDPR guidelines.

The Student Support File provides a process for recording and collating all information in relation to the young person, in order to plan interventions aligned to their identified strengths, interests and needs, and to facilitate the documentation of the young person's response to

intervention. It tracks a young person's pathway through the Continuum of Support and guides which evidence-informed interventions are most appropriate.

The Student Support File holds all the information regarding the additional support provided to the young person. This includes:

- Log of actions.
- Copy of Student Passport/Transfer Review Form from the primary school.
- Relevant information gathered to develop understanding of strengths, interests and needs.
- Information on attendance.
- Student Support Plans that are developed and monitored over time.
- Interventions, accommodations and other supports.
- Records of consultations.
- Details of reviews and response to intervention.
- Copies of professional reports and/or correspondence relevant to supporting the young person at school.
- Records of relevant communications with parents/guardians and young people

Student Support Plan

The Student Support Plan is an individualised learning plan which documents the young person's strengths, interests and needs, as well as the priority learning needs that have been agreed as the basis for targets and interventions. Some young people may present with many needs and their priority learning needs should be identified and recorded. These inform the targets and interventions required to remove identified barriers to learning and participation across the curriculum, and in the life of the school community. The Student Support Plan is developed by the special education teaching team, in collaboration with the relevant subject teachers, special education teachers, parents/guardians, and relevant professionals, where appropriate. The views of the young person are central to this process. Student Support Plans will be reviewed regularly to ensure that targets continue to address the identified priority learning needs of the young person.



4.2 Development of a Student Support Plan

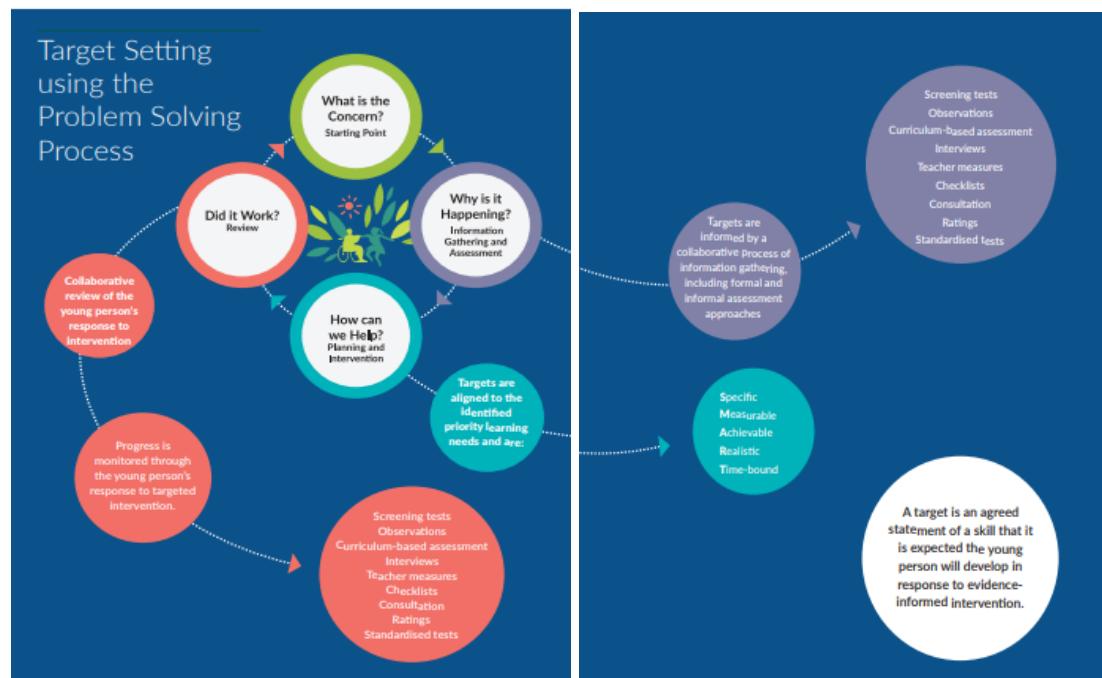
4.2.a. In general, parents and students are invited to consult with the AENAEN team and school management on Admissions Day. Parents are advised to bring assessments and relevant data that they wish to release to the school and permission is granted to share this information with relevant personnel: the SENO, the AEN Team, Management and teachers who will be dealing with their child.

To inform and develop provision for student profiles, members of the AEN team, management and when required, the student's Year Head and NEPS Psychologist meet as necessary. Contact is maintained with parents/guardians as the student timetable and targets are created and later reviewed.

4.2.b. Planning and Target Setting

The intention of the Student Support Plan is to identify modification to the general educational programme that is necessary to meet the student's needs. Team members prepare by considering their long-term goals for the student, which can then be developed into targets for the Support Plan.

We adopt a problem-solving approach to target setting, which reflects the presenting needs of our students:



Target Setting Using the Problem Solving Approach - Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes pg 48&4

4.2.c. Implementation

The student is allocated support in accordance with the provisions of the Student Support Plan. Each student's targets are made available to all staff. The student profile on THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) indicates if a student has SEN/ALN and their profile on The Schools' MIS (Management Information System) has a brief description of their diagnosis and some recommendations as to how to support them in the classroom.

Teachers have access to the targets from the student support plan for each student and can read what specific goal or strategy is recommended for that student in their subject. The AEN team will engage with the subject teachers to assess the progress of the student at specific times throughout the year and will readjust the targets accordingly where required.

Staff are made aware at the beginning of the year the AEN team member overseeing each year group and any queries that staff may have are directed to this link person.

4.2.d Evaluation / Review

Student Support Plans are reviewed at least once a year. The purpose of the review is to assess the progress made/otherwise and to adjust the targets based on the feedback from staff, teacher observation records, parent concerns, diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy, formal observation of behavior including ABC charts, Functional assessment including screening

measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties etc. This is done with a view to amending the plan for the following period.

4.2.e Supporting Transitions

The provision of targeted supports for young people with special educational needs to support their transitions at all stages of their educational journey is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness within a new environment.

The process of transition is supported by the development of positive relationships between the young person, their teachers and peers. Transition from one education setting to another is best viewed as a process over time rather than a single event. Advance planning is key to successful transitions. Young people with special educational needs will be provided with targeted support with transitions, tailored to their needs.

As part of the review of an Student Support Plan, consideration will be given, where appropriate, to the issue of transfer to further education or into working life. In accordance with EPAEN(2004), section 15, (1) when a student reaches ‘such an age as the Principal or organiser considers appropriate’ regard must be taken of ‘provision which will need to be made to assist the child to continue his or her education or training on becoming an adult’.

To fulfil this aim, the school will work in conjunction with the parents and the SENO where appropriate to

- Ascertain the wishes of the student and his/her parents
- To plan for the steps necessary to enable the student to progress as a young adult to ‘the level of education or training that meets his or her wishes or those of his or her parents and that are appropriate to his or her needs.’ EPSEN, 2004, section 15 (2).

The AEN team will engage with resources and supports from the relevant professionals and from the NCSE NCCA and NEPS including the following resources:

NCSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs to make Successful Transitions – Guidelines for Schools</i>- <i>Post Primary Transitioning</i>
NCCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>NCCA Primary to Post-Primary Education Passport</i>
NEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>NEPS Primary to Post Primary Transfer Resources</i>

4.3 SNA Support

Further to circular 06/2011 the following guidelines are adopted in assigning SNA support to students.

- Pupils will access the support of an SNA based upon their level of need, which can range from a requirement for brief periods during the day to most of the school day in some instances. SNAs are allocated as required, and on the basis of individual need.
- Multiple students may be assigned to one SNA so that dependency is not created
- An SNA may be assigned to support for particular class periods or break-time supervision times only

- An SNA may be deployed to a particular class group so as to maximise cover for more than one student when timetables allow
- SNA access may be removed from a student with decreasing care needs for a time and review progress at a later date

The student is allocated SNA support based on the primary care needs identified. Teachers of the student are made aware of the SNA/SNAs that will be working with them and teachers can communicate any observations regarding care needs to the SNA. The SNAs liaise with the AEN team and the Student Support Teams, Year Head etc. They keep a file on each of the students in their care documenting any relevant information on a weekly basis. They pass on any relevant information to the parents, Year Team, SNA Coordinator or AEN team where required.

SNAs participate fully in the life of the school and may therefore also assist other children in the school, who from time to time need assistance, or who have intermittent care needs, but who may not have been assessed as requiring SNA support on a permanent basis.

4.3.a Evaluation / Review

A key goal of SNA support is to help children to develop their independent living skills. Where care needs diminish and the goal of independence is achieved, the level of SNA support required by the student will be reduced.

All pupils with access to SNA support have their need for this support reviewed at least once a year. The purpose of the review is to see if the student is achieving the goals set out in the Student Support Plan. This is done with a view to amending the plan for the following period. Following this review, the student needs are reprioritised and students with the greatest needs and those with diminishing needs are identified and support is altered accordingly.

SECTION 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 ROLES OF STAFF

a. Board of Management

School Polices: The Board of Management (BOM) has the responsibility for overseeing the development, implementation and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of young people with special educational needs. In this regard the board should:

- Ensure that all young people have access to a high quality education as well as high standards of teaching, learning and assessment in the school.
- Make arrangements for the preparation of a School Improvement Plan that contains a summary of the areas for improvement identified as part of the School SelfEvaluation (SSE) process, including the objectives and the measures that will ensure equity of access to, and participation in, all aspects of the activities of the school, by young people with special educational needs, to the greatest extent practicable.
- Arrange for the publication of the school policy on the education of young people with special educational needs. This document should include the school's policy on the admission and participation of young people with special educational needs, the arrangements for identifying these young people, and for their educational provision in the school.
- Arrange for periodic reviews of the range of curriculum provision within the school to ensure that suitable programmes are on offer to all young people, including those with special educational needs.

- Ensure that reasonable accommodations are made within the school for young people with special educational needs, as appropriate.
- Contribute to the development of awareness and knowledge among teachers, nonteaching staff members and young people, of the needs of young people with special educational needs, and of their particular responsibilities for the inclusion of these young people in the school community.

Governance and Accountability

The BOM has a statutory governance duty to ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place to ensure school resources, including grants, staffing and other resources, are managed appropriately and correctly, and in a manner that provides for appropriate accountability to the relevant parties.

