Special Education Teaching (AEN/SEN) Policy

Coláiste Iósaef

Introduction

Coláiste Iósaef was established in 1998 and represents a coming together of the two traditions in post-primary education – the secondary and the vocational.

The current school was created as Coláiste Iósaef from an amalgamation of St. Joseph's Secondary School and St. Peter's College.

The school's ethos underpins the provision of an inclusive education to facilitate the personal growth and development of all students. The school endeavours to deliver a differentiated curriculum to meet the students' strengths and needs in a safe and caring environment.

School Mission Statement

The Board of Management and staff of Coláiste Iósaef are committed to addressing, in a creative and consultative manner, the educational needs of the college catchment population.

Our college ethos fosters the development of the whole person through the provision of a broad education tailored to individual needs within a Christian community.

Inclusion

Students with AEN/SEN are welcomed and are provided for in an inclusive way in Coláiste Iósaef, in line with the Education for Person's with Special Needs Act (2004), the Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines (2006), The Guidelines on the Provision of Special Education at Post Primary level (2007). More recently our mindset on inclusion has been heightened by the dimensions of Learning & Teaching and Leadership & Management as outlined in Looking at our Schools (2022). All students are encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of school life where reasonably practicable. The school recognises the importance of learning and teaching that is inclusive, student centered and supports young people to participate in and make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Our commitment to Special Educational Needs is emblematic of a school in which students are given space, voice, opportunity and influence in their own learning.

All students in the school should feel safe and accepted during their time with us. Bullying or exclusion of a student based on their AEN/SEN is not acceptable within the school and will be dealt in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity is promoted throughout the school community. A realistic inclusive and broad curriculum is offered in consultation with students, parents, relevant outside agencies and staff. Inclusion of all students is enhanced through the delivery of various curriculums elements e.g. SPHE, Wellbeing, Religion etc. but also within the interactions and relationships built within the school on a daily basis. Central to this is the school's commitment to embedding restorative practices.

Inclusion underpins and drives the ethos and central mission of the school. Other aspects of life at Coláiste Iósaef that help to build an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance include:

- ✓ Building core principles of restorative practice in daily life, policies and practices.
- ✓ Involvement in whole school initiatives and programmes.

- ✓ Weekly announcements celebrating student achievements in and outside school, both academic and otherwise.
- ✓ Building of supportive, trusting mentorships through our Le Cheile Programme, in which TY's support our First Year students during their transition to Post Primary, various activities such as games and induction program (Treoir Nua)
- ✓ One Good School, BeLonG To, Amber Flag, etc.
- ✓ Celebration of Special Events such as Languages weeks build acceptance and awareness of other cultures within the school community.

Allocation

Allocation will be provided in line with the new model of allocation as outlined in Special Education Teaching Allocation. Please see Circular no 0014/2017: Special Education Teaching Allocation

The new Special Education Teaching allocation will provide a single unified allocation for special educational teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile. The new model will replace the following.

- The Learning Support and English as Additional Language Support (LS/EAL) scheme.
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) allocation process which provided additional SE teaching supports to schools, to support students who had been assessed as having low incidence disabilities in accordance with DES circular 70/2014.
- The allocation process for post primary schools to support students with high incidence special educational needs as set out in DES circular 0010/2012

AEN/SEN staff will reference this circular (0014/2017) and The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Toolkit – Building on Ability to Support the Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model (September 2017) and Exemption from the Study of Irish circular 0055/2022 in allocating resources to students with SEN using the Continuum of Support Process.

Child Welfare

In accordance with circular 0081/2017 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post Primary School 2017' all staff in CIK are required to be Garda vetted. Following this all staff are also required complete the following courses, TULSA's 'Children First E-learning' course and the PDST Child Protection E-Learning Programme and submit completion certs to school management.

Due to the close working relationships and duties that are intrinsic to the provision of support to the students with special education needs, child protection procedures are to the forefront of all interactions between staff and students. All staff including those in the AEN/SEN department follow all procedures and practices regarding child welfare as stated in the schools Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment 2022-23.

Wellbeing

Every student has the right to feel cared for in the school environment as per our Code of Behaviour. Student's interactions with peers and staff can impact on their wellbeing daily. Mutual respect is central to the learning environment while providing the student with the opportunity to develop their own unique potential. All students in Junior Cycle experience wellbeing embedded across the curriculum. Those students who started First Year in September 2022 will receive over 400 hours of Wellbeing classes over their Junior Cycle three-year programme. Students are undertaking the short courses in PE, SPHE and CSPE, which all are under the banner of wellbeing in Junior

Cycle. All AEN/SEN students are encouraged to attend, which will enable them to reflect on and develop the key indicators pertaining to wellbeing. The key indicators of wellbeing at Junior Cycle include; active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected and aware and are embedded into all teaching and interactions with AEN/SEN students.

