

## **Additional Educational Needs**

**St. Mary's Secondary School**

**Edenderry,**

**Co. Offaly.**

## **Policy on Additional Educational Needs**

**November 2022**

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**This policy and plan for the inclusion of students with AEN in St. Mary’s is a living document that should be consulted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. It should be reviewed at the end of each academic year by all the partners. The views of the partners should be considered, and adjustments should be made to the policy and plan to ensure that the provision and support for students with AEN in St. Mary’s meets with international criteria for best practice.**

## Glossary of Terms

ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Adj. Disorder	Adjustment Disorder
BMGLD	Borderline Mild General Learning Disability (also referred to as the 'Low' range in some professional reports.)
CSP	Classroom support plan
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DARE	Disability Access route to Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EBD	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties
EX	Exemption from Irish
FOI	Freedom of Information
HID	High Incident Disability
HITH	High Incidence Teaching Hours (Learning Support)
HSE	Health Service Executive
LID	Low Incident Disability
LITH	Low Incidence Teaching Hours (Resource Hours)
ILP	Individual Learner Profile
MGLD	Mild General Learning Disability (also referred to as the 'Extremely Low' range in some professional reports.)
Mod. GLD	Moderate General Learning Disability
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
PPP	Personal Pupil Plan
RH	Resource Hours
SEBD	Severe Emotional Behavioural Difficulties
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organiser
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
SP or SPC	Special Class
S&L	Speech and Language Difficulties
S&L	Speech and Language Difficulties
SBST	Student Behaviour Support Team
SST	Student Support Team
SSP	Student support plan
VTHI	Visiting Teacher for the Hearing Impaired
VTVI	Visiting Teacher for the Visually Impaired

## 1. Introduction

St. Mary's Secondary School is a co-educational Voluntary Secondary School under the Trusteeship of the Kildare and Leighlin Diocese. St. Mary's welcomes students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and endeavours to ensure that the students develop and reach their potential in an inclusive and supportive environment in the school.

Students learn and process information in different ways. Therefore, supports and programmes need to be tailored to the students so that they can access all forms of educational opportunity. This policy reflects how St. Mary's Secondary School provides educational support to students with Additional Educational Needs (SEN).

### 1.1 Policy Statement

It is the policy of St. Mary's Secondary School to provide holistic educational opportunities to students of varied levels of abilities in line with our mission statement:

*'St Mary's Secondary school, Edenderry held in trust by the Kildare and Leighlin diocesan Trust and under the patronage of the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin as a Catholic school. The purpose of the school as a centre of post primary Catholic education is to help the students take their place in society as educated, mature and committed Christians with a philosophy of life which is spiritually enriching, and which will enable them to contribute to society in which they live. The school authority wants the school to be, not only a centre of academic excellence, but a community animated by the spirit of the gospel, where personal faith is nurtured and developed.*

*The educational programme of the school is directed to the growth of the whole person and has its source in a Christian vision of reality. The principal/teacher who joins the school community must be willing to take his /her share of responsibility in the formation and education of young Christians. This calls for witness and support for the Catholic ethos of the school and its educational programme'.*

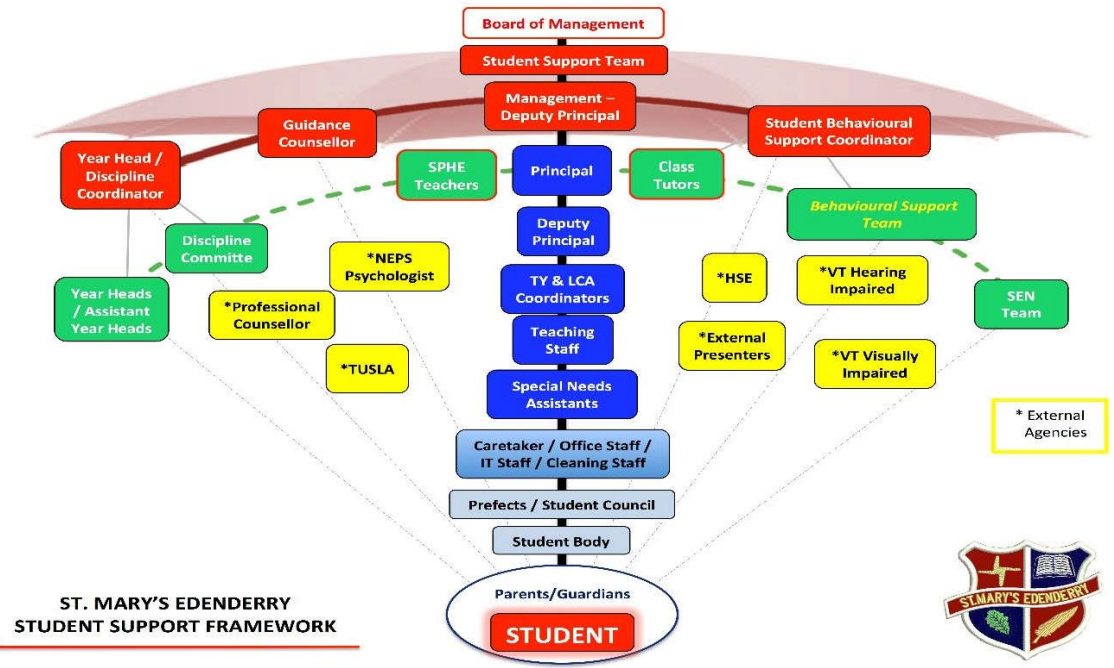
## 1.2 Legislation

The terms of this policy have been further informed by the substantial body of legislation relating to the education of students with AEN.

- ❖ The Education Act (1998)
- ❖ The Equal Status Act (2000) and the Equality Act (2004)
- ❖ The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- ❖ The Data protection Acts (1988, 1998, 2003)
- ❖ The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (Epsen 2004)
- ❖ United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
  
- ❖ *St. Mary's 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."*
  
- ❖ *St. Mary's will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).*

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility for the provision of support for students with AEN is a shared collaborative one involving all the educational partners – Students, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principals, Senior Management, Student Support Team, Care team, AEN team, Subject Teachers, and SNAs. Identification and provision of support for AEN is a significant aspect in the overall support framework for students as illustrated in the following graphic:



## 2.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management of St. Mary's is committed to the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. Therefore, the Board ensures that National Guidelines and Legislation are implemented through this AEN policy, giving practical effect to the constitutional rights of students who have a disability or who have other additional educational needs.

## 2.2 The Principal

The Principal, who serves as secretary to the Board of Management of St. Mary's, has overall responsibility for the development, implementation and review of whole school policies that promote the inclusion of students with AEN. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that all such policies and plans are described in the school plan.

The Principal will:

- ❖ Ensure that this policy is disseminated and understood by all those taking part in providing supports to students with AEN.
- ❖ Promote the professional training and development of all staff in the area of AEN so that teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the education of students with AEN.
- ❖ Consult and liaise, as required, with relevant external bodies and agencies such as:
  - Department of Education and Skills (DES),
  - National Education Psychological Service (NEPS),
  - National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
  - Health Service Executive (HSE)
  - Special Education Support Service (SESS),
  - National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)
  - Visiting Teacher Service for students with a Hearing Impairment (VTHI) and for students with a Visual Impairment (VTVI).
- ❖ Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents/guardians, providing for their involvement in the education and decision-making process in relation to their child, thus achieving appropriate support at home and at school.