In the case of special education teaching resources, the board of management should ensure:

- That the allocation provided, which is an additional teaching resource, is ring-fenced and used for the sole purpose of supporting young people with special educational needs.
- That where special education teaching resources are used to support young people with special educational needs in subject classes, including through team teaching, advance preparation takes place to facilitate meaningful participation.
- That these resources are utilised for their intended purpose only. This is stipulated within Section 15 of the Education Act 1998, and the Department Circular 0064/2024.
- That the Student Support File, which includes the Student Support Plan, is the process through which the school accounts for its decisions on the use and allocation of its special education teaching supports.
- That the deployment of special education teaching supports is recorded in the Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers (Appendix 2 - Guidelines 2024 and Appendix 14 of this policy) to assist in tracking the use of special education teaching hours across the Continuum of Support.
- That it receives annual confirmation from the principal on the use of the special education teaching resources (see Appendix 2 Guidelines 2024 and Appendix 14 of this policy) for the mandatory data required to be noted and maintained by the board to provide this assurance.

School Self-Evaluation Process

The board oversees the school's engagement in school self-evaluation. When applied to a school's provision for young people with special educational needs, the SSE process, and the domains and statements of practice detailed in LAOS, enable teachers and school leaders to:

- Review their practices.
- Identify what they are doing well.
- Recognise aspects of the school's work that could be further developed to improve inclusive learning experiences and outcomes for young people.

b. Principal

On behalf of the Board of Management of Mercy Mounthawk, the Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. The Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers (as outlined in Section 18 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004).

The school principal has a primary role in modelling, promoting and building whole-school staff capacity to maintain effective inclusive practice throughout the school.

The principal

- Ensures the board of management is kept fully informed on the deployment of special education teaching resources.
- Oversees how the resources, including human resources, and special education teaching hours, which are provided to the school to support young people with AEN, are used to ensure that the young people with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support.
- Ensures the development and implementation of inclusive whole-school policies and procedures relating to the inclusion of young people with special educational needs and monitors and reviews their implementation.
- Oversees a whole-school approach to assessment and screening to identify strengths, needs and interests to guide the allocation of appropriate teaching and learning supports.
- Ensures effective engagement with feeder primary schools to support the transition of young people with special educational needs.
- Deploys teachers who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to special education teaching roles.
- Establishes a core special education teaching team.
- Collaborates with the core special education teaching team to delegate roles and responsibilities for the effective allocation of resources and timetabling, based on identified needs across the Continuum of Support.
- Ensures that systems are in place for effective sharing of relevant information on young people's needs with all subject and special education teachers.
- Facilitates teacher professional learning for all teachers in relation to whole-school inclusive teaching and learning practices and the education of young people with special educational needs.
- Encourages and facilitates special education teachers to undertake the PostGraduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers that is available through a number of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).
- Ensures that all school staff, including subject teachers and special education teachers, guidance counsellors and special needs assistants (SNAs), are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Ensures that teachers with relevant experience and expertise in the area of special educational needs provide additional targeted supports to young people with special educational needs.
- Ensures that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents/guardians, young people and external professionals/agencies in provision for young people with special educational needs.
- Ensures that the School Provision Plan for Young People with Special Educational Needs is updated.
- Ensures that a Student Support File has been initiated for all young people identified at School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few, on the School Provision Plan for Young People with Special Educational Needs.
- Ensures that a Student Support Plan is developed and contained within the School Support File for all young people identified at School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few, on the School Provision Plan for Young People Identified with Special Educational Needs.

In the implementation of the special education teaching model, The principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff. The principal establishes a core special education teaching team to assist in providing an effective and holistic response to young people's needs. The principal can allow time for the core team to identify, plan, review, monitor and co-ordinate provision for young people with special educational needs.

c. Deputy Principal (with specific responsibility for AEN)

Responsibility for timetabling provision for Learning Support with the relevant Post Holder and Deputy Principal with responsible for timetabling.

- Responsibility for liaising with external service providers: NEPS, SENO, CAMHS, Health Service Executive etc.
- Organises individual interventions with NEPS

The Deputy Principal with responsibility for AEN and the AEN Team meet every week to: plan, prepare and evaluate services provided in the school: to apply to the Department of Education and Science (DES) for resource hours and assistive technologies and to profile students on an on-going basis.

d. Guidance Counsellors

- Oversee and organise the administration of the standardised tests on admissions day.
- Assist 6th year students who meet the criteria in their applications for DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)

e. Subject teachers

EPAEN(2004) states that students with special needs shall whenever possible be educated '*in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs*'. Circular Special Education 24/03 indicates that regardless of what special educational need a child may have, or who may be involved in supporting that need, **the classroom subject teacher retains primary responsibility for all the students in his/her classroom**. The classroom subject teachers will always have responsibility for teaching all the students all the curricular content.

The subject teacher:

- Provides an inclusive learning environment that facilitates the wellbeing of all young people through their meaningful participation in learning in the mainstream classroom.
- Develops positive relationships with all young people in their class groups, including those with special educational needs.
- Demonstrates flexibility in approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, to enhance the learning experiences and learning outcomes for all.
- Identifies and communicates concerns where needs emerge at the level of Subject Classroom Support-All with parents/guardians, the young person, and other relevant staff.
- Communicates and collaborates with the special education teaching team, as necessary, including seeking advice and/or assistance to facilitate inclusive practice in their classroom.
- Accesses all information in a Student Support File and/or Student Support Plan that is relevant and necessary to plan effectively for teaching and learning at mainstream subject level.
- Ensures that all young people are provided with a learning programme and environment that enables them to access, participate and experience success in a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Adapts teaching approaches, as required, to meet individual needs and specifically, to facilitate the achievement of targets that are set in Student Support Plans, as appropriate to the subject area.
- Contributes, as appropriate, to reviews of Student Support Plans, by providing information on a young person's progress in the subject classroom context, and by collaborating with the members of the special education teaching team as required.
- Informs parents/guardians of their child's progress through regular parent/guardian teacher meetings and school reports, and by being available to meet parents/guardians from time to time, as required.

- Contributes to school development planning for young people with special educational needs through strategic planning at the subject department level within the school.

The class teacher takes responsibility for their continuous professional development, particularly concerning common difficulties e.g. Dyslexia & Specific Language difficulties. They develop an attitude of ownership to the education of students in their classes with Additional/Special Educational Needs.

Through access to the students' diagnosis, needs and recommendations on THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) , Subject teachers are cognisant of the learning difficulties/challenges of students in their classes and make allowances for this in the delivery of the course material and in assessment and feedback to students.

Where a student has access to an SNA, the subject teacher should plan how to most effectively engage the SNA in consultation with the AENteacher or the AENCoordinator for the year.

Meeting Needs through effective teaching and learning

Subject teachers in Mercy Mounthawk have first-line responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. They adapt their teaching approaches for some students whose ability, application, motivation, communication, behaviour, or interaction with peers are causes of concern.

All subject teachers implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of all students. These include

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Co-teaching/Team teaching
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment
- Collaborate with AEN team and contributing to planning
- Adapting our physical classroom environment
- Guiding work of the SNA in the classroom specific to their subject needs and the care needs of the student.

To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, subject teachers use a variety of methodologies and approaches to suit the learning styles/needs of all students in their class, by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs.
- Using an inclusive, differentiated, and flexible approach to student output, such as homework, assignments, projects, and tests.
- Adapting lessons for students' interests.
- Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs.
- Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology.
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly
- Providing scaffolded instruction.
- Ensuring that their classroom is adapted appropriately.

In Mercy Mounthawk, we aim to ensure that every student is taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. In matching programmes to students' needs, we examine the range of curriculum options available, including, Junior Certificate Level 2 Learning Programmes and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

Subject teachers will co-ordinate with members of the AEN team to plan the support and differential programme for students. As part of this process, subject teachers will participate in the ongoing assessment of students for the purposes of identification, establishing baselines and progress.

Subject teachers may be timetabled to take a number of support classes per week. These teachers work with the small groups allocated to them by the Deputy Principal with responsibility for timetabling. The subject teacher follows the programme indicated in subject support.

f. The AEN Team

Support for Students with Additional Educational Needs within the school is mainly coordinated by the AEN team in conjunction with a number of key staff members whose roles are outlined in section 8 below.

- The AEN team comprises the Deputy Principal with responsibility for ~~Special~~ Additional Educational Needs, a number of Middle Leadership post holders with responsibility for: RACE, AENtimetabling, SENO applications, and the ~~AEN~~AEN teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
- A named AEN teacher oversees each year group: this entails being aware of the needs of AEN students in that year group and thus being the key contact person in relation to students in that year. This AEN teacher is scheduled to attend the Year Team weekly meetings for their designated year where they provide insight into case work of students from Learning/Social/Emotional Needs perspective and where they provide a link back to the AEN department. (*see appendix 14 for updated Year Teams*).
- Teachers, Year Heads, Management, Post-holders, parents and other relevant agencies are directed to the year AEN coordinator to consult regarding reports, referrals, exam provisions, concessions etc.
- The Team works closely with the Principal, Deputy Principals, NEPS, visiting Teachers and parents, in relation to in-house assessments, diagnostic and summative assessments, referrals for specialist assessments, development of Student Support Plans and general queries.

Members of the AEN team share the workload by each overseeing a year group. (*see Appendix 14 for updated lists*)

- The AEN team members and Management profile incoming students; consulting parents, primary schools and relevant professionals-the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) the Special Educational Support Service (SESS) or other relevant agencies
- The AEN team, where necessary administer a variety of standardised tests to assess students and monitor progress throughout the year
- The AEN Team work in an advisory capacity with management in timetabling ~~AEN~~of students and allocating Resource hours at all levels
- The AEN team is available on Admissions Day or on an alternative date which will be made known to parents on Admissions Day: to meet parents of incoming students and the students; to record information and to collate reports and paper work; to help supervise Assessments given to first years that day.