“Looking at Our Schools 2022” sees students’ wellbeing as intrinsic to this holistic view of learning, both as an enabler of learning and as an outcome of learning. It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students’ wellbeing through their practices in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies, and partnerships.

Children with special educational needs in particular may experience a range of social, emotional and mental health problems, which can create a barrier to learning. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, uncertainty, the unknown and school closures have posed particular challenges for students with special educational needs (AEN/SEN) and their families. While teachers have responded creatively to closures by adapting their practice and endeavouring to provide opportunities for remote learning, some students with AEN/SEN found it very challenging to engage meaningfully with this. Families have experienced stress in trying to meet their child’s learning needs within the home. Many students with AEN/SEN have found it difficult to understand the loss of routines and opportunities to interact with school staff and peers. In this context, a greater emphasis on wellbeing, especially in the arena of social emotional learning is key.

This includes strategies within the classroom, specific class topics and other structures and opportunities put in place by the school such as the lunch time club, wellbeing walks, chats with tea, school class trips and Guidance department support.

The school's involvement in Jigsaws ‘One Good School’ and the BeLonG To Initiatives demonstrates its commitment to addressing the challenges of mental health and student identity and the barriers they can pose to wellbeing and learning.

Rationale

The aim of this policy is to show the manner in which students with AEN/SEN are catered for in Coláiste Iósaef. It is written with reference to parts of the Education Act 1998, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN) and Looking at Our Schools 2022. The policy is a working document and is reviewed annually in light of the new developments both internally and nationally.

At Coláiste Iósaef we aim to make inclusion a lived experienced where all students feel cared for an accepted.

Identifying Students with AEN/SEN

The school identifies students with AEN/SEN as follows:

- ✓ Student Passport (NCCA Guidelines 2016) transfer from primary school to include 6th class report card, My Profile, My Child's Profile and additional information as provided by the Primary School
- ✓ Request for all relevant information, professional reports, etc. in Acceptance Form as part of enrolment procedures
- ✓ The use of student profiling (PPAD-E) is utilised in co-operation with our NEPs psychologist as part of the transition process to post primary
- ✓ Visit to the main feeder primary schools by AEN/SEN Coordinator/s and AEN/SEN team member, phone call to all other primary schools by same
- ✓ Completion of Additional Education Needs Questionnaire by feeder school of all students who have accepted a place in the school
- ✓ Presentation to parents at Incoming First Year Registration Evening
- ✓ An individual meeting(s) with parents/guardians of children with AEN/SEN are facilitated at earliest convenience, as it will help to fully inform the school
- ✓ Specialised Induction & Orientation for students with complex needs
- ✓ Individual Student Support Files (NEPS) are initiated and kept in the AEN/SEN office. Information given by parents and in reports is treated with the utmost sensitivity
- ✓ A summary of needs and supports of students is disseminated by the AEN/SEN team to all teaching staff and is maintained on a shared folder in the CIK Google Drive.

All subject teachers may report any concerns they have regarding a child across the year to the AEN/SEN team. The informal observations carried out by the mainstream teacher may highlight anyone of the following:

- Under performance in class tests.
- Absenteeism.
- Emotional, social or behavioural difficulties including anxiety
- Difficulties in literacy and/or numeracy.
- Language difficulties.

The school also welcomes parents/guardians and students to report any concerns. A parent/guardian may inform the school that a student is overtly challenged by the school curriculum or that they wish to apply for an Irish exemption or support.

Categories of Special Education Needs (AEN/SEN) as identified in Coláiste Iósaef

- ✓ Borderline/Mild General Learning Disability
- ✓ Moderate General Learning Disability
- ✓ Severe/Profound General Learning Disability

- ✓ Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties –ADD/ ADHD
- ✓ Specific Learning Difficulty – Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, Spelling difficulty
- ✓ Physical Disability – LAMBS, Phocomolia, Juvenile Arithitis, Muscular dystrophy, Scoliosis
- ✓ Mild Speech and Language Disorders
- ✓ Sensory Difficulties – hearing and visual impairments – currently one class DHH
- ✓ Additional Education Needs (AEN) – English as a foreign language
- ✓ Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – currently two ASD classes
- ✓ Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH) – currently one DHH class
- ✓ Cystic Fibrosis (CF)
- ✓ Traveller
- ✓ Gifted and Talented students
- ✓ English as Additional Language – EAL for Ukrainian/international students

***The above list may be updated at any time during the school year**

Roles within Special Education Provision in Coláiste Iósaef

Role of the Board of Management

- ✓ The Board of Management of recognised schools "shall provide for education to student which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit …. ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, are identified and provided for."
- ✓ The Education Act (1998) section 15 states that the Board of Management shall publish "the policy of the school concerning admissions to and participation in the school and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to the school of the parents' choice are respected."
- ✓ The Board shall also "within the resources provided to the school in accordance with section 12, make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with special educational needs."