### 2.3 Deputy with Responsibility for Additional Educational Needs

The Principal of St. Mary's delegates several functions concerning the practical organisation of the provision of support for students with AEN in the school. The Principal appoints a Deputy who is responsible for the overall delivery of support within the school.

In consultation with the Principal, the Deputy principal chairs AEN Team Meetings, recording minutes and communicates with relevant staff, parents, outside agencies regarding essential AEN matters. This Deputy is also a member of the Care team in the school, and in this capacity contributes valuable expertise in relation to AEN issues which may arise.

Other duties include:

- ❖ Co-ordinating AEN provision in the school.
- ❖ Liaising with school management regarding timetabling for students with AEN.
- ❖ Assisting with arrangements for the successful transfer of students from Primary school to St. Mary's Secondary School, gathering information about prospective students before this transfer.
- ❖ Organising and administering Screening Tests to all incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years and maintaining records of tests carried out throughout the year for other students on the continuum of support.
- ❖ Updating the 'AEN Register' and the files of students with AEN.
- ❖ Overseeing the processing of applications for Irish exemptions, and applications for Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Exams (RACE) where necessary.
- ❖ Working with the school's NEPS Psychologist to identify appropriate supports for students.
- ❖ Communicating with Parents/Guardians by inviting them to share information and consulting with them on how this information can be used in the best interest of their child.
- ❖ Creating a climate of confidentiality regarding the sensitive information around all the partners involved in AEN provision in St. Mary's.
- ❖ Consulting with school management regarding specific and whole school professional development.
- ❖ Engaging with the relevant outside agencies e.g., National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in relation to all matters of Special Education provision.

## **2.4 Additional Educational Needs Team**

The Principal of St. Mary's works collaboratively with the AEN Team to plan and review supports for students with AEN. The Principal may also delegate some or all of this work to one or more of his/her Deputy Principals.

The AEN team takes responsibility for the allocation and timetabling of supports for students with AEN. The team oversees the deployment of resources within the school to meet the needs of students with AEN.

Members of the AEN team fulfil a consultative role for classroom teachers in helping them to understand the various challenges for students with AEN in their classes. The relevant Link Teacher from the AEN team offers support to subject teachers by collaborating on student support plans (SSPs). The team assists subject teachers with strategies to differentiate the teaching and learning in their subject for students with AEN in their classes. They encourage teachers to create an inclusive environment in their classroom where students with AEN feel included and valued.

The AEN Team meet weekly. Management attends the AEN Team Meetings.

## **2.5 Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

There are currently 7 SNAs employed in St Mary's Edenderry (2022).

The Special Needs Assistant plays an important role in the health and safety of the students, and in their social, emotional, and educational development. The SNA is employed to meet the 'Care Needs' of students who have been granted access to SNA support. SNAs are also allocated to the four Special Classes in the school.

The SNAs make an invaluable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to students with AEN. It is important that the Special Needs Assistant supports the student's participation in school life without developing a culture of dependency.

The AEN Team completes a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) to encourage independence through targets and strategies for students who have been granted access to SNA support.

The SNA takes responsibility for the implementation of this plan and assists the AEN Team in reviewing progress in relation to the goals and targets.

The Deputy Principal meets monthly with the SNA team and records the minutes of these meetings throughout the academic year.

SNAs support the 'Care Needs' of any student in a mainstream class who has been granted access to SNA support. They also support the 'Care Needs' of the students enrolled in the four special classes in the school.

The Duties of the Special Needs Assistant involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- ❖ Assisting with dressing, feeding, administration of medicine, toileting and general hygiene, mobility, and orientation, being mindful of the health and safety needs of the students.
- ❖ Supporting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, lunch breaks and in movement from one classroom to another.
- ❖ Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- ❖ Monitoring and recording students work and/or homework or assisting the students to use their journals daily.
- ❖ Acting as a scribe/reader and assisting in practical tests in State Examinations if deemed appropriate.
- ❖ Giving special assistance to students with difficulties e.g., helping special needs students with the use of equipment.
- ❖ Escorting students on school trips.
- ❖ General assistance to the subject teacher of a non-teaching nature.
- ❖ SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, or another person acting on behalf of the Principal, and/or the Board of Management and are determined by the ongoing needs of the pupils and the school. SNAs may be re-assigned to other appropriate tasks when special needs students are absent or when appropriate.
- ❖ SNA's may be required to attend meetings with parents, Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of the Deputy Principal with responsibility for AEN or the Principal.

- ❖ Special Needs Assistants are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work as strictly confidential.

See [Circular 0030/2014](#) for a detailed account of the role of the SNA.

## 2.6 Bus Escorts

Some of our students are entitled to transport and a Bus escort. The Bus Escort Scheme is operated by the School Transport Section of the Department of Education.

The SENO will advise the Department, where s/he is aware, by reference to Department criteria, from relevant professional reports or through information supplied by the School Authorities that a child's care and safety needs are such as to require the support of an Escort. The Department allocates funding to schools, for the employment of escorts to accompany these children. The continuing need for such escorts will be reviewed periodically in the context of a child's ongoing needs, independence, and maturity.

The bus escort reports to the Principal/ Deputy Principal.

## 2.7 Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians, as the primary educators of their child and through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. St. Mary's recognises and values the importance of the role of parents/guardians in working together with the school to ensure the best possible outcome for the students with AEN. It is equally important for the parent/guardian to respect and value the role of teachers as professional educators. A collaborative approach between the school and parents/guardians, with the support, where necessary of outside professionals, is vital for a successful outcome for students with AEN.

St Mary' encourages parents/guardians to:

- ❖ Support and participate in the students learning.
- ❖ Co-operate and support the school's efforts in meeting the needs of the students.
- ❖ Support the students at home by responding to the requests of teachers.
- ❖ Liaise with the AEN team in reviewing and setting targets for the students by completing the 'Parent/Guardian SSP Input'.

- ❖ Attend consultation meetings with members of the AEN Team and outside professionals at the request of the school.
- ❖ Work with the school to ensure the best possible education for their child.
- ❖ Bring concerns immediately to the attention of the relevant school personnel.
- ❖ Contribute to the development and review of Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

The AEN Team in St. Mary's operates an open-door policy in relation to parental input and the team is available to parents/guardians for onsite meetings with staff and can be contacted by school telephone, school email or through the student journals.

### **2.8 Year Head**

The Year Head in St. Mary's has overall responsibility for a year group, including students with AEN, from the date of their enrolment in the school to their graduation in 6<sup>th</sup> year. They support the general welfare of the students in their care and promote the school's inclusive spirit among the year group.

In St. Mary's the Year Head works collaboratively with the Principal, the Senior Management Team, AEN Team, Parents and Outside Agencies to monitor closely students with SEN in their cohort and provide relevant information on student progress and student welfare.

The Year Heads meet weekly. The Year Head is therefore able to make informed contributions regarding students with AEN who may have difficulties or be involved in discipline matters. The Year Head is also a point of contact with subject teachers, class tutors and parents/guardians.