- The team works in a consultative role with teaching colleagues. They share their knowledge and expertise formally at staff meetings and informally as required when consulted. A folder for teachers giving extra information about special educational needs that our students have along with teaching resources has been created on Google Drive.
- Each August/September the SENO applications coordinator shares information concerning incoming and existing students and compiles a register of AENstudents illustrating individual assessed special needs and medical needs.
- Subject teachers who are concerned about students are encouraged to communicate their concern through the AENteacher overseeing the year in which the student is placed. Teachers should fill a Teacher Preparation Form. (See teacher preparation form appendix 16)
- Parents may also refer their son/daughter either directly through the person in management in charge of AEN or the Year Head for assessment by the AEN Dept.
- The AEN Team has input into the Reasonable Accommodation for Certificate Examinations (RACE) Copies of assessments and results of tests administered by the AEN team are given to the member of staff with responsibility for R.A.C.E.
- Access to Psychological Reports/Student Support Plans/Assessments
- In accordance with section 3.5 Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post Primary Guidelines, teachers have access to all information that '*is likely to be relevant to teaching or supervising a student with special educational needs, including psychological reports and other confidential documents*'.
- The AEN team prepares the Student Support Plan and relevant parts of that plan are made available only for the teachers of these students.

g. Special Education Lead Teacher for Each Year Group

The special education Lead teacher provides or leads the additional teaching support to young people attending mainstream classes who have been identified as having special educational needs. Special education teaching provision includes early intervention, team teaching, and small group and/or individual support, where appropriate.

The special education Lead Teacher:

- Leads the identification and provision of support for young people with special educational needs in the school context using the Continuum of Support problem solving process.
- Develops Student Support Files and Student Support Plans as agreed by the team, for the young people with special educational needs to whom they are directly providing/leading as regards to additional teaching support, at the levels of School Support-Some and School Support Plus-Few.
- Collaborates, liaises and communicates with parents/guardians, the young person, other relevant teachers and staff, the special education teaching team, the Student Support Team, the school principal and relevant others, as part of the problem-solving process.
- Engages and collaborates with external agencies and services outside of the school as appropriate and necessary.
- Promotes and advises staff of the use of evidence-informed teaching and learning approaches to support the special educational needs of young people, and monitors response to intervention.
- Plans, as best practice suggests, for the effective implementation of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets that have been agreed following the process of liaison, communication and collaboration described above.
- Plans to support transitions for young people with special educational needs.

- Leads the provision of support across a variety of settings including in-class, small group and/or individual support.
- Shares relevant information with subject teachers regarding the special educational needs of young people to support their meaningful engagement and participation in lessons.
- Advises subject teachers when requested.
- Engages in TPL to upskill and develop the knowledge, competencies and skills required for high quality provision of support for young people with special educational needs.
- Reflects on individual professional practice, including teaching and learning approaches, to enhance provision.

h. Post Holders

- Responsible for the dissemination of information, indication of a diagnosis/additional need and sharing of professional recommendations as outlined in professional reports to the staff through the schools Management Information System.
- Co-ordinates the exemptions from Irish, concessions for state examinations and RACE / DARE applications.

i. Special Needs Assistants

The Special Needs Assistant provides care assistance to named students and any assigned student who have Primary Care Needs. They make a valuable contribution to the schools capacity to provide inclusive education to these students. The Additional Educational Needs Support Team and the Deputy Principal with responsibility for overseeing Additional Education Needs will work collaboratively in devising an appropriate strategic plan for a student with Primary Care Needs. The SNA is made aware of this plan and given guidance on its role in the successful implementation of this plan.

The Special Needs Assistant plays an essential role in the health and safety of students with Primary Care Needs and in their social, emotional and educational development. The Special Needs Assistant supports student participation in school life without developing a culture of dependence.

The duties of the Special Needs Assistants involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting students on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs students with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- General assistance of the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal of a non-teaching nature.
- Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the School.

Care for students with Primary Care needs – work can vary depending on the individual's needs: from supporting students in practical subjects, to organising homework, books, monitoring

attendance at classes, assisting students in classes or providing the possibility for withdrawal of students from classes, assisting students in times of overwhelm/sensory overload/high anxiety, liaison with teachers regarding work to be completed etc... Decisions on the specific role of the SNA are made on a case by case basis.

5.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

As primary educators of the student, the school recognise the central importance of the involvement of parents in addressing the special educational needs of students at the school. The school believes that the effectiveness of any assessment or intervention will be influenced by the involvement and interest of the child and his/her parents.

On Admissions Day, information on special needs provision in the school is passed on to parents/guardians. Parents are invited to contact AEN department during the year in addition to meeting teachers at Parent/teacher meetings.

Parents/guardians are always contacted if the AEN/Student Support team feel that further outside professional support or further more intensive school support such as Pastoral Care should be considered and it will always be the decision of the parent/guardian how to proceed in such instances.

5.3 STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

The right of the young person to express their views in all matters affecting them, is central to the collaborative process outlined in the Guidelines 2025. Young people will be provided with age appropriate opportunities and assistance to realise this right.

Young people are involved in identifying their own strengths and needs, have input in setting learning targets, and in monitoring their progress and response to intervention. Students interests and priority areas of concerns are identified by the lead special education teacher in collaboration with the student themselves, their parents and subject teachers

In general, where students are being withdrawn from the mainstream curriculum for group support or for 1:1 support, they are informed by the AENteam. Often, students will know, coming into the school, that they have an Educational Assessment/Need and will have spoken to the relevant personnel along with their parents as part of the transition process.

In the case of a student who is referred for assessment through the school, we will discuss with the parent/guardian what is the best way to approach informing the student.

5.4 LINKS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND SERVICES

The EPAENAct (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 the Act, the school will work with the local SENO, the local NEPS psychologist, the local visually impaired and the hearing impaired, psychologists or psychiatrists from the Health Service Executive and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of any particular student.

It will be customary to hold case meetings with relevant professionals with the permissions and knowledge of the student's parents (and where relevant their attendance) in order to determine the best approach and provision for the students in question.

The arrangements for such meetings will, at present, be coordinated by the Deputy Principal and permission sought from the parents in advance.

Notes from such meetings will be recorded and maintained in the student's file.

5.5 THE YEARLY AENSCHEDULE

MONT H	TASK	COMMENT
May of finishing year & August of New term	Assist SMT in evaluation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision and deployment of AENstaff and SNAs SEN/EAL/Special Class timetables, class lists and rooms. 	Consider number of subjects, subject options and access to appropriate programmes e.g. LCA, LPL1 and LPL2
	Liaise with parents and external professionals concerning the complex needs groups identified in 1 st and 6 th year to maximise possible supports that can be put in place.	AENteam
	Review the list for Leaving Cert RACE; discuss changes with students; test as required; contact parents; prepare forms for October deadline; inform Year Head, LC and LCA teachers and Guidance Counsellor.	Information required by staff member(s) with responsibility for DARE applicants, POR holder and AENteam
	Review Leaving Certificate results of AENstudents.	AENteam
	Ensure AENinformation on incoming first year and new students is entered on THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) for dissemination to staff.	GDPR considerations.
	Present at staff meeting re new AENstudents, Additional Needs Register, referral system, roles, responsibilities, team meetings, assessments, reporting, RACE, CPD...	GDPR considerations. Year Heads, SMT, AENdept, Y Heads, Post Holders & Relevant staff
	Schedule planning meetings with relevant staff and year teams to ensure AENprovision is planned, implemented, reviewed and amended as necessary.	Special Needs Department / SETs / SNAs / Pastoral Care Team / Student Support Team / newly appointed personnel / Year Heads.
	Review school website and information re SEN	SMT
	Review plan for induction of new AENstudents. Liaise with relevant staff including Year Head and First Year Tutors.	Consider SNA access, layout of building(s); storage, use and maintenance of assistive technology; location of lockers; break time arrangements.
	Commence gathering information on incoming students after offer of places for next year: Begin with briefing meetings with primary schools; Follow up with calls and meetings with parents.	AENteam member responsible for 1 st year and Year Head.
Sept.	Prepare for scheduled Parent Information Meetings for Year Groups and First Year in particular.	Decide on AENmessage to impart to parents for each year group.
	Review the list for Leaving Cert RACE; discuss changes with students; test as required; contact parents; prepare forms for October deadline; inform Year Head, LC and LCA teachers and Guidance Counsellor.	Information required by staff member(s) with responsibility for DARE applicants.

Review the list for Junior Cert RACE testing; plan for eligibility testing to resume in time to meet the late December deadline; inform Year Head and JC teachers.	Guidance and AENteam
Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	AENTeam
Hold planning meetings with relevant staff and teams to ensure AENprovision is planned, implemented, reviewed and amended as necessary.	Special Needs Department / SETs / SNAs / Pastoral Care Team / Student Support Team / newly appointed personnel / Year Heads.
Brief first year Year Head in detail about the needs of the new group: identify the students who may cause most concern, who will require regular and frequent review and plan dates for review with Year Head.	Can be useful to set-up regular meetings with Year Head.
Plan for the administration and analysis of the PPADE in first year: Share and explain the information with relevant staff including Guidance Counsellor. Identify students with identified needs and plan to review and possibly test these students further using standardised testing.	SET team & Staff
Review the year group with Year Team and discuss AENissues; identify students most at risk both academically and in other ways.	Year Team and AENteam member
Meet individually and brief any teacher with support hours on their timetable. Agenda: Brief about students' needs Prepare the general programme for the year; write more detailed plan for first term identifying outcomes and success criteria Provide training for staff who have little or no AENknowledge or skills Advise on CPD available.	Team-Teachers, SNAs, AENteam and relevant staff.
Ensure that Student Support Files are created and maintained and that students and parents are aware and consulted on these plans.	AENteam , students and parents
Ensure to link with the SNAs around Personal Pupil Plans to inform a students Support Plan. Brief SNA about the needs of the students in their care providing training if necessary Go through the PPP Trouble shoot possible problems.	Essential to link with parents.
Parent Information Meetings.	AENmembeers may present at parents info meetings
Finalise AENtimetables for Sept. returns: 30 th Sept Prepare Leavers Form and Student Attendance Confirmation Form (NCSE Forms 5 and 6 for special class) for the Principal to sign by end of September. Finalise exemptions from study of Irish for October returns.	Returned through PPod to DES. Review number of subjects, subject options and access to appropriate programmes e.g. TY, LCA, LPL1 and LPL2. SMT, AENteam, RACE coordinator
Monitor induction and transition of new students.	Watch out for lost students, heavy school bags, lost belongings etc: SNAs, AENteam, Year teams and all relevant staff.
Plan for Open Day.	AENteam available on Open Day and/or is available to meet with parents.