Role of the Principal

- ✓ Under current legislation the Principal has the overall responsibility for ensuring the special educational needs of all students are met. The Principal has general responsibility for establishing and promoting whole-school policies and procedures that are supportive of the learning of all students including those with special educational needs.
- ✓ To ensure that a suitable and effective Additional Educational Needs Policy is in place that reflects the ethos, characteristic spirit and mission statement of the school as well as legislative requirements.
- ✓ To ensure that this policy is monitored, reviewed and amended in order to address changes in legislation and the needs of students in our care.
- ✓ To ensure that adequate resources/facilities are sought and provided, well maintained and appropriately used.
- ✓ To keep teachers informed of new developments relating to AEN/SEN and to provide staff with training and development in areas relating to special educational needs.
- ✓ To respond to appeals by parents with respect to decisions made at this level.

Role of the AEN/SEN Coordinator(s)

- ✓ To oversee the day-to-day operation of our school's AEN/SEN policy, including formulation, implementation and review
- ✓ To liaise with feeder schools, teachers & parents of incoming students
- ✓ To support our school's management team in terms of management and responsibility for provision of AEN/SEN within the school
- ✓ To coordinate management and timetabling of the AEN/SEN team (resource teachers/learning support teachers/SNAs) in conjunction with senior management.
- ✓ To liaise with and advise colleagues in relation to AEN/SEN provision
- ✓ To coordinate the formulation, implementation and review of Individual Student Support Files
- ✓ To monitor and track students with AEN/SEN
- ✓ To coordinate provision for students with AEN/SEN. e.g. withdrawal of students for individual/group instruction, in class support etc.
- ✓ To monitor and evaluate AEN/SEN interventions/strategies
- ✓ To oversee the records/reports/register on students with AEN/SEN
- ✓ To liaise with parents/guardians of students with AEN/SEN
- ✓ To contribute to the in-service/upskilling of staff as appropriate
- ✓ To support the identification of Irish and language exemptions
- ✓ To coordinate the application for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)
- ✓ To liaise with external agencies and support services as appropriate including: Inclusion Support Service (Special Education Needs Support Service (SESS), National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), Visiting Teachers Service); National Education Psychological Service (NEPS); National Council for Special Education (NCSE); State Examinations Commission (SEC); Psychologists, Speech & language Therapists, Occupational Therapists; Dyslexia, Dyspraxia Associations; Autism/Asperger Support Ireland; National Council for the Blind of Ireland; National Council for the Deaf.

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the department are met and as our school grows.

Role of the AEN/SEN Team

- ✓ Meet weekly to plan and discuss AEN/SEN issues
- ✓ Complete ISSFs (Individual Student Support Files)
- ✓ Liaise with subject teachers
- ✓ Monitor student progress
- ✓ Plan for accommodations for students for school exams
- ✓ Identify students having difficulty and offer support
- ✓ Update staff regularly on individual students' needs (e.g share minutes of weekly AEN/SEN meetings with staff).

Role of the Year Head/Class Tutor

As key figures within the school, Year Heads are a primary contact point for students and parents/guardians within the school. Their role is:

- ✓ To support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute significantly to the work of the AEN/SEN team

- ✓ To facilitate the inclusion of any individual student with AEN/SEN by monitoring the student's progress within the year group
- ✓ To encourage an awareness of special educational needs in the school community including a respect for students with AEN/SEN
- ✓ To initiate a referral after communication from home, class tutors, mainstream teacher, analysis of student attainment, SNA and observation of behaviour.
- ✓ To communicate with the AEN/SEN Team regarding patterns of behaviour, work rate or changes in emotional state they may become aware of during their Year Head duties
- ✓ To make referrals to the SST as needed to provide additional support
- ✓ To work closely with the AEN/SEN team to observe, collect information on and monitor student progress.

Class Tutors work closely with Year Heads as part of the continuum of support within the school, helping to monitor and disseminate information regarding student attainment and needs.

Role of the Guidance Counsellor(s)

- ✓ To work with the AEN/SEN Team and other staff in the implementation and review of this policy.
- ✓ To liaise on an ongoing basis with the other members of the AEN/SEN Team and Student Support Team as relevant matters arise.
- ✓ To provide a range of services to all students, including careers information, study skills and examination techniques, consultation with parents, referral services etc. with an awareness of the AEN/SEN students.
- ✓ To support students who have been referred.
- ✓ To advise on supports available at third level for AEN/SEN students e.g. RACE, DARE and to assist students in accessing these supports.