### **2.9 Class Tutors**

Class tutors meet a class group from 8.50 until 8.58 each morning. They offer a supportive first contact to students. Class Tutors may be requested at times to assist the AEN team with corresponding with students' parents/guardians through handing out and collection of letters and checking of journals for notes. Class tutors encourage a spirit of inclusion amongst their class group. Tutors also help track students' attendance and use of homework journal.

## 2.10 Teachers

The academic progress of students, including those students with AEN, rests in the first instance with the subject/class teachers.

St. Mary's encourages subject teachers to:

- ❖ Be aware of the school's policy and procedures - as outlined in this document - in relation to students with individual needs and learning differences.
- ❖ Make themselves familiar with the '*Care Needs Register*' and '*AEN Register*' and that are on TEAMS, along with "support plans" that are on VsWare. They are expected to identify and respond appropriately to the needs of students in both registers. These booklets provide a useful overview of the nature of the AEN/Care Needs of students in their class group or under their care when in a teaching, supervising, or substituting capacity.
- ❖ Seek advice from the AEN Team regarding the needs of students with AEN in their classes and bring any concerns regarding these students to the relevant Link Teacher. AEN referrals may be made through using the AEN Student Referral Form on teams.
- ❖ Develop an attitude of ownership of the education of all students in their classes with individual needs and learning differences.
- ❖ Engage with the AEN team to become familiar with the student's SSP and ensure lesson plans incorporate opportunities to meet the targets on the SSP.
- ❖ Take account of the diversity of learning needs and learning styles of their students and employ suitable teaching methods so that all students can access the curriculum at the appropriate level.
- ❖ Differentiate the curriculum to individual student needs in their classroom. This might include a variety of visual/auditory/kinaesthetic strategies, group work, pair work, mind mapping, use of ICT, oral work, concrete/symbolic/abstract examples.
- ❖ Foster an inclusive spirit among their class group.
- ❖ Avail of and engage with the AEN resource materials.
- ❖ Be responsible for their own continuous professional development, particularly with regards to High Incidence Disabilities - SLD, MGLD, BMGLD and EAL students.

- ❖ Consult with the SEN TEAM to ensure and confirm that the appropriate level is entered, for students with AEN, participating in State Exams. L2IP will be an option available to all students who need it, and this becomes an early consideration for the students with Mild or Moderate General Learning Disability.
- ❖ Complete Teacher Input forms (on teams) when requested.
- ❖ Attend NEPs consultations if requested.
- ❖ Assist with the collection of writing samples from house exams for RACE purposes.
- ❖ Learn how to use the assistive technology that is granted to students, actively use this technology in class and monitor students' use of assistive technology so that the students use it safely and effectively e.g., through the use of shared teacher/student online copies.
- ❖ Record students' use of the Blue Card system on VsWare

Where a student has access to SNA support in the classroom, the subject teacher should plan how to effectively engage the SNA by consulting with the AEN team and the SNA on the individual care needs of the pupil. In addition, they may also deploy the SNA to prepare materials that will support and facilitate the needs of the student.

### **2.11 Students**

As students are the centre of the educational process, their involvement in their education is key to its success and effectiveness. The AEN Team in St. Mary's engages with students with AEN and encourages them to actively contribute to their own SPP. Where appropriate, students are encouraged to set PLP targets for themselves, participate fully in achieving them, and contribute to a review of their progress. This may also apply to situations where behavioural targets are set in a Behaviour Support Plan.

### **2.12 The Student Body**

Working with others is a key skill within the Junior Cycle Framework. Students with AEN learn within a community of learners, therefore St. Mary's recognises that the general student body plays an important role in supporting their peers who have AEN. St Mary's integrates diversity awareness into the learning of the student body through subjects such as SPHE. The student body engage in inclusion awareness programs run by organisations

such ASIAM and Special Olympics Ireland. Teachers are encouraged to use co-operative learning strategies to actively include students with AEN with their mainstream peers. The Big Brother Big sister programme is run at lunchtimes to assist the social inclusion of students with AEN.

### 2.13 The CARE TEAM

The care team consists of St. Mary's Guidance counsellors, the school chaplain, members of the AEN team and the Deputy Principal with responsibilities for AEN. Members of this team support students with who have wellbeing, mental health, and emotional needs and this includes students with AEN. The team member work together to devise care supports for SSPs. The team plays a role in providing subject and career guidance to students with AEN. The care team work together to help students with AEN access the DARE scheme.

## 3. Enrolment Process for Students with AEN

### 3.1 Enrolment

The enrolment of students with AEN in the school follows the same process as described in the enrolment policy for all students who wish to enrol in St. Marys Secondary School. (<http://www.stmarysedenderry.ie/admissions-policy.html>). Enrolment forms are available in October or November in the year prior to intended enrolment. Open night is an ideal opportunity for prospective parents and students to visit the school and familiarise themselves with the AEN provision that St. Mary's has to offer.

The process begins when parents/guardians complete the **Enrolment Acceptance Form** available from the school office and return it to the school.

Parents/Guardians should read this form carefully, complete it in full and return it to the school immediately. It is vital that parents complete all sections of this document, particularly the section which requests information of a student's history of access to AEN resources. This allows the AEN team to begin the process of identifying students with AEN, ensuring a smooth transition into St. Mary's.

The parents/guardians of prospective Special Class students are encouraged to contact the school to arrange to meet an AEN team member for further clarification on the enrolment



process or to discuss their child's AEN in further detail prior to starting at St Marys. The AEN team will also be available on open night to meet with parents/guardians of AEN students who may wish to enrol in the school.

### **3.2 Enrolment in the Special Classes**

St. Mary's has 4 special classes integrated into the school community to support students who may not be capable of accessing a full timetable in the mainstream school. The first class provides for the needs of students who have a Mild General Learning Disability (MLGLD) - maximum number of places 11. The second class caters for students who have a Moderate General Learning Disability (Moderate GLD)-maximum number of places 8. The third and fourth class are our two Autism Classes, with 6 places in each.

The enrolment of students in either of the 4 special classes will be dependent on the number of places available in these special classes. Students who wish to enrol in the Special Classes must have a diagnosed Mild General Learning Disability (Mild GLD) or a diagnosed Moderate General Learning Disability (Moderate GLD) or a diagnosis of Autism with documented evidence from a professional stating that placement in such a class is necessary and essential for their education.

All additional supports e.g., IT equipment or other physical appliances and furniture transfer with the student, on enrolment, from primary to secondary. This equipment does not transfer into 3<sup>rd</sup> level.

### **3.3 Assessment of Need**

As part of the enrolment process in St. Mary's all in-coming first year students attend a general screening process as part of the 'Assessment of Need' procedures.

The purpose of the screening process is to:

- ❖ Identify the strengths of all students and the areas that might require additional support.
- ❖ Establish a baseline from which further information on a student's educational needs may be extracted.
- ❖ To ensure that the appropriate supports are put in place for a successful transition.

There are two post primary schools in Edenderry. Both schools work collaboratively and agree on a common day for the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT 4). This usually takes place on the same Saturday in late January or early February.