	Review Junior Cycle results of AENstudents in relation to choice of Senior Cycle Programme and subject.	AENteam, Year team
Oct.	Finalise Leaving Cert RACE and post by deadline. Advise relevant teachers on the implications of the RACE accommodations for 6 th year students: training for optimal use of the accommodations should begin in support classes and during SNA time.	Guidance Dept. Guianace Dept and AENteam
	Consult with Year Heads to identify students who will need NEPS assessments / external assessments this school year and start preparing the briefing documents for referrals.	This work will continue through the year in every month including testing and preparation of briefing documents / completion of checklists for NEPS or external assessments. Year Teams
	Open a planning document and an appointment schedule for DARE applications for next February. Liaise with relevant school staff including Guidance Counsellors. Update letter about RACE / DARE / Better Options Conference and important dates schedule; post to parents of 6 th year AENstudents before Hallowe'en.	Guidance Dept.
	Open planning document for testing schedule for students who are referred by teachers for investigation of difficulties. Complete NEPS checklists for these students and order the necessary testing instruments required for the year.	This work will continue through the year in every month. AENteam
	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Finalise AENTimetables.	Review number of subjects, subject options and access to appropriate programmes e.g. LCA, LPL1 and LPL2.
	Remind teachers of Additional Needs Register in advance of Parent/Teacher meetings.	AENTeam – Year specific – wk 11 and 22, Christmas and Summer and Mocks
NOV.	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Discuss arrangements for House Exams with relevant personnel.	
	Remind teachers of Additional Needs Register in advance of Parent/Teacher meetings. Advise on differentiation of house exams as required	
DEC.	Finalise Junior Cycle RACE testing; complete forms; advise students and parents; post forms by deadline.	Ongoing work throughout November and December – Guidance and AENteam
	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	CAO Parents' Information Evening.	Career Guidance Counsellor presents on DARE Scheme.
	Review Christmas reports for 1 st , 3 rd and 6 th years and track the students identified in the meeting in September.	AENand Year Team
	Contact parents of 1 st year students with low incidence conditions to discuss their progress and support: advise relevant staff and adjust supports as required.	Review and update Student Support Files and Personal Pupil Plans.

	After offer of first year places for next year, discuss AENstudents and applications for Special Classes with SMT.	
Jan.	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Remind teachers of Additional Needs Register in advance of Parent/Teacher meetings.	AENteam and relevant staff
	Support AENstudents as they finalise CAO applications.	Guidance Counsellor
	Discuss arrangements for Mock Examinations with SMT: Oral and Practical Examinations; RACE and Special Centres.	Agree lists, venues, necessary equipment, personnel. Liaise with Examinations Secretary throughout the Mock Examination process
Feb.	Ensure that AENstudents are supported during Mock Examinations.	AENand SNAs and Year Heads
	Arrange DARE appointments with 6 th year students and parents for completion of EIS.	Guidance
	Analyse the Mock Examination results with relevant staff and review the supports in place for 3 rd and 6 th year students and LCA students.	Year Teams
	Discuss First Year Subject Options, Priority Learning Units and Senior Cycle Programmes and Subject Options with relevant personnel.	AENand Guidance
	Set up an appointment schedule for meetings with parents of students with complex needs coming into the school next year.	AENand Year Head
	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Discuss levels chosen by AENstudents for State Examinations with class teacher, student and parents where needed.	AENteam and staff
	Discuss EAL Curricular Concessions and AENprovision for next year with SMT.	SMT
	Discuss Assessment of incoming First Year students with SMT.	AENperson for 1 st year, Year Head for First year and SMT
Mar.	Make late RACE or adjusted RACE applications.	Guidance
	Ensure all DARE applications are complete and submitted by 15 th March deadline.	Guidance
	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Discuss arrangements for State Examinations with Examinations Secretary and SMT: Oral and Practical Examinations; RACE and Special Centres.	Agree lists, venues, necessary equipment, personnel. SMT, Exams Secretary, Race Coordinator.
April	Make late RACE or adjusted RACE applications.	Guidance / RACE coordinator
	Open a RACE planning document for 2nd years to begin screening for following year's Junior Cycle Examinations.	Race coordinator and AENteam
	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Support AENstudents during Oral / practical exams.	AENteam SNA exams secretary
	Discuss CBAs for relevant Junior Cycle students with relevant staff.	AENteam and staff

	Agree Summer Examination timetable and accomodations with Examinations Secretary and other relevant personnel.	AENteam and SMT
	Apply for school transport for AENstudents in Special classes by deadline in late April.	NCSE Form 2 Special Class coordinator
	Check the scores from the assessment of incoming First Year students against information provided to the school by parents: identify gaps in knowledge and start looking for information.	AEN team and Year teams
	Complete Forms for AENstudents including those in Special Classes and notify SENO of new entrants to special class by 1 st May .	NCSE Forms 5 and 7. –Special Class coordinator and SMT
	Make late RACE or adjusted RACE applications.	Race Coordinator
May	Arrange / Attend CPD and liaise / meet with outside agencies / parents.	NEPS Psychologist, SENO, Clinical Psychologist etc.
	Discuss school's SET and SNA provision and AENtimetable for next year with SMT.	Consider what Team Teaching, group/individual withdrawal, Irish exemption provision can be built into the timetable. AENteam and SMT
	Finalise arrangements for State Examinations with Examinations Secretary and SMT and Technology person	SET, SMT, Technology person
	Discuss CPD requirements for next year.	SMT and AENteam
	Ensure AENstudents are supported during Summer Examinations.	SET team and Special Class Coordinators
	Analyse summer reports of those students with SEN; use information to inform planning for next year.	SET team
	Plan for induction of new AENstudents and review Transition Programme/Plan. Arrange and lead visits to the school for incoming students with SEN. Gather information from parents and primary schools.	Consider class groups, SNA access, layout of building(s); storage, use and maintenance of assistive technology; location of lockers; break time arrangements. SMT team and Year Head and AENteam
June	Ensure AENstudents are supported during State Examinations.	SMT and SNA and Exams superintends/secretary
	Ensure school website is up-to date re SEN.	SMT

SECTION 6. PARTICULAR INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

6.1 Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations

Following a review of RACE in 2016, changes have been made to the scheme from the academic year 2016/2017 to accord with the new model of provision of RACE.

- From this 2017, accommodations that were provided at Junior Certificate will be reactivated at Leaving Certificate subject to confirmation by the school authority of an identified and continuing need.
- Schools will retain devolved authority for recommending the supports to be put in place at Junior Certificate and will now also have devolved authority to recommend the supports to be put in place at Leaving Certificate. It is expected that, in most cases, the school's

recommendation in the case of Leaving Certificate will be to reactivate the same supports as were provided to the candidate at Junior Certificate.

- In the case of reactivating arrangements that had been in place for Junior Certificate, the SEC will accept the recommendation of the school based on the school's judgement that the need for supports persists and in general there will be no need for schools to undertake further testing. Unless some exceptional circumstance arises, the SEC will accept all such reactivation recommendations.
- A separate application process will apply to Leaving Certificate candidates who did not have any accommodations at Junior Certificate or who are applying for a change to the accommodations provided at Junior Certificate. This new model of decision making will give certainty from an earlier stage of students' post-primary education as to the supports that they will have in the state examinations should they continue to be needed.
- There is one exception to this: The category of 'Specific Learning Difficulty' will be broadened to a new category to be known as 'Learning Difficulty'. This will bring RACE into line with the overall needs-based approach to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, advocated by the National Council for Special Education (2014). There will no longer be a need for the school or candidate to provide cognitive ability scores or to otherwise confirm that a candidate has a specific learning difficulty in order to be eligible for RACE. Instead eligibility will be assessed based on level of need, without a requirement for a diagnosis of a specific condition. The change to a needs based approach will enable greater access to the scheme by candidates with general learning disabilities and will bring RACE into line with the overall needs-based approach for the provision of support to students with special educational needs.
- Where testing is required as evidence of eligibility, at Junior Certificate or in the case of an application for new accommodations at Leaving Certificate, the testing arrangements will continue to be evidenced by reference to the candidate's attainment in a standardised reading test and error rates in reading examination papers. Student progress will be monitored in first and second year with a view to applying for RACE for state examinations should they be deemed necessary.
- Applications for the RACE Scheme will continue to be made on one of four grounds as follows:

(1) Learning Difficulty (2) Hearing Difficulty (3) Visual Difficulty 4) Physical Difficulty* * this category is taken to include medical, sensory, mental health and behavioural difficulties as well as physical difficulties.

Further information can be found at the following link
<https://www.examinations.ie/schools/circulars/reasonable-accommodations/>

6.2 Exemptions from Irish

Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in **those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of Department Circular 0055/2022**. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning.

The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish can only be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher/s, special education

teachers and the student. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 of circular 0055/2022.

6.3 STEAM ACADEMY - provision for the 'more able' students

6.3.a Context of Provision

Despite the fact that students with exceptional ability are omitted from the EPAENAct, the school bases its policy on the Education Act 1998 which acknowledges that "special educational needs" means the educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students" (Part 1 Section 2). (c.f. 1.2.d. above).

6.3.b Definition

As part of our policy, we decided to use as a guide the definition as outlined in the Special Education Review Committee (1993) and also used in the SESS document 2004 guidelines which make reference to "exceptionally able or talented" children and providing the following definition:

Pupils who are exceptionally able or talented are those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve high performance in one or more of the following areas:

- (a) General intellectual ability;
- (b) Specific academic aptitude;
- (c) Creative or productive thinking;
- (d) Leadership ability;
- (e) Visual and performing arts;
- (f) Mechanical aptitude;
- (g) Psychomotor ability, e.g. in athletics, gymnastics.

The following caveat was also added by The Review Committee:

"Insofar as a score on an intelligence test can be regarded as an indicator, we suggest that the description "exceptionally able" be used to denote pupils with an IQ score in the range of 130 and above. It is our opinion, however, that adopting a precise cut off point can have little practical application". The SESS document suggest that 'Within a school it would probably be reasonable to use a working definition, which would say that children with ability at the 97th percentile level in at least one area are seen as having special needs'.

Keeping the indicators outlined above in mind and the NCCA recommendation that exceptionally-able would typically include 5-10% of the school population, we have broadened our definition to include students who have scored over 95% on the standardized testing in at least one of the areas of those tests.

6.3.c Identification

Two main sources of identification are used to identify the more-able students.

Testing

Testing is used in the first instance. Students sit the CAT3 test in the March prior to commencing school the following September and the DRT test in September. The students who score in the top ten percent in both or either of these tests are initially identified as being more-able. However, the results of these tests are used with caution, as there can be significant variation in the results. Also the tests are limited in their scope and do not test for exceptional ability in sport, music or art.

Teacher Identification

In accordance with NCCA ‘*Exceptionally Able Students: Draft guidelines for teachers*’, 2007 , we use teacher identification as a means of identification. Through department meetings, teachers are asked to use indicators from the NCCA guidelines to identify students with particular ability in their subject area. These students can be added to the list.