Role of the Learning Support Teacher

The learning support teacher will support AEN/SEN students in the following way:

- ✓ By involvement in co-teaching/teach with mainstream teachers in the classroom setting
- ✓ By withdrawing students for additional classes in literacy/numeracy or subject support
- ✓ By providing support for students in other areas e.g. social skills
- ✓ Aiding the completion of the Individual Student Support Files
- ✓ Continuous support is provided through differentiated teaching approaches in the classroom, following the completion of this programme
- ✓ Support based on areas of need identified by the student/ISP/subject teacher

Role of the Subject Teachers

Unless there is a good reason for withholding information the subject teacher should have access to all information that is likely to be relevant to the education or supervision of a student that they teach.

The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including pupils with AEN/SEN The subject teacher has the responsibility of ensuring that all students including those with AEN/SEN are provided with a learning programme that enables them to gain access to the curriculum and advance their learning.

To support completion of the Individual Student Support Files including the development of specific targets of your subject areas and strategies to support the student.

The subject teacher may identify a student who may be at risk and may draw the attention of other staff members to the student. A teacher may become concerned at a student's lack of progress and may make accommodations for the student within the class. **If concerns continue the teacher should consult other teachers such as the learning support teacher or AEN/SEN team.**

Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

- ✓ Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are allocated to post-primary schools to provide care assistance to named students who have special educational care needs
- ✓ SNAs may be appointed to students who have a significant medical need for assistance or a significant impairment of physical or sensory function, or on behalf of students whose behaviour is such that they are a danger to themselves or other students
- ✓ SNAs make a valuable contribution to the capacity of Coláiste Iósaef in providing inclusive education to students with AEN/SEN. The SNA is in a professional position within the classroom to offer invaluable insights into the care needs of students which are incorporated into the development of timetables, which are dynamic and flexible throughout the year.
- ✓ They work closely with teachers in providing assistance to students with AEN/SEN for example in areas of personal care, supporting mobility, or supervising work or recreation activities.
- ✓ The SNA is required to keep detailed class notes on all students on their caseload. Records of any incidence involving these students are documented and reported immediately to the year head and Deputy Principal.
- ✓ The SNA will have an input to the development of Individual Student Support Files for the students on their caseload.
- ✓ Assisting with supervision at break and lunchtimes and escorting students on school trips.
- ✓ Giving special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping a student with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- ✓ Assisting and supporting with inhouse examinations where a care need is present.
- ✓ Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- ✓ Engagement with parents of students with AEN/SEN as required and directed by school management.
- ✓ Other appropriate duties as ma be determined by the needs of the students and the school.

Role of the Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians, through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. The participation of Parents/Guardians in a meaningful, consistent manner is key determiner of student success and positive outcomes. Parents and guardians have a more complete understanding of a child's physical, social, developmental, and family history. They can provide information on the child's strengths and weaknesses at home, background information on the child's history and development, and information on any family factors that may affect the child's learning.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to actively communicate with the school at enrolment if they observe any learning or related difficulties in their child at home. In all cases where screening, assessment and profiling is being conducted parents are consulted and their permission is sought. The AEN/SEN team advocates a partnership of collaboration and co–operation with the parents of students with AEN/SEN.

Parents are advocates for their child and should avail of the open-door policy in communicating with the school including:

- ✓ Strategies to support their child
- ✓ Target setting for support files
- ✓ Submitting updated reports/diagnosis
- ✓ Informing of changes in circumstances
- ✓ Raise a concern regarding emotional or academic needs
- ✓ Application for Irish Exemptions
- ✓ Application for Assistive Technology
- ✓ Application for Special Transport
- ✓ Access to Special Class

Continued collaboration with the school contributes to the best possible outcome for their child. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the school informed on the emergent and transient needs of their child.

Role of the Student

The involvement of students in the development, implementation and review of their own progress is an important principle that underpins effective AEN/SEN provision. Students are encouraged to develop and take ownership of the skills and strategies that are developed to meet their needs. All AEN/SEN students are encouraged to become active participants in all aspects of the school community such as focus groups, student council, information evenings and extra-curricular activities, and in their own learning through goal setting, planning and reviewing of their progress.

In Coláiste Iósaef, we are continually striving to promote and encourage students voice within the classroom to ensure the creation of an inclusive environment that will facilitate the learning of all students. The development and embedding of inclusive strategies are all means for AEN/SEN students to utilise their voice, enabling mainstream and LS teachers to gain feedback and insight into the students' thoughts, ideas and progress.