At St. Mary's, we acknowledge that some students may require additional support in Irish so therefore we include a screening test in Irish. On the day of the CAT 4 test students will sit a simple Irish test to identify the level of support that they might require in Irish.

St. Mary's carries out three further screening assessments following the CAT 4/Irish Test - the NEW Group Reading Test (NGRT) to establish Reading Age and Comprehension Ability, a Maths Competency Test (MCT-PDST) to identify areas of strength and weakness in mathematical concepts, a WRAT spelling test to identify areas of strength and weakness in spelling.

The screening process allows the school to examine and analyse the results, contact the primary schools and the parents/guardians and plan for the transfer of students who may require additional supports/resources. At St. Mary's we value the importance of early identification and intervention and therefore early screening assessments allow us to have all resources time-tabled and put in place for the beginning of the new academic year. This avoids unnecessary testing and upset to students in the early weeks of their transition into the Post Primary setting in St. Mary's.

### **3.4 The Transition Process**

St. Mary's has an open flexible policy in relation to parents visiting the school as part of the transition process for students with AEN. Parents are encouraged and are welcome at any stage to visit the school to discuss issues and allay any concerns they may have about the transition of their son/daughter into the post primary setting.

During open night 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils can visit the school with their parents/guardians and friends so that they can make an informed decision regarding their second level placement. The AEN team is available on Open Night to meet with parents/guardians to discuss concerns and clarify issues regarding the support available in St. Mary's for their child with AEN.

Students with AEN may visit the school to familiarise themselves with the post primary environment in preparation for the transfer into St. Mary's. This usually takes place in June before the Primary school closes. Students are usually accompanied by the Class Teacher, Support Teacher and SNA depending on the Additional Educational Needs of the students.

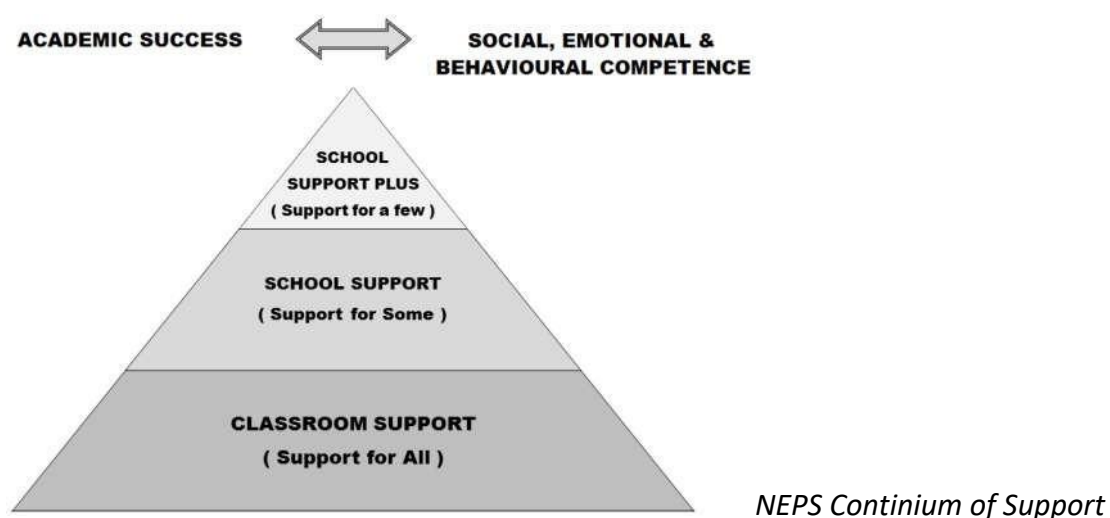
A more formal meeting is held in late August when the AEN team meet with parents and students on a quiet day for orientation. The students get a tour around the school and the procedure for the first few weeks of first year is outlined for them and their parents/guardians.

The first day at school is an induction day at which all new first year students are greeted and will receive a talk by the Principal, Guidance Counsellor, and Year Head. The 6<sup>th</sup> year Prefects then meet with first years in their class groups and engage with the students to help them become familiar with the school environment, rules etc. The Prefects provide a mentoring service for the initial weeks of the first term.

As some students with AEN may have additional or more complex challenges settling in, a transition programme will follow which will be tailored towards the individual needs of the students. Relevant Link teachers will continue to monitor their transition and inform staff of the Additional Educational Needs of the pupils at the opening staff meetings.

## 4. Support Structures for Students with AEN

### 4.1 Continuum of Support



Special Education Needs provision in St. Mary's is aligned with the guidelines set out in the NEPS Continuum of Support Documentation. It involves three distinct school-based processes, Support for All, School for Some and School Support Plus for a Few.

### 4.2 Support for All

At this initial phase of the process is one of prevention, effective mainstream teaching, and early identification. Intervention for all students is intended to be proactive. It aims to support and promote positive student behaviour and learning for all.

The screening outlined in 3.3 above is used to identify strengths and areas for concern within the student body. Information is also gathered from feeder primary schools, parents/guardians, NCSE or other outside agencies, if appropriate, to identify the potential need for classroom, environmental or learning accommodations for students.

Results of screening tests are available for teachers to peruse. The *'Care Needs Register'* and the *'AEN Register'* are available on Teams for teachers to refer to. Mainstream teachers are also facilitated to access relevant information through the AEN team from student files and in particular the *Passport Form* from feeder schools (**Appendix 15**).

First year groups are mixed ability groups, and a differentiated classroom environment is expected in terms of the teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to liaise with the relevant Link Teacher in relation to differentiating the workload, the content and level to ensure the inclusion of students with AEN within the mainstream 'Support for All' classroom.

Teachers are expected to create a supportive classroom environment, use positive and constructive feedback, and create opportunities for all learners to experience success and achieve their potential.

Classroom teachers are also expected to assess, monitor progress, and communicate concerns relating to any student at risk in terms of emotional, behavioural, or learning issues to the Student Support Team should it become evident that the student requires further intervention.

This process of 'Support for All' continues as the student progresses from year to year.

### **4.3 Support for Some**

'Support for Some' provides additional teaching support for students with identifiable learning needs requiring additional resources that are not provided under the 'Support for All' category. These students may be identified through the screening process for incoming First Years, consultation with feeder primary schools, information from parents/guardians or referrals from the Student Support Team. This category usually includes students with High Incidence Disabilities (HID) - SLD, BMGLD, MGLD, EAL students and those who have ability, literacy, or numeracy percentile scores towards the lower end of standardised tests.

St Mary's is now practicing the new SET model Low Incidence Teacher support.

In St. Mary's the allocation of teaching support at this level can take the form of direct provision though (1) in-class support, (2) learning support team teaching and co-teaching in

Irish, English and Maths, and follow up curricular support during (3) Irish Exemption classes for those students who have a certified exemption from Irish. Students in this category may access one, two or all three of the above provisions.

The selection of students for additional Support provision in English, Mathematics and Irish is prioritised for pupils who are performing at or below the 10th percentile in standardised tests. Provision of this nature in first year as of 2022 involves team teaching or support teaching with a qualified teacher. Learning support in other years currently consists of smaller groups (10-12) in a teaching and learning environment that is tailored towards the pace and learning needs of the group. St. Mary's is moving towards team teaching / co-teacher as its learning support model. It may also involve additional teaching resources in the form of Team Teaching or Support Teaching with a qualified AEN teacher.