6.3.d Provision for more-able students

Our provision in mercy Mounthawk has been developed through our involvement in the ‘Equality of Challenge’ initiative through the then SESS 2008- 20014. Please see the materials developed and the process adopted at: <https://www.sess.ie/equality-challenge>

Differentiation

The main provision for more-able students is through differentiation in the classroom. A team of teachers have completed both an ICEPE course on gifted and talented education. All staff have received whole school training from PDST on differentiation. These methods can be used to extend the more able students in the mainstream classroom. Some of the resources created by these teachers are available for teachers to access on the school intranet site. Examples of differentiation methods include: peer and self-assessment, self-evaluation, KWL Grids.

In-service on differentiation has been delivered to all teaching staff in the school, the focus being that differentiation will have a positive outcome for every student in the class. It will also promote independent learning for the more able students.

Enrichment

A variety of extra-curricular clubs and societies exist to enrich students who are more-able in particular subject areas. Science club, public speaking and debating as well as a variety of sporting activities are examples of what are available. Students are encouraged to enter the Scifest competition, BT Young Scientist, the Maths and Science Olympiad, John Hooper Statistics competition, Concern and Mental Health Debating, More-able students with particular aptitudes in particular areas are encouraged to participate in these clubs and societies and to enter these competitions. (c.f. *Extra-curricular Policy*)

6.4 EAL PROVISION

Students who require this intervention are identified through the use of the appropriate tests. This test is administered following identification of need in order to set a base line of achievement from which progress can be monitored. This test is re-administered to the selected students each year to monitor progress.

Following identification, a submission is made to the Allocations Section of the DES for hours for the provision of support to these students.

6.5 SPECIAL CLASSES

Special Class Provision

6.5.1 Introduction

The Special Class for Autism operates under the Rules for Post Primary Schools, The Education Act (1998). The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), all relevant equality legislation and Department of

Education and Skills (DES) Circulars 02/05 and more recently 0008/2019. In establishing the ASD class reference was also made to the NCSE (2016) advice on “Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes for Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post Primary Schools”.

The class depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down, by the Department.

The main aim of the Special Class for Autism is to assist students with Autism to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the best of their ability, in an inclusive way in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Our Special class is a place of understanding and acceptance, where every student's unique abilities and challenges are recognised and celebrated. We foster a sense of belonging, where every student feels valued and supported on their learning journeys. We empower our pupils to thrive and flourish through patience, empathy, and individualised learning. We take time to develop meaningful relationships that enable trust, respect, and understanding. Through a range of diverse learning experiences, pupils will work within their ability range developing a range of skills applicable to their daily lives. We aim to enable relevant life skills that will raise confidence, boost morale, and develop understanding through our curriculum programmes.

6.5.2 General Information

Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

A psychiatrist or psychologist will have assessed and classified such pupils as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM–V or ICD–10 criteria. (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

What is a Special Class for Autism ?

Special classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum with a full timetable of mainstream classes, even with support, for most or all of their school day.

Integration

The overarching aim is that all students attending the Special Class for Autism in Mercy Mounthawk will attend mainstream classes in so far as possible. The Special Class for Autism will provide the relevant supports for students with Autism to enable them to integrate as much as is achievable at a particular point in time into the mainstream classes, so as they can be taught alongside their peers with the majority of their learning taking place there.

During their time in the Special Class for Autism, Students have access to an extended curriculum (either individually or in a small group setting) where they will receive social and life skills training, a sensory programme and stress management strategies as appropriate based on their individual needs. Students may also benefit from pre and/or post tutoring of mainstream subjects. Students enrolled in special classes should be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible, in line with their abilities and their emotopnal wellbeing at any given time.

The Individualised Timetable

Students in the Special Class for Autism operate from a modified timetable. The number of academic **subjects** undertaken is wholly dependent on their needs and abilities. Activities in the Special Class for Autism are also individualised. Each student's timetable is fluid and therefore constantly under review. Changes will be made throughout the academic year where the need arises.

6.5.3. Development of Special Class for Autism

6.5.3.a Aims and Objectives:

- To foster and develop an inclusive learning environment in which all students, no matter what their ability, are enabled to experience success and achieve their full potential within our school community.
- To provide a whole school response to the needs of students with Autism within the overall ethos of the school.
- To provide a safe, nurturing and happy environment in which students are guided and supported.
- To provide an environment where students learn skills individually and in small groups in the Special Class for Autism that can then be practiced in the mainstream respective classrooms.
- To provide a predictable and consistent environment with the aim that students' needs become implicitly understood and met.
- To facilitate the student's education from the transfer from primary school to the transition to college/work upon completion of his/her education at Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk.
- To work on strengths and needs and to identify any needs that students are experiencing as early and as thoroughly as possible so as to intervene appropriately as early as possible.
- To Foster a collaborative and supportive partnership between parents, teachers, and students to enhance the overall learning experience for students with Autism.
- To work in partnership with parents/guardians, students, the schools' AEN team, the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and other outside professionals.
- To set achievable and manageable targets for students attending the Special Class for Autism and to employ a variety of resources, equipment, and teaching strategies to enable differentiation in the approach to the curriculum.
- To employ a variety of resources, equipment and teaching strategies to enable differentiation in the approach to the curriculum so that students in the ASD class follow some parts of post primary curriculum, differentiated, as appropriate, to their individual needs.
- To provide access to an extended curriculum whereby students strengths and needs are taken into account and support is offered in the areas of life skills training and stress management and self-regulation strategies

- To attempt to meet the sensory needs of students in the Special Class for Autism by providing access to a sensory room, to sensory activities, sensory/fidget tools and sensory integration rooms and in providing sensory/movement breaks.
- To promote and encourage the integration of all students in the Special Class for Autism within the mainstream school.

6.5.3.b The Special class coordination group

The Board of Management (Board) takes ultimate responsibility for enrolling students with Autism in the school and in the Special Class for Autism. The Board will establish the Special class coordination group to consider all applications made. Members of this Committee are nominated by the Board to include the Principal, a Deputy Principal, and the Special Class Co-ordinators. The local SENo may be consulted in this process. The Principal is responsible for implementing the guidelines under the direction of the Board of Management. The role of the Committee is to advise the Board on matters relating to the special class and to perform the following duties:

- (a) Oversee the registration and application process for inclusion in the Special Classes as outlined in this policy.
- (b) As part of our annual review of the student's progress and our Autism programme's ability to meet their needs and deliver the most beneficial educational programme we adhere to the following model of evaluation: Regular assessment of: (i) the academic, social and behavioural benefits of the student being enrolled in the Autism programme (ii) the level and quality of mainstream participation.
- (c) Review student progress in general. In cases where it is our professional opinion that a student is not benefiting from their place in the Special Class, and it is believed, with reason, that the student may benefit more from being in mainstream, or indeed greater support than the school can provide, this will be discussed with the SENo, NEPS/other professionals involved with the student, the parents and referred to the Board of Management to assess suitability for continuance on the programme. The Board may seek advice from the Special class coordination group.

In accordance with Circular 14/2017, the management and administration of the DES resources is at the discretion of the Board of Management. Circular 14/2017 does not supersede the Board's overall responsibility to manage the school. Mercy Mounthawk School will not exceed the sanctioned number of places in each Special Class. It is the school's position that the application of Circular 14/2017 does not equate to using the DES AEN(General allocation model) annual allocation for the provision of the supports and resources equivalent to that of a specialised setting such as a designated ASD class or other DES recognised Special Class.

6.5.3.c Eligibility for enrolment in the Special class for ASD

“A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his/her overall needs” – The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004.

Enrolment in the ASD Support class is subject to a place being available and the enrolment criteria being satisfied. The Department of Education (DES) places a cap on the number of students able to enrol in an ASD support class (maximum of 6 students per class). Admission is dependent on the number of places available in the special classes.

6.5.3.d Criteria for Enrolment in Autism class

Eligibility criteria for admission to a special class or special school are set down by the Department of Education and Youth ('the Department') and the NCSE and are set out in Department Circular letters and NCSE guidelines. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria to be considered for admission to a special class or special school.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for Autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of special educational needs (e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for Autism.

b) A student who wishes to repeat 6th year in the school and previously had a place in the Autism class will also have to reapply for a place (as it may already have been allocated).

6.5.4 Application process and offer of places

The total capacity for the Autism Class is restricted to six students per class, as determined by the NCSE (National Council for Special Education) and the DE (Department of Education). All applications for the Special Class (whether from existing students in the school or from incoming 1st years) will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy.

6.5.4.a. In relation to incoming 1st years, the general Registration for Admission form is available from the school website as per the Admissions Notice. All applicants must complete this form. You must indicate on this form that you are applying for a place in the Special class for students with Autism.

As outlined in Department of Education circular 0080/2024 available at <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/d5d449a3-00802024-.pdf> parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child or young person in a special class should:

- notify the NCSE and engage with them on the range of options which are available to meet the needs of their child or young person and

- obtain a letter from the NCSE to submit with their admission application for a special class or special school confirming that the child meets the requirements for enrolment to that setting.

“In order to ensure that the NCSE has access to information on all children and young people who may require a special class or special school place, parents/guardians should notify the NCSE prior to making an application for admission to a special class and/or special school. The NCSE will discuss with families the range of options that are available to meet the needs of their child or young person as identified in available reports. This notification together with the submission of the child or young person’s relevant reports should occur as early as is possible.” Department of Education, Circular 0080/2024 page 6

Details on how you can contact the NCSE regarding Special Class/Special School Placement can be found <https://ncse.ie/notify-ncse-special-class-special-school>

Once you have engaged with the NCSE and have received written confirmation from the NCSE stating that your child/young person is eligible for a place in the Special Class for Autism, you should provide it and all other supporting documentation/reports etc. to the school as part of your application for enrolment into the Special Class.

Please note that should your child or young person be placed on a waiting list for a place, their personal data may be shared with the National Council for Special Education for the purposes of planning for the provision of special education placements.

6.5.4.b. In the case of students already within the school

A letter of *Preliminary Determination of Eligibility to a Special Class Placement* from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for Autism must be submitted to the school if a student wishes to be considered for a place in the special class for autism. All necessary and supporting documentation (*mentioned at 6.2.3.d above*) should be submitted also.

6.5.4.c In the case of over subscription for the Special Class (Autism)

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 6 of the school’s Admission Policy will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled.