Provision of Support

Identification of Needs Through the Continuum of Support Process	
Whole School & Classroom Support **(FOR ALL)**	**PREVENTATIVE & PROACTIVE APPROACHES** The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those students who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by: • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures /assessments • Basic needs checklist • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist

	• Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review
School Support **(FOR SOME)**	**RESPONSE TO GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS** At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by: • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures / assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review
School Support Plus **(FOR FEW)**	**Individualised & Specialist Support** This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include: • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation

Based on the Continuum of Support the following support teaching options are available to help support the students in Coláiste Iósaef:

Mainstream (General)

The subject teachers, in consultation with the AEN/SEN team, can consider ways in which the teaching & learning can be differentiated or adapted to suit the needs of individual students in their classes/subjects.

Co-Teaching/In Class Support/Parallel Teaching

Co-teaching is available in some classes where timetabling and staff availability allows. The mainstream teacher and learning support teacher agree initially on which model of co- teaching will most benefit the students of the targeted class.

It can be for a full year or an intervention of a block of weeks. It allows two teachers to monitor, assess and support all students in the classroom and is seen as more favourable than withdrawing a student. It can be particularly beneficial for high achieving students or students that may be struggling with the course content as the teachers work to differentiate work according to ability.

It is a very inclusive approach to education. This support model is used to support all students in the class while focusing on particular students with a learning need or focus/attention issues.

More details are available in our Co-Teaching policy.

Inclusion of SNA in Specific Classes

All students with access to an SNA receive support in some of their classes. SNAs will be allocated between the ASD & DHH classes and mainstream classes based on access and hours. If a student who is timetabled for SNA access is absent the SNA will be timetabled to support other students with access at this time.

Group Withdrawal

This model is utilised in Coláiste Iósaef to support students. In 1st, 2nd and 3rd year, students are withdrawn at Irish and complete a Junior Cycle Short Course (school accredited). During this class time, they also have the support of a second teacher that offers academic and social/emotional support.

1st Year: **Climate Action**

2nd Year: **Artistic Performance**

3rd Year: **Animal Care**

The above is an effort to best meet the needs of students exempt from Irish and to reflect the reasons and number of exemptions.

Small Group Teaching: Groups are arranged on the basis of similar need profiles and the capacity to offer support to students at the same time. Small groups usually can access support during Irish (for those students who are exempt) and during appropriate opportunities on their timetable.

At senior cycle, small group student support is based on student's subject choice and teachers with the required subject knowledge are timetabled for this support where possible during non-exam classes.

Individual Withdrawal

It may be necessary on occasions to engage in one-to-one teaching. It is school procedure to

- Have glass panels in all classroom doors where one-to-one occurs.
- Leave the door slightly open during one-to-one sessions.
- Have an SNA with the teacher during some one-to-one sessions. This will be at the discretion of the teacher and the principal.
- Inform parents that their child will be attending one-to-one sessions.
- When a LS teacher or SNA accompanies a child to a room for a time out session, he/she will sit outside the door and supervise the child through the glass panel or will stay in the room and leave the door slightly ajar. They will also let the teacher in the room nearby know that they are in the room.
- The LS teacher or SNA will record in their work logs the dates and times when accompanying a child to the room or when on time out from the classroom.

Curricular Reduction

All students with the exception of the students in the ASD or DHH classes and students who have already activated their exemption in Irish, start first year on a full timetable. The students who are experiencing difficulties are provided with the opportunity to reduce their timetable once all other avenues of support have been exhausted. Students who have an exemption in Irish from primary school are immediately exempt and will be given the option of studying a foreign language in the subject option bands. Students who find areas of the curriculum challenging may be offered support and decisions around the period of intervention are discussed with parents/guardians, class teachers and students.

Support in Special Classes

Whilst inclusion is paramount in our delivery of an inclusive education, students who are enrolled in our ASD or DHH classes have the support of our ASD/DHH base classrooms. The school has two ASD classes (Rang Oisin & Rang Fionn) and one class for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH) called Rang Danu.

The school operates a model that encourages and supports access to mainstream but the students know and understand that they can use their base room when necessary and their teacher and SNA support will be available to them there should they require it. All classes are resourced following the appropriate guidelines and staffing parameters. As per the continuum of support, these classes form part of Level 3 of this model in the school.

These classes have allowed the school to include students with ASD and hearing impairment in our school community, who may not have otherwise engaged with mainstream education. These students are integrated into as many aspects of school life as is beneficial for them and other students. The classes are essential for such individuals as it provides a safe and comforting environment when they become overwhelmed with their surroundings. By providing them with the opportunity to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations, it encourages them to participate in both academic and social activities.