In accordance with the Irish exemption guidelines (Circular 0055/2022) St Mary's takes into account the literacy learning needs of students who are exempt from the study of Irish, including their English as an Additional Language needs, when deploying additional education teaching resources. As Assistive technology can enable students with literacy needs to access the curriculum, as of 2022 First years who are exempt from the study of Irish substitute Irish for a short course in Digital Literacy. In 2022, Students in other year groups, with a certified exemption from Irish will be provided with additional literacy focused curricular support in designated core subjects instead of the time-tabled Irish classes. At Junior Cycle level the subjects are History, Geography, Business, Religion and CSPE-Civic Social and Political Education. At Senior Cycle level the subjects on offer can vary from year to year and can in some cases be with the students own subject teacher in the interest of maintaining consistency of support. To ensure that these students do not miss out on Irish culture, teachers of Irish exemptions classes at times will base some class supports around the themes of Irish Mythology /sayings/ Music/ sport/ literature/art/film.

Teachers directly involved with students accessing 'Support for Some' are expected to liaise with the AEN team, understand the specific AEN of the student, collaborate with the AEN team in drawing up an SSP for the student and use resources, strategies and assistive technologies provided by the AEN team. Teachers are also expected to differentiate

classwork, reducing the amount and level expected from students at this category, thus supporting the AEN of the student in the context of Irish, English, Maths, and the other curricular subjects.

In St. Mary's there is flexibility for the changing and emerging needs of the students but supports will be dependent on the available resources in the school.

#### **4.4 Support for a Few**

Students in this category may enroll with more complex identified disabilities.

Support provided for students in this category may take the form of a reduced timetable, rest breaks (the Blue Card system), sensory support, behavioural support, SNA support (if sanctioned by NCSE), ICT equipment, social skills provision, RACE, differentiated curriculum (L2LP with mild/ mod GLD) etc. Decisions in relation to the provision will follow consultation with feeder schools, parents/guardians, outside agencies e.g., NEPS, HSE, NCSE etc.

Parents/Guardians of these students and the students themselves are involved in and contribute to the decision on their support in St. Mary's.

Educational Profiles are completed for these students in consultation with all the partners involved in the student's education. The strengths, weaknesses and priority learning needs of the students are identified through the profiling process. This is then consolidated into a (SSP) which is agreed on with parents and is used to inform and support teachers in providing for or accommodating the AEN of the student within the subject classroom and the additional support classroom.

St Mary's utilises co-teaching where possible. Should these students have an exemption from Irish they also have access to curricular support in the Irish exemption classes.

Subject teachers of these students are expected to be aware of and include the student's PLP in all their class plans.

#### **The blue card system.**

St. Mary's recognises that some students with AEN have needs that relate to sensory regulation and can experience sensory overload. Students are encouraged to take time outs within class and when this does not work, the Blue Card system allows students to take

supervised timeouts from class to regulate their senses. The students who use this system have a blue card. If they feel the need to leave the classroom for a sensory break, they show the teacher the blue card. The teacher records on VsWare that the student is leaving class (writes Blue Card on note and records the time). The teacher sends the student with an SNA (or buddy if SNA not present) to the sensory space. The teacher in that room sends the Buddy/SNA back to class with a note saying that the student is in the sensory space. The student signs into the sensory space. Students who avail of this sensory space are allowed to keep materials there that they use to regulate their senses e.g., sound cancelling earphones. When leaving the sensory space, the student signs out and is accompanied by another student/SNA back to class. The student records the sensory experience that led to the use of the blue card.

#### **4.5 Support for a Few- Special Classes**

St. Mary's Edenderry has four special classes; one class for students who present with a Mild General Learning Disability (Mild GLD), a second for students with a Moderate General Learning Disability (Moderate GLD), and two ASD classes.

The Mild and Moderate Special Classes follow a reduced and differentiated Junior Cycle curriculum. Support for teachers on differentiating at this level may be found at [\(NCCA-Guidelines for Mild /Mod. GLD\)](#).

Students in these classes are included in a mainstream class group of their year (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) as much as possible to facilitate inclusion and social integration with mainstream peers. They receive follow up support with their class teacher in the Special Class setting. Differentiated follow-up support is used to ensure that students are prepared as much as possible for inclusion in the mainstream class through pre or repeated teaching to suit the level or learning style of students and assisting with or reinforcing homework. The Level 1 and 2 Learning Programme is available to students with mild and moderate GLD's at junior cycle. AS part of this programme the students complete 2 short courses e.g., Grow it, cook it, eat it, and Animal Care.



Our students become fully immersed in our TY programme engaging with the majority of subjects offered and supported to attend all trips. This is a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes. During TY students retain the added benefit of smaller tuition classes in literacy and numeracy

Inclusion as much as is possible at Senior Cycle through the Leaving Cert Applied Programme is regarded as the longer-term goal for Special Class students as this programme is more suited to the development of essential life skills and vocational skills.

SNA support is allocated to each of the two special classes in line with the DES criteria.

Moderate GLD class = .5 of a SNA post.

Mild GLD class = .25 of a SNA post.

Several students in both the Moderate GLD class and the Mild GLD class have access to additional SNA support, granted by NCSE.

The total allocation to St. Mary's is seven full time SNA posts.

## **5. Reasonable Accommodations**

Each year the State Examinations Commission produce Instructions for Schools for Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Exams (RACE). This scheme facilitates access to the certificate examinations by candidates who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a learning, visual, hearing and/or physical difficulty. Physical difficulty includes medical, sensory, mental health and behavioural difficulties as well as physical difficulties. The scheme assists candidates who have additional educational needs to demonstrate what they know and can do in certificate examinations, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The RACE scheme is part of the continuum of support. Students who are identified as candidates for RACE, must have student support files and be provided with support and interventions in school. Therefore, consideration is given to students with identified needs who are already receiving additional support in the school. In addition to this, the AEN team with support of English teachers, screen all second-year students for literacy learning difficulties. The AEN team also liaise with the CARE TEAM to assess which students need reasonable accommodations in relation to physical needs. When other students may come to the attention of the CARE team /year heads/parents/guardians/staff, the AEN team also with follow up on these.

After screening is completed, parents/guardians are contacted to give consent for their son/daughter to be assessed for eligibility to apply for RACE. AEN team members who are qualified in the use of diagnostic tests assess students and process RACE Applications. Results of the assessments are shared with parents/guardians. It is the responsibility of parents to sign RACE applications in a timely manner. The state examinations commission examines the applications and granting of RACE comes from the state examinations, not the school. Parents can apply to the state examinations commission to appeal this decision.

Students who are granted accommodations at Junior Cycle level will have their RACE reactivated at Leaving Cert or Leaving Cert Applied level if there remains an identified and *continuing* need for the provision. This applies to state examinations only and not house exams. Provision of RACE for mock exams is reliant on the schools' resources. Digital course books are also available through the RACE scheme for students who are eligible to use a word processor for state examinations.