Where Mercy Mounthawk is in a position to offer further places that become available in the Special Class (Autism) for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list. Students will be placed on the waiting list in line with the earliest dated NCSE letter of *Preliminary Determination of Eligibility to a Special Class Placement*.

In relation to incoming 1st year students. **In relation to incoming 1st year students**, if a waiting list for the Special Class is already in place, incoming First Year students will be added to it once their enrolment in the school is confirmed. They will be placed after existing applicants and prioritised according to the selection criteria outlined in section 6 of the school’s Admission Policy.

Where two or more students fall into the same criteria, students will be prioritised in line with the earliest dated NCSE letter of *Preliminary Determination of Eligibility to a Special Class Placement*. Therefore, the student with the earliest dated eligibility letter will be prioritised on the waiting list.

If an incoming First Year student does not receive an offer of a place during the initial enrolment process, they will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of the Admissions Policy. If that student has also applied for a place in the Special Class for Autism, they will be added to the waiting list for the Special Class for Autism **only if they receive an offer of a place**. They will be added to the waiting list for the Special Class for Autism on the date they accept a place in the school. (PLEASE NOTE - a copy of the NCSE *letter of Preliminary Determination of Eligibility to a Special Class Placement* must be provided to the school before a student can be added to the waiting list for the Special Class for Autism).

6.6.4.d In the case of under subscription for the centre

The special class for autism may have unfilled spaces if:

- a. There are fewer applicants than places, or b. If applicants decline the offer of a place.

These available places may be offered to:

- i) The next highest ranked applicant from the admissions process.
- ii) Children who are attending an ASD Class in another school but who are moving to the catchment area.
- iii) Children who applied for special Class placement after the closing date for application to the NCSE. These children's suitability and eligibility will need to be established and confirmation sought on the eligibility of the candidate.
- iv) Students of Mercy Mounthawk who following consultation with other external professionals such as NEPS, CAMHS, KIDS, etc. would benefit from a concessionary place. In this situation, priority is given to those students who meet eligibility criteria for a place and who have been granted a place in the special class first and foremost. A concessionary place will only be considered (a) where the Special Class is not full and therefore there is space and (b) where the needs of those enrolled in the class isn't impacted upon by allowing a student access on a concessionary basis.

6.5.4.e Concessionary places

In instances where there is spare timetable capacity in special class because of insufficient eligible children, the Board of Management may offer a temporary place to a student who does not meet the eligibility criteria but who could benefit from enrolment in the class.

A student who wishes to be considered for a concessionary place must

- a) fall under Support plus/Suport for few in line with the 'Continuum for Support', and
- b) have significant multiple disabilities/difficulties, and
- c) are on a waiting list for an ASD/Autism assessment or have been advised by CAMHS or other external professional to apply for such assessment, and
- d) have a NEPS recommendation for special class access, and
- e) be supported by the Board of Management.

This concessionary place would only be offered for the academic term and will be reviewed on a term-by-term basis. Students with an official diagnosis of Autism and an NCSE letter of *Preliminary Determination of Eligibility to a Special Class Placement* will take priority in the allocation of special class places. The question of the continued enrolment of a student on a concessionary basis can only be considered once all eligible pupils have been accommodated.

The Special Class Coordination Group and Board of Management of Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk respect the rights of the existing school community and students already enrolled. This will be taken into account, when assessing entry into the Mercy Secondary School Special Class for Autism.

6.5.5 Procedures to be followed once a student has been deemed eligible for a place in the ASD class

(i) Once all criteria have been met, a member of the Special Class Coordination Group will be in contact with parents/guardians.

(iv) In order to best support students and without affecting their eligibility for a place in the ASD Support Class, a member of the Special Class coordination committee will request details of:

- Any medications that the applicant may be in receipt of either at home or in the course of the school day
- Any additional medical conditions and / or dietary restrictions / requirements that the individual may have.

(iii) At a suitable time prior to entry into Mercy Mounthawk members of the AEN team will contact both the parents/guardians of the applicant student and subsequently their school to put a plan in place for the transition into Mercy Mounthawk. Transition meetings will involve selected members of the AEN/ASD support staff, a member of staff from the feeder school and/or any other school personnel who are deemed to have played a significant role in the applicant pupil's education to that point (such as mainstream teachers, resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants).

(iv) To assist the transition we ask that the feeder school, with parental permission, supply us with copies of the applicant students' work and their most recent Student Support Plan & Personal Pupil Profile.

SECTION 7. MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING

Monitoring and evaluation of interventions for relevant students will be conducted as an integral part of the students Support Plan. Student progress will also be monitored through teacher assessment in the usual manner.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of procedures adopted under this policy, will be done on a yearly basis. The Additional Needs Department will conduct a yearly review of procedures in May each year on the basis of which proposals for development and improvement will be adopted. Such reflective practice will be ongoing within the AEN department.

SECTION 8. DATA PROTECTION AND RECORD KEEPING

All data collected and processed by members of the AEN department is subject to the Provisions of the school's Data Protection Policy (2018). See section 9.b of the policy for details of data collected, processing and sharing.

Individual files are kept on each student who has been engaged with by the Additional Education team in the school. Information in the files includes psychological reports, results from entrance assessments, in-school assessments, correspondence between the school, parents and other relevant agencies, and applications for support and concessions.

(a) Hard Copies

Two complete sets of files are maintained as verifiable evidence, one by the Deputy Principal and the other by the AEN Department. Files will be kept indefinitely, since currently there is no statute of limitations on possible cases in this area. Soft / Digital copy. A copy of the ~~HEP~~ Student Support File is also maintained in Google Drive/in students' paper file and is accessible through the THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) system to teachers who are involved with students.

(b) Access to files

Currently only the following personnel have access to the data the school Principal, the Deputy Principals, members of the AEN department, the Year Heads and the Guidance Counsellors. The maintenance of files is subject to the provisions of the data policy in the school.

(c) Communication of information to subject teachers

Beyond these individuals, information regarding Additional Educational Needs is communicated to teachers on a need to know basis. In accordance with section 14.(1.d) of the EPAENAct 2004, the school '*shall ensure that all relevant teachers and other relevant employees of the school are aware of the special educational needs of students*'. Communication of needs of individual students to their teachers is carried out through the THE SCHOOLS' MIS (MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM) system. It is the responsibility of individual subject teachers to follow up on identification and ascertain further information regarding individual students from the files made available to them by the AEN Team. Other newly identified students are notified to the teachers as the year progresses. This is overseen by the AEN Team and relevant Post Holder.

SECTION 9: RESOURCES AND CPD

The school is committed to the continuing upskilling of the staff to ensure

- that the staff are supported to give confidence in developing inclusive practice and differentiation
- That inclusion appears on the agenda of school development planning.

A programme of CPD is adopted in the school as part of the overall school development plan.

SECTION 10. POLICY RATIFICATION, MONITORING, and REVIEW

Once this AENpolicy has been ratified by the Board of Management, it will then be circulated within the school community. The entire staff will be familiarised with the Policy and be ready to put it into practice in accordance with the specified implementation arrangements. Any

subsequent changes in recording information on students, staff and others in the school community will be notified to all staff.

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the principal and a sub-committee of the board of management.

An annual report will be submitted to the board of management to confirm that the actions/measures set down under the policy are being implemented.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated at certain pre-determined times and as necessary in accordance with the policy review rots. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the Data Protection Commissioner, Department of Education and Skills or the NEWB), legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others.

Review history to date:

- *Review of policy – October '09 to February '10 Ratification by BOM February 22nd 2010*
- *Review of Policy – 2014/5 Ratification by BoM - May 2015*
- *Amended Jan 2017 to include RACE changes and new model of allocation for SEN*
- *Amended and ratified November 2018 to include section in BfL, changes to IEP, Team teaching, and Curriculum Enhancement.*
- *Amended December 2021 changes to PPP and BfL*
- *Amended October 2025 in line with new SET Guidelines and supporting documentation to aid schools in supporting Children/Young people with Special Education Needs.*

Signed:*Margaret McAlmeek*....

For and behalf of board of management

Date of ratification of this policy: **08/10/2025**

Date for next review of this policy: **September 2026 or prior to this date if updated guidance comes from the DEY or NCSE**

APPENDIX 1Glossary of Terms

DES – Department of Education and Youth

NEPS – National Educational Psychological Service

SENO Special Education Needs Officer

AEN– Special Education Needs

AEN – Additional Education Needs

IBP – Individual Behaviour Plan

IEP – Individual Education Plan

SSP – Student Support Plan

SSF – Student Support File

PPP – Pupil Personal Plan

EWO - Education welfare Officer (EWO pre-referral form)

NCSE – National Council for Special Education

APPENDIX 2

Sources referenced in the preparation of this policy document

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

- Department of Education and Skills Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines: http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/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/post-primary/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/sse_guidelines_post_primary.pdf
- Circular Letter 0025/2012: <http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and- Forms/Active-Circulars/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
- Guidelines for Post Primary Schools - *Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes – 2024* <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Guidelines-for-post-primary-schools.pdf.pdf>
- Indicators of Effective Practice for Post Primary Schools *Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes 2024* <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Indicators-of-effective-practice-for-post-primary-schools.pdf.pdf>
- Indicators of Effective Practice *Section 3 Examples Student Support Files for Post Primary schools – 2025* https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Post_Primary_SET_Indicators_example_July_2025.pdf
- Special Education Teaching Support in Primary Schools *Guide for Children* <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/special-education-teaching-support-in-primary-schools-guide-for-children.pdf>
- Special Education Teaching Support in Primary Schools *Guide for Children Your life in school is important* <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/special-education-teaching-support-in-primary-schools-guide-for-children-leaflet-2.pdf>
- Special Education Teaching Support in PostPrimary Schools Guide for Young People 2 <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/special-education-teaching-support-in-post-primary-schools-guide-for-young-people.pdf>
- Special Education Teaching Support in Primary and Post Primary Schools *Quick Reference Guide for Parents/Guardians* <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/special-education-teaching-support-in-primary-and-post-primary-schools-quick-reference.pdf>