The special class teacher/SNAs will engage in co-teaching and will provide in-class support if all students allocated to the special class/es are in mainstream during their timetabled class period.

Enrolment and Admission to the Special Classes

Procedures for admission are set out having regard for the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000) and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004). The Board of Management reserves the right of admission within the terms of this policy. The Board of Management will not however refuse a

child on the basis of: ethnicity, disability (severity of diagnosis), traveller status, political beliefs, family or social status, sexual orientation, gender or religious beliefs.

Any applications for enrolment in the special classes will only be considered up to two years previous to entry of the candidate to our school. A dedicated group, typically consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principals, SE teacher(s) and the dedicated NEPS Psychologist, reviews the application for the enrolment. Applications are sent to the SENO who makes the final decision on which student(s) is to be registered in the special classes.

Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills, the number of places in the ASD class is limited to six students and eight students in the DHH class.

Enrolment Procedure

In line with our Enrolment and Admission Policy the process of enrolment begins with:

- A referral from an external agency and a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
- **(ASD)** A school application form, showing family details and medical history is then completed. This application must be accompanied by a diagnostic report confirming ASD diagnosis and educational psychological assessment, Occupational Therapist report and Speech and Language report if available.
- **(DHH)** A school application form, showing family details and medical history is then completed. This application must be accompanied by a diagnostic report confirming a diagnosis that merits access to a class for DHH and any other relevant medical or professional reports.
- Fully completed applications are then recorded in the applications file.
- A Letter of Offer from the school is sent to the parents, whereby they accept their place in the ASD Unit within 14 days.
- In March prior to the entry, an application to register the student in the unit will be sent to the SENO using NSCE Form 7. A special transport application form will also be sent to the SENO for this student at this time.
- It is the SENO who approves the registration in the special classes, not the school.
- The AEN/SEN department in the school will notify parents of the outcome of the SENOs decision.

If the number of the children on the list of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the following ranked criteria will apply:

- Applications with siblings already registered in the special classes.
- Applicants with siblings already registered in the school.
- Applicants attending the feeder schools
- Applicants not attending these feeder schools for whom this ASD or DHH class would be the nearest facility.
- Applicants not in any of the above categories.

Please note that place allocations will always be subject to emerging students needs. Please note that the fulfilling of the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if necessary, resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available, **such as sufficient vacancies within the ASD or DHH class.**

On admission to the special class, each student will be assessed by the school AEN/SEN team and a ISSF will be created and shared.

Programmes of study in Coláiste Iósaef

In our school, we currently offer the following programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ):

Junior Level

- Junior Cycle (JC)

Senior Level

- Transition Year programme (TY)
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
- Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)

Timetabling of AEN/SEN

The timetabling of AEN/SEN is completed as part of the overall timetable creation for the following academic year. There is an understanding that flexibility is required in same and this is reflected by allowing changes to take place at the outset of each term if necessary to teacher and SNA timetables.

Irish Exemptions

Exemptions are granted in line with Circular 0055/2022. A list of students with exemptions and the grounds for the exemption is shared with staff on the CIK Google Drive. This list is updated at the beginning of each academic year and during the year as necessary.

Personalised Timetabling

Students may be permanently withdrawn from a subject area in consultation with the respective subject department, guidance counsellors and with parents/guardians permission. Whilst this is not encouraged, it may be necessary to facilitate the ongoing inclusion of the student within the school.

English as Additional Language (EAL)

While EAL has not been a significant feature of AEN/SEN provision, the school is committed to responding in a proactive manner to the changing nature of the school community as it responds to global events. When the need arises we will cater for EAL students by:

- Application of funding in terms of SE hours and SNA hours.
- Assessment of EAL students to establish language acquisition attainment in English.
- Dissemination of information to the all staff and supporting the staff in creating an inclusive environment.
- Development and use of resources to support inclusion and language acquisition including dictionaries and visual supports from Language connects.
- Structured individual and group interventions where appropriate.
- A programme of extra-curricular activities.
- A buddy system where appropriate.
- Social and emotional support provided within the school support structures.
- Review of the effectiveness of supports and interventions.

Exceptionally Able/Gifted and Talented

Our school recognises the importance of enabling all students to achieve their full potential. We are committed to providing an environment which enables all children to progress towards achieving their potential. The school realises that, by virtue of their ability, exceptionally able children may require specific interventions to enable them to achieve their potential and to maximise their performance. Differentiation strategies used within the classroom in addition to enrichment activities and materials provided by teachers, affirm and encourage exceptionally able to excel.