## 6. Irish Exemption Applications

The AEN team follow the circulars and guidelines on Irish exemptions for Post Primary schools. On enrolment, parents/guardians of a student coming from primary or from another post-primary school who already have an Irish Exemption, must supply a copy of the Irish Exemption Certificate before a student can avail of the exemption. Circular 0055/2022 sets out the exceptional circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting a student an exemption from the study of Irish and the procedure for applying.

The school principal, on behalf of the school's board of management, processes applications received by the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish. The formal written application submitted by the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student (applicant) must indicate the exceptional circumstance that forms the basis for the application in accordance with sub-paragraphs 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 or 2.2.4 of Circular 0055/2022.

An exemption from Irish is only granted if the following criteria are met:

### **2.2.1 A student moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language.**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student whose education was received outside the State (for a **minimum period of three consecutive years**) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.

AND either (a) or (b)

(a) who is **not less than 12 years of age** on the day of their enrolment or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is **enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.**

**2.2.2 A student who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum.**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student: (i) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are **persistent** despite having had **access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time.** Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment, target-setting, evidence-informed intervention, and review, including test scores (Word reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of Language/Literacy) at key points of review.

AND

(ii) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a **discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.**

**2.2.3 A student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life.**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student: (i) who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life.

AND

(ii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parents/guardians and the student

AND

(iv) who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach to language skills development and the communicative approach underpinning the Specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) and the Leaving Certificate Syllabuses for Irish.

AND

(v) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

**2.2.4 A student in a recognised special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school**

(i) Where a student is **currently enrolled** in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has **previously been enrolled** in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that student is **automatically entitled** to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

OR

(ii) Where a student has a **recommendation and has been deemed eligible** for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school, an **application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.**

A member of the AEN team liaises with the parents and principal to complete the process. Processing an application for exemption from the study of Irish. In considering the application the principal will:

- (b) Ensure that the date of receipt of the application by the school is recorded on the form.
- (c) Acknowledge receipt of the application for exemption from the study of Irish in writing.
- (d) Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 or 2.2.4) as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
- (e) Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student of the next steps in processing the application.
- (f) Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student of the implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.  
**Parents are advised to consult with the Career Guidance team.**
- (g) Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that the application will be processed, and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.
- (h) Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that that a signed Certificate of Exemption will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.
- (i) Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student that, where an application is refused, the reason(s) as to why it was refused; and the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- (j) Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student, and the student on whose behalf the application has been made, the arrangements for the student's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.

- (k) Use the provided checklists to guide the processing of applications in the case of the relevant sub-paragraph in Section 2.2 of the Circular.
- (l) Convey the outcome of the application in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- (m) Make arrangements for the retention of the application form and all supporting documentation, including a copy of the Certificate of Exemption where applicable, and the Checklist in accordance with data protection law.
- (n) In the case that an Exemption from the study of Irish is granted, the student's record on the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) is updated by the relevant Deputy Principal, with details of the date and grounds on which it has been granted.

## **7. Assistive Technology Grants.**

When professional reports deem assistive technology to be essential for a student to access the Curriculum, a member of the AEN team applies for an assistive technology grant for this technology through the NCSE.

## **8. Modes of Assessment**

In St. Mary's formal and informal modes of assessment are used to elicit information on the strengths, weaknesses, and progress of students with AEN on an ongoing basis. A variety of tests are used to assess the students and to determine the AEN to be addressed and the placement of the student on the 'Continuum of Support'.

### **Formal Assessments currently used:**

- Results of standardised tests carried out in 6th class.
- Psychological Assessment Reports.
- Cognitive Ability Test 4 (CAT 4).
- Questionnaires/Subject Teacher Surveys.

- Standardised Tests of Literacy and Numeracy (NGRT/WRAT 4/ DRA).
- School test results.

**Informal Assessment currently used:**

- Informal observations.
- Checklists.
- Interviews.
- Parent/Guardian Input Forms.
- Document examination.
- Interviews with the student, parents/guardians, Year Heads, teachers, and associated professionals.
- My Thoughts About School Survey (NEPS).
- Samples of students work.
- Miscue Analysis.
- Subject Teacher Survey information.
- Learning style inventory.
- Self-esteem scales.

**9. Resources for Teachers**

Resources for teachers are shared on Teams. When possible, copies of resources are also kept in the staffroom. Teachers who attend relevant CPD share resources via teams.

**10. Further Education Provision.**

The National Learning Network (NLN) is the training and employment division of the Rehab Group. It caters for, amongst others, students who have an illness or a disability. They provide a wide range of supports for students with disabilities following on from their post-primary education. A member of the AEN team will be in contact with the NLN to arrange for a consultation with both parents/guardians and students to prepare for the transfer into further education. This usually is initiated during the first term of the student's final year in the school. The NLN offers several training programs tailored to the student's needs to help them to build their confidence in getting a job or to access further training.

<http://www.nln.ie/>

St. Mary's also engages with AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation and contact is made annually in relation to school leavers with AEN. AONTAS exists to promote lifelong learning through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education which is accessible and inclusive to all.

AONTAS provides an information referral service to adult learners and the general public collecting data on developments in the sector and undertaking research. AONTAS endeavors to work in partnership with other relevant organisations and Government Departments, and from time to time engages in specific projects designed to support the work of different sectors of the membership. <http://www.aontas.com/>

## 11. Role of External Agencies

The AEN team in St. Mary's liaise with and value the support of outside agencies to ensure the provision of the best possible service for students with AEN. The following is a list of relevant outside agencies regularly referred to:

- **Department of Education and Skills (DES):** The DES has overall responsibility for the provision of resources in education including resources in Special Educational Needs. The Minister for Education and Skills is obliged, among other things, to ensure that everyone living in Ireland (including people with disabilities and people who have other special educational needs) has available to them support services and a level and quality of education appropriate to his/her needs and abilities. <http://www.education.ie/en/>
- **Health Service Executive (HSE):** The HSE oversees the implementation of Part 2 of the Disability Act (2005), which provides a right to an assessment of a child's health and educational needs arising from a disability. The Health Service Executive (HSE) authorises Assessment Officers to arrange, oversee and co-ordinate an assessment of need and to produce a report based on the outcome of the assessment. <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/>



- **The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA):** The NCCA is a statutory body advising the Minister for Education and Skills on the curriculum and syllabus requirements of students with disabilities or with special educational needs.
- The NCCA has published Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities. [http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum\\_and\\_Assessment/Inclusion/Special\\_Educational\\_Needs/Download\\_Special\\_Educational\\_Needs\\_Guidelines/Guidelines\\_for\\_teachers\\_of\\_students\\_with\\_general\\_learning\\_disabilities.html](http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/Special_Educational_Needs/Download_Special_Educational_Needs_Guidelines/Guidelines_for_teachers_of_students_with_general_learning_disabilities.html)
- **National Education Psychological Service (NEPS):** When an assessment for a student is deemed necessary, the NEPS psychologist generally carries it out in the school setting. Sometimes onward referral to other agencies or services may be indicated. The NEPS psychologist meets with the AEN team to plan for the year and to assist with the deployment of the resources for AEN allocated to the school by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The NEPS psychologist will also participate in case conferences on students. <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Information-for-Parents.html>
- **National Council for Special Education (NCSE):** The interim website of the National Council for Special Education has some introductory information about the work of the Council and contact details for the Council and for local Special Educational Needs Organisers. <http://ncse.ie/for-schools>
- **Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO):** The NCSE employs over 80 Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who are responsible for allocating additional resources to support the special educational needs of children with disabilities at local level. They process applications for SNAs, Special Classes, assistive technology, and transport for students with a diagnosed AEN. SENOs are the point of contact for parents/guardians and schools. <http://ncse.ie/seno-contact-list>