Appendix 3 Whole-School AEN Provision Mapping

Area of Need ¹	Class/ Year Group Note: Applies to <u>all</u> unless specified	Whole-School & Classroom Support/ Support for All <i>Interventions delivered at whole-school level to support and promote positive behaviour and learning for ALL</i>	Class/ Year Group Note: Applies to <u>all</u> unless specified	School Support/ Support for Some <i>Interventions delivered at School Support/ Support for SOME level to support students with AEN who are in receipt of additional interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework</i>	Class/ Year Group Note: Applies to <u>all</u> unless specified	School Support Plus/ Support for Few <i>Interventions delivered at School Support Plus/ Support for Few level to support students with AEN who are in receipt of additional interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework and external professionals</i>	Class/ Year Group Note: Applies to <u>all</u> unless specified	More able
Social and Emotional Learning	TY to 1 st TY TY TY Incoming 1 st Yrs 1 st 1 st Yrs	Peer mentoring (TY to 1 ST Yrs) Differentiated curriculum planning and outcome: key word journal and simplified language Mentoring programme Visual aids Guidance and Counselling Yellow Flag Learning to learn Positive Psychology Tutor system Open Day First year night Pastoral care Wellbeing Sports teams e.g.: GAA (Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football, Ladies Football), Basketball, Soccer, Futsal, Rugby, Volleyball, Wheelchair	6 th	Community Liaison Behaviour Support Team IEP		National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) Special Education Support Service (SESS) HSE (Health Service Executive) CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health services) TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) Chaplain's office support at break, lunch and before school SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)		

		Basketball, Athletics, Swimming, Horse riding, Golf, Rowing etc.						
<i>Social and Communication Skills</i>	1 st , TY, 5 th TY TY TY 1 st , 2 nd , TY, 5 th	Induction session Lunchtime club Structured school and classroom routines Google Classroom Young Social Innovators Community of Social Innovators (COSI) Fashion Show Garda Youth Achievement Awards School Play and Musical Role play		Lunchtime club Christmas Carol Service			TY	
<i>Self-management organisational skills</i>	Incoming 1 st Yrs TYs 2 nd TY and	Subject information handbook Open Day Student Council and committees- Social integration Health, fitness and wellbeing Ecology and Recycling Leadership skills Homework Journal Colour coded timetable with books (Use coloured dots to match subject on timetable to book/ copy) European school tours		Attendance reports			6 th Yr	Head boy and Head girl
<i>Study Skills</i>	2 nd TY TY 1 st , 3 rd , 6 th Yr Parents 3 rd &6 th	SPHE Study Skills Research Study Skills Graphic Organisers Think Pair Share Study Skills Parent's Talk Studyclix	1 st TYs TY	Study support by volunteer parents Learning support mentors Learning to learn Book Scheme				

Life Skills	6 th TY, LCA, LCVP TY TY Parents of 1 st Years 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , TY 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , TY 1 st TYs 2 nd & TY	Health Promotion Weeks X2 Careers night Work Experience Primary School Sport Coaching Peer coaching fitness circuits Wellbeing talk for parents CSPE School Mile Challenge Irish Life Fitness Challenge Wellbeing Gaisce European school tours Sports teams e.g.: GAA (Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football, Ladies Football), Basketball, Soccer, Futsal, Rugby, Volleyball, Wheelchair Basketball, Athletics, Swimming, Horse riding, Golf, Rowing etc. LCA, LCVP, TY Programmes Choir Chess Yellow flag Traditional Irish Music group	TY	STAR Traveller Programme Computer Studies		TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network)	
Behaviour	1 st Yr	Whole school behaviour policy Lunch time club Whole school/ class rules Year group behaviour charter Positive Behaviour leaflet Education Passport Homework Journal Ladder of reward and sanction Improvement cards Merit cards	5 th to 1 st Junior Cycle & LCA	SSP Lunchtime club Peer mentoring Individual and small group withdrawal Team teaching SNA in class support for supporting behaviour targets, access and safety	5 th to 1 st	BSP Home- school record Peer mentoring Reduced timetable Collaboration with CAMHS/ Clinical Psychologist/ National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) NBSS PBRT (Positive Behaviour Reinforcement Team)	Voucher reward system Hidden heroes Awards system Homework Journal

				Reflection sheets Behaviour report cards Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)				
Language	1 st Yr 2 nd and TY TY TY	Seachtain na Gaeilge WIAT Visual Supports European school tours MFL Film Club Gaeltacht trip	3 rd	Individual and small group withdrawal EAL Policy WIAT			5 th and 6 th TY	Modern Foreign Languages Debating Concern&Mental Health Debating
Literacy	Incoming 1 ST Yrs 1 st TY-6 th 1 st Yr 1 st Yrs 3 rd & 6 th	1 st Yr screening ICT use of overhead projectors Library time Keyword journal and explicit teaching of the key vocabulary DEAR Book in the bag initiative Literacy Week Display boards “Wellread” National Award Lunchtime debates WIAT Book Club Education Passport Referral system Visual Supports Foundation, Ordinary, Honours in all subjects where applicable	TY 1 st 1 st 3 rd &6 th Yr 3 rd	SSP Individual and small group withdrawal Group provision Peer Tutoring Paired Reading with Parents Council Toe by Toe Read Write Gold ICT Dolch Sight Word List Acceleread Accelewrite SNIP IEPs RACE/ exam accommodations SNA in class support WIAT	Collaborate with Educational Psychologist SSP ICT/ Assistive technology e.g.: REC Reading pen		2nd	Scifest BT Young Scientist Debating Club Listowel Writer’s Week Competition
Numeracy	Incoming 1 st Years	1 st Yr screening Maths week Science Week	TY to 1 st	Individual and small group withdrawal Group provision Peer Tutoring	3 rd &6 th	RACE Collaborate with Educational Psychologist ICT/ Assistive technology	TY 7 5 th	Scifest BT Young Scientist

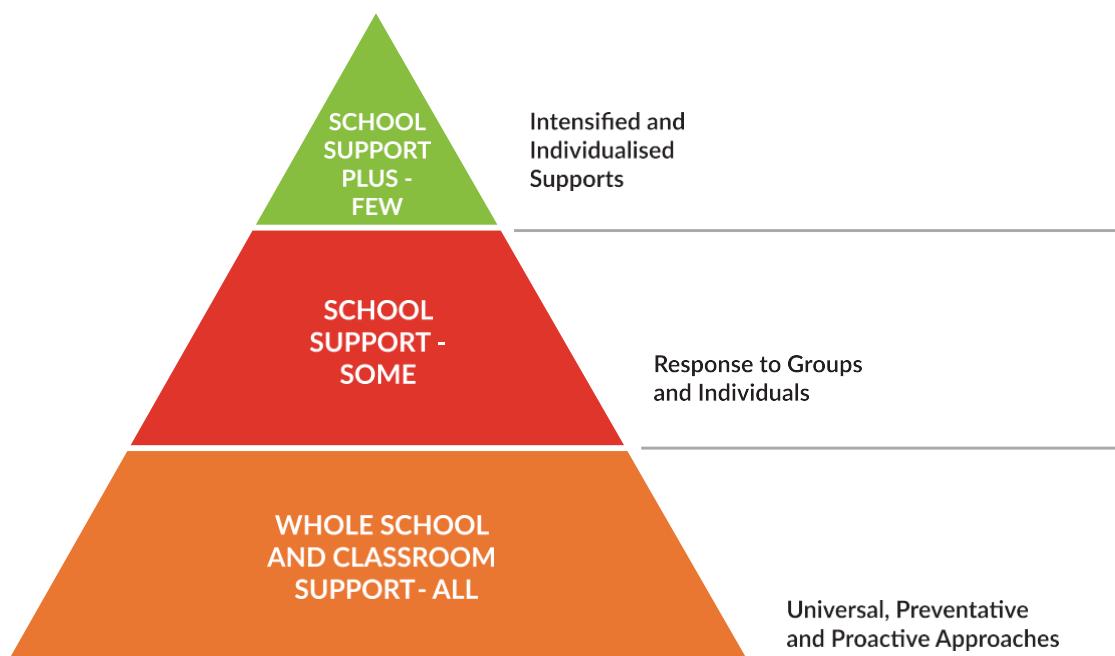
	1 st Yr 1 st Yrs	Numeracy SIP WIAT Education Passport Referral system Use of calculator	1 st 1 st 3 rd &6 th	Maths for Fun Diagnostic numeracy assessment IEP RACE/ exam accommodations SNA in class support	SSP	TY TY 1 st Yr	Maths and Science Olympiad John Hooper Statistics Competition STEM events Science Club IMTA Maths Quiz
Physical and/ or Sensory	TY	ICT use of overhead projectors Seating plan Lunchtime club Staff aware of implications of physical impairment Accessible building- lift, ramps etc. Gardening <u>Hearing impairment</u> Staff aware of implications of hearing impairment <u>Visual impairment</u> Staff aware of implications of visual impairment Sports teams e.g.: GAA (Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football, Ladies Football), Basketball, Soccer, Futsal, Rugby, Volleyball, Wheelchair Basketball, Athletics, Swimming, Horse riding, Golf, Rowing etc.	3 rd & 6 th	Assistive technology In class support for supporting access, safety SSP Use of the lift Seating plan accommodating need Breakfast Club <u>Hearing impairment</u> Looking at student when speaking Keyboard skills training <u>Visual impairment</u> Seated at front of class In class support for supporting access, safety	Deaf Resource Co-ordinator National Council for Special Education (NCSE) (As of 03/17 VTS is managed by NCSE) Visiting Teacher Service (VTS) SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser) Individual support in practical classes such as Science, PE Sleeping area for student with Narcolepsy Links with NLN, Enable Ireland Input from Physiotherapist/OT <u>Hearing impairment</u> FM system used at all times Assistive technology SSP RT to pre teach language and literacy Individual support in class <u>Visual impairment</u>		

				RACE/ exam accommodations		SNA support for practical classes Enlarged texts Use of magnifier		
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APPENDIX 4 - Student Support Plan (Cover Sheet)



STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
Name	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	



Developing a Support Plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the child. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

APPENDIX 5 Student Support Plan (Log of Actions)



Student Support Plan –Log of Actions

Student	
Class	

Date	Actions

APPENDIX 6 - Student Support Plan (Support Checklist)



Support Checklist

Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
Parents/ Guardians Consulted		
Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
Hearing		
Vision		
Medical Needs		
Basic Needs Checklist completed		
Assessment of learning ¹		
Observation of learning/approach to learning		
Observation of social and emotional development		
Child's views		

¹ The term learning is used in a holistic manner and incorporates skills development across areas of literacy, numeracy, language and communication, sensory, motor, social and emotional development.