The school is in the process of developing an Exceptionally Able Student Policy.

Communication

The school adopts a number of approaches and platforms to communicate with the school community:

- VSware
- School App (Unique Schools)
- Email with staff/parents/guardians
- Phone calls with parents /guardians as required
- Google Shared Drive
- Staff notice board
- Staff meetings
- Informal meetings with teachers
- Referral forms
- SST meetings
- Class tutor and Year Head meetings.
- Subject meetings
- Year head meetings
- Year assemblies
- Reports home to parents/guardians

AEN/SEN Profile

At the beginning of the new school year the AEN/SEN staff/school management inform the whole staff of those students on the AEN/SEN profile. The categories and needs of the students are identified and strategies for in-class teaching and learning are outlined if required.

The AEN/SEN profile is made available on the shared drive in a student support folder. All mainstream teachers who require additional information can request this from the AEN/SEN staff or relevant special class teachers.

Sharing AEN/SEN Information

All staff are informed about AEN/SEN students during the first school term at a whole staff meeting. The information pertaining to the students AEN/SEN is given through the AEN/SEN student support folder.

Additional information is available from a member of the AEN/SEN team and is held in the student file.

Access to the Individual Student Support Files (ISSF) is also available through the student support folder on the shared drive.

AEN/SEN Record Keeping

All relevant information including communication with parents or outside agencies should be recorded in the student file and/or in minutes of meetings.

An Individual Student Support File (ISSF) is completed for each student in the ASD & DHH classes.

A list of all students with access to an SNA is available on the student support shared folder.

All teaching staff engaged in learning support (one – one support, small group withdrawal) are required to keep a learning record of each lesson. This is maintained on a school template shared by school management at the outset of the academic year. The teacher is responsible for keeping this document and for its accuracy in the details recorded on it.

Each of the above documents are working documents and are reviewed as required.

Enrolment and Assessment

Admissions and Enrolment Policy

This is outlined in detail in the school's Admissions and Enrolment Policy.

Primary to Post-Primary Transition

The feeder school plays a very important part in identifying students entering the school with AEN/SEN. Through direct communication with teachers and parents/guardians prior to entry of students the needs of the students are identified, and resources put in place to meet these needs.

Parents/Guardians are requested to share all relevant information to assist the school in making the provision for their child's AEN/SEN. The school continues to develop its transition programme *'Treoir Nua'* to best capture information pertinent to the needs of students starting in the school. This collection and collation of this information will enable the transition of students to take place smoothly as information is available to students prior to entry to the school.

Our transition from Primary to Post primary includes the following:

- A visit by the Principal and another member of staff to all feeder primary schools outlining the education and facilities available at Coláiste Iósaef
- An Open Night for parents of incoming 1st years.
- At registration night parents complete a form where they get an opportunity to inform JTBCS of their child's AEN/SEN needs and to meet with members of our AEN/SEN team in the information hub.
- The PPADE is administered in advance of entry to the school. This is used as baseline data for students with AEN/SEN and also to identify any students with emerging needs.
- Mixed ability classes are formed in the first year group
- Optional private tour of the school is provided for AEN/SEN students and their parents during June, to ensure they gain familiarity with the surroundings and ease to the transition from primary to post-primary.
- A stand-alone induction day at the beginning of the Autumn term where only first years are in school and settling-in activities are undertaken.

Assessment Procedure

Assessment is carried out for a specific purpose with the intention of acting on the results. It can be carried out for any of the following reasons:

- To track a student's progress
- To establish a baseline in students' attainments including EAL.
- To set clear and achievable targets for the student.
- To form mixed ability classes
- To select students for additional teaching support.
- To complete Irish exemption process.
- To complete RACE and DARE processes.
- To inform a NEPS referral.
- To establish a student's needs following a referral.
- To assist outside agencies with diagnosis.

Methods of Assessments

Methods of assessment used at the school are appropriate and do not create barriers to inclusion for students with AEN/SEN.

Formal assessment

This is in the form of standardised criterion, referenced and certain diagnostic tests. Formal assessments are summative and formative in nature.

- **Assessment of Learning** – This includes CAT4, WJIII, WIATIII, DASH, PPAD-E, EAL Post Primary

Assessment kit, class tests, end of unit tests, chapter tests, term assessments, in house exams, CBAs, final projects and state examinations.

- **Assessment for Learning** – teachers at both mainstream and special education use several strategies for assessment for learning namely, success criteria, effective questioning (blooms taxonomy), self- assessment, peer assessment and effective feedback.

- **Assessment as Learning** – Students with AEN/SEN have to be supported through this process and given the skills to use this form of assessment. It includes self-reflection and peer evaluation.