- **Special Education Support Service (SESS):** The role of SESS is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in relation to special educational provision. The service coordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools, and special classes. <http://www.sess.ie/>
- **National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS):** The NBSS assists partner schools in addressing current behavioural concerns on three levels. The NBSS works with schools in addressing students' social, emotional, academic, and behavioural needs at: Level 1: school-wide for all students, Level 2: targeted intervention for some students and Level 3: intensive individualised support for a few students. <https://www.nbss.ie/>
- **Visiting Teacher Service for Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (VTHI):** The VTHI teachers work with school children to provide guidance and support for parents of deaf or hard-of-hearing children. The visiting teachers also monitor the child's language development and communication skills and give information and advice to parents on pre-school and school placements. At primary level, the visiting teacher works with the principal and other staff to plan and put in place suitable supports for the child. They can provide tuition with special emphasis on language development and monitor the educational progress of the child. <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Visiting-Teacher-Service/>
- **Visiting Teacher for Children who are Blind/Visually Impaired (VTVI):** The VTVI teachers assess and evaluate the needs of each child and explain the effects of visual impairment, including the current and future implications of the impairment. In addition, they provide information and advice to assess educational planning for children and young people with visual impairments. Visiting teachers co-operate closely with colleagues from a range of educational and other professional backgrounds, in addition to national organisations.

- **Inclusion Support Service (ISS):** The ISS was recently set up to assist schools in supporting children with special educational needs.

This is an umbrella service for the Special Education Support Service (SESS), the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), the Visiting Teacher Service for Visually Impaired children (VTVI), the Visiting Teacher Service for Hearing Impaired children (VTHI) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Up until now these services were managed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

- **National Learning Network (NLN):** The NLN, (formerly called NTDI) is Ireland's largest non-Government training organisation with more than 50 purpose built training and employment facilities catering for around 4,500 students each year. The organisation offers over 40 different vocational programmes which carry nationally and internationally recognised certification and are designed to lead directly to jobs or progression to further education. <http://www.nln.ie/>
- **Down Syndrome Ireland (DSI):** DSI is dedicated to being the primary source of information and support to people with Down Syndrome, their families, and the professional community, working towards an improved quality of life for members along with a respect and acceptance of people with Down Syndrome as valued members of Irish Society. <https://downsyndrome.ie/information-centre/education/>
- **AsIAm :**AsIAm Is Ireland's National Autism Charity. We are working to create a society in which every autistic person is empowered to reach their own personal potential and fully participate in society. We believe that by developing the capacity of the autism community and addressing the societal barriers to inclusion we can make Ireland the world's most autism-friendly country.

## **12. Policy/Plan Recommendations**

This policy and plan for the inclusion of students with AEN in St. Mary's is a living document that should be consulted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. It should be reviewed at the end of each academic year by all the partners. The views of the partners should be considered, and adjustments should be made to the policy and plan to ensure that the provision and support for students with AEN in St. Mary's meets with international criteria for best practice.

## **AUTISM CLASS POLICY SEPTEMBER 2022**

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## **GLOSSARY**

ASC Autism Spectrum Condition

CL Circular Letter

DES Department of Education and Skills

■ DLP Designated Liaison Person (Child Protection)

DDLDP Deputy Designated Liaison Person

HSE Health Service Executive ■

ICT Information & Communication Technology

JC Junior Cycle

JCPA Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

JCT Junior Cycle for Teachers

LC Leaving Certificate

LCA Leaving Certificate Applied

LCVP Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

L2LP Level 2 Learning Programme

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCGE National Centre for Guidance in Education

NCSE National Council for Special Education

NEPS National Educational Psychological Service

PDST Professional Development Service for Teachers

PTR Pupil-Teacher Ratio

QQI Quality and Qualifications Ireland

SC Senior Cycle

SEN Special Educational Needs

SENO Special Education Needs Organiser

SPHE Social, Personal and Health Education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

St. Mary's Secondary School is a co-educational diocesan secondary school managed under the auspices of Kildare and Leighlin. The school community strives to create a learning environment that provides its students.

with the academic, social, and cultural training necessary for success in life.

The student population is drawn from varied communities and cultures. There are approximately nineteen feeder primary schools.

The Autism classes in "The Laochra Centre," strive to empower students to belong to an educational community without prejudice, and within which individual difference is celebrated.

The Laochra Centre offers the following programmes - Junior Certificate/Cycle, Level 2 Junior Cycle (L2LP), Transition Year Programme (TYP), Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA). Where possible and in line with the inclusive ethos, students will have access to and equal opportunity for learning in the mainstream classrooms.

### 1.1 Scope

The Autism policy concerns all aspects of school life and as such it is a whole-school policy.

The autism policy applies to all school staff, the board of management, parents/guardians, students and others (including prospective or potential students and their parents/guardians

and applicants for staff positions within the school) insofar as the measures under the plan relate to them. While the Board of Management and the school principal has the overall responsibility for the oversight and implementation of the policy, all members of staff have a contribution to make.

The various members of the school educational team aspire to provide students with the best possible service. Members of this team include, among others:

- School Management

- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- Autism Class Co-ordinator
- Special Needs Assistants
- Programmes Co-ordinator
- Parents/Guardians
- School administration
- School maintenance

## 1.2 Vision

We, the staff of St. Mary's Secondary School, aim to offer a positive, meaningful educational experience which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers predictability, understanding, calm and support. Our mission statement emphasizes enabling our students to develop their talents to the fullest and providing an atmosphere that promotes self-esteem and respect for others. We see inclusion and integration of all students with ASC as being implicit in this statement, and we are committed to providing a supportive and nurturing learning environment with relevant resources for students with autism spectrum condition.

The continuum of support model is currently being implemented in St. Mary's Secondary School in line with guidelines from the NCSE and NEPs to provide a whole school support system for students. Students in the Laochra Centre are placed in the School Support Plus category and are required to have Personal Pupil Plans and Student Support Files to be completed in consultation with parents, SNAs, teachers and multi-disciplinary teams where possible.



### 1.3. Policy and Legislative Context

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Equal Status Act (2004) and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) 2004, the Board of Management of SME adopts the following autism class policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the NCSE Guidelines for Setting up and Organising Special Classes Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2016.

*St. Mary's 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.*

*St. Mary's will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).*

Other requirements and guidelines include:

- Circular No 0051/2007 – Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 and Disability Act 2005

[https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/cl0051\\_2007.pdf](https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/cl0051_2007.pdf)

- Circular No 0008/2019 – Special Education Teaching Allocation (Post-Primary)

<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2019/14.pdf>

- Circular No 0053/2019 – Exemptions from the study of Irish – revising circular 0012/1996 (Post-Primary)

<https://assets.gov.ie/27473/c10cb646f6a14074b6d02d54b0ab3d1b.pdf>

- Circular No 0029/2021 – Special Needs assistant allocation 2021/2022 school year (Post-Primary)

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Special-Education-Allocations-PostPrimary-Schools-2122-03122021.pdf>

- Circular No 0058/2019 – Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for Guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary

school

<https://assets.gov.ie/34209/d314dd6e8f614c1da5afc45c9605a95b.pdf>

- Wellbeing Guidelines for Junior Cycle, NCCA, 2017.