Support Checklist

Classroom work adapted?		
Learning environment adapted?		
Yard/school environments adapted?		
Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
Advice given by special education teacher or other school staff?		
Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		

APPENDIX 7 Student Support Plan (Support for Some)



MERCY MOUNTHAWK STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN *School Support-Some*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
<i>Child's strengths and interests:</i>			
<i>Priority concerns</i>			
<i>Possible reasons for concerns</i>			
<i>SMART Targets</i>			
<i>Strategies to help achieve the targets</i>			
<i>Staff involved and resources needed</i>			
<i>Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)</i>			
<i>Signature of teacher</i>			

APPENDIX 8- Student Support Plan (Support for Few)



MERCY MOUNTHAWK STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN *School Support - Few*

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child.

Name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
<i>Child's strengths and interests:</i>			
<i>Priority concerns</i>			
<i>Possible reasons for concerns</i>			
<i>SMART Targets</i>			
<i>Strategies to help achieve the targets</i>			
<i>Staff involved and resources needed</i>			
<i>Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)</i>			
<i>Signature of teacher</i>			

APPENDIX 9 Student Support Plan (School Support for Some - Review)



STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN-REVIEW School Support-Some

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

Name:	Class:	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review:	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?		
Have the child's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?		
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?		
Childs view?		
Parent(s)/guardian(s) views?		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher(s)		

Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revert to previous level of support - Classroom Support - All	<input type="checkbox"/>	Progress to next level of support - School Support Plus - Few
<input type="checkbox"/>	Continue at Current Level of Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request consultation with other professionals

APPENDIX 10 Student Support Plan (School Support for Few - Review)



STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN-REVIEW School Support-Some

To be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

Name:	Class:	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review:	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?		
Have the child's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?		
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?		
Childs view?		
Parent(s)/guardian(s) views?		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher(s)		

Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revert to previous level of support - Classroom Support - All	<input type="checkbox"/>	Progress to next level of support - School Support Plus - Few
<input type="checkbox"/>	Continue at Current Level of Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request consultation with other professionals

APPENDIX 11 Personal Pupil Plan



Mercy Mounthawk Personal Pupil Plan

Student Name:	Address:	Parent/Guardian	Contact number
Class	SEN/SNA contact person	Year head	
Year Started in school			
Professional reports:			
Diagnosis :			
Link with other interventions: (IEP, IBP, etc.)			

1. Primary Care Needs SNA Tasks (as per Circular 30/2014): <i>(please mark with X relevant sections for this list)</i>		X
Assistance with feeding: Where a pupil with special needs requires adult assistance & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.		
Administration of medicine: Where a pupil requires adult assistance to administer medicine & where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time.		
Assistance with toileting & general hygiene: Where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, & until such time as they are able to do so.		
Assistance with mobility & orientation: On an ongoing basis including assisting a pupil or pupils to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a pupil to access school transport), or to help a pupil to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)		
Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground & school grounds: At recreation, assembly, & dispersal times including assistance with arriving & departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision		

Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: Such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.	
Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a pupil may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.	
Assistance with moving & lifting of pupils, operation of hoists & equipment.	
Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs & those with significant, & identified social & emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.	
Secondary Care Associated Tasks (SNA Tasks) (as per Circular 30/2014):	
Preparation & tidying of workspaces & classrooms or assisting a pupil who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare & tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.	
Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for pupils with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned & the review of such plans.	
Assist teachers & / or Principal in maintaining a journal & care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance & care needs. Assist in preparation of school files & materials relating to care & assistance required in class by students with special needs	
Planning for activities & classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with Class Teachers & other Teachers such as the Resource Teacher & School Principal, attending meetings with Parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement & guidance of class Teacher/Principal.	
Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel, including class teachers or support teachers.	
Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.	

2. Supports and interventions RELATED TO PRIMARY CARE NEEDS	
Assistance with mobility & orientation:	

Assist student with orientation either in transition to school or new year or as a result of mobility	
Help with lifting and packing bag	
Help finishing dressing after PE	
Help and support student in the use of practical equipment in practical classes	
Accompany student during PE classes	
Accompanying the student to and from classes	
Assist the student by providing alternative to lockers when the organisation of same is not achievable at a particular point in time	
Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs &those with significant, & identified social & emotional difficulties.	
Supporting student in stress management and emotional regulation when having a panic attack or experiencing anxiety	
Supervising/supporting student and providing emotional support or supervision in times of meltdown/sensory overload/anxiety/meltdown/aggression/emotional outbursts	
Maintain dialogue with parents in relation to students' panic attacks/emotional meltdowns/sensory overload etc.	
Support student in initiating and maintaining social interactions.	
Support student in breathing/counting strategies in times of anxiety	
Help student with locker to avoid anxiety around books and equipment	
Help student with their assistive technology so they can engage and assess curriculum	
Help with organisation - colour coding copies, equipment and timetable to promote independence and self-organisation	
Escort student to quite space when the noise is too much	
Help students to log on and download school email and Google classroom and help student navigate school systems	
download school books onto laptop/device	
Help and support students in the use of and downloading of assistive tech/apps etc	
Support student with social skills and help guide them regarding socially acceptable behaviours in classroom/at break-times	
Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions	
Maintain regular contact with parents to ensure most up to date medical information is shared with staff.	
Be aware of any symptoms and any potential risks that may trigger symptoms – e.g. exercise, stress and deep emotion.	
Observe for any signs of allergic reactions	
BE aware of Procedure for Cardiac Emergency.	
SNA will be aware of and initiate Emergency Cardiac Procedure if required.	
Emergency Diabetic protocol is in place and SNA will execute if levels go too low.	

Be aware of symptoms of hypoglycaemia - pale, sweating, shaking or jittery, weakness, dizziness, mood change (anxiety, irritability).	
Provide assistance in Hypoglycemic events for students with diabetes	
Ensure parents are made aware of any hypoglycaemic events or medical emergencies	
Accompany student during PE classes	
Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground & school grounds:	
Assistance/Supervising at assembly, recreation & dispersal times.	
Be aware of potential for injurious behaviour in times of high anxiety.	
Supervising/supporting a student who may be of harm to self/others	
Being aware of and preventing a student from destroying property	
Being aware of a student who is a flight risk and having a plan in place in case of same	
Accompanying the child to and from classes	
Removing the child from whole school activities, if the child becomes distressed / overwhelmed	
Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential:	
Withdrawal from class to support student in self-regulation following sensory overload	
Withdrawal of student from class due to medical needs	
Withdrawal of student from class due to stress	
Withdrawal of student from class due to safety reasons	
OTHER	

Individual Student Intervention and Targets. School Year:

	Strategy/Target	Who	Date	Review Progress - outcome - recommendation forward
<i>Feeding</i>				
<i>Administration of Medicine</i>				
<i>Toileting & General Hygiene</i>				
<i>Mobility & Orientation</i>				
<i>Supervision in the class, playground & school grounds</i>				
<i>Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions</i>				
<i>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential</i>				
<i>Assistance with severe communication difficulties including</i>				

<i>enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs &those with significant, & identified social & emotional difficulties</i>				
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(How we plan actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe. The plan should include time-bound targets for the development of independence skills. Only a very small number of pupils with severe special educational needs and very significant care needs will continue to access to SNA support throughout their education" Circular 0030/2014)

Individual Student Intervention and Targets. School Year:				
	Strategy/Target	Who	Date	Review Progress - outcome - recommendation forward
<i>Feeding</i>				
<i>Administration of Medicine</i>				
<i>Toileting & General Hygiene</i>				
<i>Mobility & Orientation</i>				

<i>Supervision in the class, playground & school grounds</i>				
<i>Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions</i>				
<i>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential</i>				
<i>Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs & those with significant, & identified social &</i>				

<i>emotional difficulties</i>				
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Individual Student Intervention and Targets. School Year:

	Strategy/Target	Who	Date	Review Progress - outcome - recommendation forward
<i>Feeding</i>				
<i>Administration of Medicine</i>				
<i>Toileting & General Hygiene</i>				
<i>Mobility & Orientation</i>				
<i>Supervision in the class, playground & school grounds</i>				
<i>Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions</i>				

<p><i>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential</i></p>				
<p><i>Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs & those with significant, & identified social & emotional difficulties</i></p>				

APPENDIX 12 Student Support Plan

Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)



Individual Behaviour Plan

Review Date: _____

Time: _____

IBP Number: _____

Date: _____

Events/Behaviours which brought about this Individual Behaviour Plan

- Behaviour/Event 1
- Behaviour/Event 2 etc

Goals of this Individual Behaviour Plan

This plan aims to

Behaviour Support Strategies

	Strategy/Action	Who?	By (date)	Review Comment
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Agreed Behaviour Improvements

	Behaviour/Improvement	Review Comment
1	<i>I agree to comply with the School Code of Behaviour in full.</i>	
2	<i>I agree to engage with . . .</i>	
3		

4	<i>Parents agree to . . .</i>	
5		
6		

Signature of Student: _____

Date:

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date:

Signature on behalf of Mercy Mounthawk: _____

Date:

APPENDIX 13 - YEAR TEAMS

Mercy Mounthawk Year Teams 2025/26						
Year Group	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	TY	5 th Year	6 th Year
Year Head	Noreen Somers	Suzanne O Halloran	Linda Kane	Ronan Redican	Pat Lyne	Breda Cronin
Assistant Year Head	Stacey O Leary	Ellen Mc Kenna	Áine Clarke		Frank Fell	Diarmuid Murphy
AEN Contact Person	Cora Mc Eligott	Fionnuala Casey	Conor O Leary	Bríd Marie Buckley	Nicoleta Pantea	Lyndsey Moriarty

APPENDIX 14 - Schedule of Deployment of SETs

Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers to Support Young People with Special Educational Needs (Post-Primary)

School: Roll No:

School Year: Date reviewed/updated:

Special Education Teaching Allocation: Total hours

Teacher Name	Subject area/s taught	Total Special Education Teaching Hours allocated	Details of support provided

Roles/Area of support e.g. Literacy, numeracy, social interaction, emotional regulation, etc.	Year/class group and time allocation e.g. 1st year 1E x 120 minutes per week	No. of young people per group

APPENDIX 15 - Teacher Preparation Form



Student Support Team (SST) Problem Solving Process **Teacher Preparation Form**

To be filled in by the teacher(s) involved in advance of an SST Problem Solving meeting.

1. Teacher details

Name(s) of teacher(s) involved:

Class / year (if relevant)

2. Reason for consultation

What is the issue you would like to discuss?

Have you collected any data/ information about the issue?

What has been tried already?

3. Teacher's expectations

What would you like to see change?

Teacher's signature(s)

Date