Prior to 1st year students starting in the school, a morning is organised for them to complete the PPAD-E. This assessment is used as a screening and diagnostic tool that assess literacy skills consisting of five subtests.

- Word reading
- Spelling
- Reading speed
- Reading comprehension
- Writing samples.

The SE staff administering and interpreting these formal tests have training and knowledge of the area.

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment methods are applied in all school environments including classroom and yard and information gathered can lead directly to the planning for supporting the students.

- Classroom progress checks – quizzes, whiteboards, tweet board, number line.
- Informal observation by the teacher/SNA/student
- Evaluation of homework
- Informal analysis of students language and social development
- Interaction with others
- Student journal and VSware
- Organisational skills
- Self-management skills
- Strategies – think-pair-share, placemats, tweet boards, exit tickets, whiteboards, 3-2-1, must- could- should, success criteria, reflection number line, 5W and 1H.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is used to identify the students learning strengths and needs. The assessment may be carried out to aid the planning of the learning programme for students with AEN/SEN. This testing is also used to provide background information for the NEPS psychologist. In CIK, diagnostic testing is also used to grant Irish exemptions. Diagnostic test results are held in the students file and also on the shared drive which can be accessed by staff.

Files and psychological assessments are stored in the AEN/SEN office. These are confidential. Mainstream teachers have access to these files on request from the AEN/SEN Department. Teachers are given access to the AEN/SEN student register and are encouraged to read these files in order to inform their teaching practices and meet the needs of their students.

Ongoing monitoring of progress and support of transfer from second level

Coláiste Iósaef is committed to ensuring that all AEN/SEN students receive full support in progressing and accessing 3rd level education. All AEN/SEN students receive Guidance Counselling support when applying to PLC, and CAO to ensure all supports are accessed. They are fully assisted and advised in applying to HEAR and/or DARE and all parents/guardians are encouraged to meet with our Guidance Counsellor/s in order to progress all applications. Our guidance team have established strong links with the Disability Support Services at 3rd Level Institutions in both Cork and Limerick. Guidance Counsellors regularly attend information sessions and meetings with staff at all these institutions. On the day of CAO offers Guidance Counsellors are available at the school to meet with all students to assist them in making contact with the DSS staff at the relevant 3rd level provider.

AEN/SEN students who progress to PLC colleges are advised to contact the guidance department throughout the year after they finish in the school, in order to apply for DARE should they wish to pursue a CAO application. Guidance Counsellors regularly liaise with the AEN/SEN department to ensure efficiency of the system and may follow up regarding individual students. The Guidance Dept operate an open-door policy for all students and AEN/SEN students are advised that Guidance support is available to them in the years following completion of education at the school.

Support Agencies

In keeping with the ethos of the school with emphasis on the holistic development of the child the school works in a collaborative nature with the following support agencies:

Special Needs Organiser (SENO)

The SENO (Gerry Ryan) has responsibility for coordinating and facilitating the delivery of educational services for children presenting with SEN. The SENO reviews SNA requirements, Shared area registration (ASD/Special classes) special transport applications, and also processes the applications for assistive technology.

NEPS Psychologist

The NEPS psychologist (Diarmuid O,Rourke) visits the school on a regular basis.

- Gives advice on classroom strategies and resources.
- Conducts full psychological assessments.
- Advises on individual students needs.
- Advises on SEN policy and practice.
- Advises on Literacy and Numeracy
- Meets with the parents and members of the SEN team to follow up on the progress of the students presenting with SEN.
- Meets with students to track progress/give advice as appropriate.
- In the event of a NEPs psychologist not being assigned to the school, the SCAPA Scheme will be accessed.

Health Service Executive (HSE)

- Social Workers
- Child and Adolescence Psychiatric Services

Other Agencies:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- TULSA/TESS
- Primary Care Teams
- Speech and Language Therapists & Occupational Therapists
- Limerick Intervention Services (HSE)
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS (HSE)
- Visiting Teacher Services for Deaf and Visually Impaired.
- Limerick and Clare Education Training Board (LCETB)
- Educational & Clinical Psychologists.
- Medical Personnel
- Jigsaw
- The above list is not exhaustive and continues to evolve to meet the needs of our students.

Student Voice

An integral part of our AEN/SEN provision is that of student voice. The school will utilise student questionnaires, parent/guardian questionnaires and student focus groups to garner feedback on the supports and resources provided and to use the feedback from these to inform planning of provision.

Whole School Monitoring, Evaluation and Ongoing Review:

As with all school policies this policy is evaluated/reviewed on an ongoing basis in line with Department of Education Policy, continual evaluation by School Management and AEN/SEN team.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of Policy Review: _____