[https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines\\_forjunior\\_cycle.pdf](https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf)

- Looking At Our School 2016 - A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools,

Inspectorate of Department of Education and Skills, 2016.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-ReportsPublications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/Looking-at-Our-School-2016-A-QualityFramework-for-Post-Primary-schools.pdf>

- School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 – 2020, Inspectorate of Department of

Education and Skills, 2015. [http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-](http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-primary/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2018/01/School-Self-Evaluation-Guidelines-2016-2020-Post-Primary_web.pdf)

[primary/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2018/01/School-Self-Evaluation-Guidelines-2016-2020-Post-Primary\\_web.pdf](http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-primary/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2018/01/School-Self-Evaluation-Guidelines-2016-2020-Post-Primary_web.pdf)

- Framework for Junior Cycle, NCCA, 2015.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-JuniorCycle-2015.pdf>

- Well-being in Post-Primary Schools. Mental Health Promotion and Suicide

Prevention, NEPS, 2013.

<https://www.education.ie/en/SchoolsColleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-SchoolsGuidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>

- Education (Welfare) Act 2000 –

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/22/enacted/en/html>

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, Túsla/NEWB, 2008 -

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

Policy documents which impact on the formation and delivery of the policy:

- Acceptable Use ICT Policy
- Admissions Policy & Procedures
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Educational Tours and Field Trips Policy

Suspension and Expulsion Policy & Procedures

- Acceptable Use Policy for Network and Internet

- Admissions policy
- Child Protection Risk Assessment and Statement
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy
- Social Political and Health Education Policy
- Special Needs Education Policy

#### **1.4 Rationale for an Autism Class Policy**

Following advice from the SENO, the decision to provide a Special Class to support students with Autism in St. Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry, was taken by the Board of Management, the principal, staff, and school community in September 2019. The decision was made with a view to providing an appropriate, specialist education within a mainstream setting for students who wish to join our school community. Our first special class opened in The Laochra Centre in September 2020 and our second class opened in September 2021.

Definition: The purpose of the Laochra Centre classes is to assist students with ASC 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 lives.

### **1.5. Aims of the Policy**

The aims of the policy are:

- To create a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference including the use of positive language
- To provide a whole school response to the needs of students with AS within the overall ethos of the school.
- Outline the key roles and responsibilities of the autism classes teachers, learning support teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs)
- To provide a differentiated education for each learner based on their individual learning profile
- Describe approaches to teaching and learning

### **1.6 Admissions**

Admission to autism special class is governed by the St. Mary's Secondary School Admissions Policy.

### **1.7. Curriculum**

The curriculum actively supports the creation of a positive school culture with a focus on inclusivity and autism acceptance.

- ✓ Each subject department includes L2LP in their department planning meetings.
- ✓ Differentiation of learning outcomes within mainstream subject classrooms and in the Laochra Centre to meet the needs of all learners and learning styles.

Curriculum will be delivered and differentiated to meet the requirements of the individual learner. In the Laochra Centre we strive for, and pride ourselves with the delivery of curricula by means of active learning.

For practical subjects whereby there is no defined curriculum for Level 2 learning (Woodwork, Drama, Art, Home Economics, music) a cross curricular thematic approach will be implemented fostering the learning of the existing five Priority learning units.

## **1.8 Health and Safety Procedures**

For practical subjects, whereby the teacher has requested that students attend Home

Economics, Woodwork, Computers and Science classrooms, the SNAs from the Laochra Centre will accompany the students and remain with them for the duration of the class and will accompany them back to the Laochra Centre after the lesson has ended. If there is no teacher present, the SNA team will return to the Laochra Centre.

Class teachers should remain with the students in the Laochra Centre until the next teacher has arrived.

## **1.9 Unforeseen School Closures**

In the unlikely event of a school closure, all teaching staff will be required to work on a thematic approach to assist with the delivery of the L2LP curriculum.

For example, the theme could be “Food Preparation” and will entail practical activities whereby photographic and video evidence will be utilised as much as possible to capture participation in assigned activity. Teachers will design the tasks and map the task to the relevant learning outcomes.

## **2.0 Reporting Incidents**

When a student engages in poor behaviour the class teacher/SNA will report on an incident report form or ABC chart and give to the autism class teacher. The autism class teacher will record the incident and administer the appropriate consequence if required.

## **2.1 Procedures for Monitoring Progress**

As all students in the Laochra Centre have their own unique talents and skills.; there is scope for the evidence of teaching and learning to be captured by various means, including written, photographic, and video evidence in their portfolios.

It is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure L2LP portfolios are up to date for each learner. Assessment and feedback will be stored by the class teachers. Progress reports will be sent to parents in line with mainstream classes.

## 2.2 Assessment

An assessment includes an evaluation of the students' strengths and difficulties to inform the holistic learning profile. Information will be sought from previous school placement in consultation with class teacher, learning support teacher, and SNAs.

Additional testing will be prescribed for each learner based on teacher observations, and information gathered during the first term (September – October).

Assessment methods can include:

- Teacher observations
- Literacy (Teacher designed task)
- Numeracy (Teacher designed task)
- Social and emotional (Teacher designed task)
- Fine and gross motor skills (teacher designed activity)
- Feedback from subject teachers (NEPS Subject teacher survey)
- SNA Observation
- Parental survey / feedback

\*All testing is subject to the consent of parents/ guardians.

All procedures, test results and information received are documented and filed in accordance with GDPR.

## 2.3 Staff Training

The process of raising awareness among all staff members in the school community is achieved in the following ways.

✓ Staff meetings

- ✓ Training for new members in L2LP programme.
- ✓ C.P.D. in ASC and Special Educational Needs and sharing of the policy and procedures with all staff
- ✓ Whole staff participation in awareness raising events in Autism Acceptance month

## **2.4 Initiatives**

Other examples of school initiatives which support the creation of a positive environment and inclusive ethos include:

- ✓ Induction day for incoming students
  - SNA supervision to enable students to participate in whole school activities
- ✓ Inclusive school ethos to encourage participation in all areas of school life e.g., school trips, extra-curricular clubs, sports, and societies.
- ✓ Staff encouraged to participate in continuous professional development and postgraduate studies in autism and additional educational needs.
- ✓ Raising awareness among non-teaching staff.
- ✓ Student mentor involvement with 1st years.
- ✓ Whole School training in Autism delivered by NCSE

## **3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Providing an inclusive education is not the responsibility of any one individual or group, but rather of all members of the school community. A whole-school approach benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common goal.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate support to students. The main roles and responsibilities within our School are outlined below.



Role

Responsibilities

<p>Parents/Guardians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to the learner plan</li> <li>• Involvement in the creation of smart targets</li> <li>• Regular communication with staff to support the student</li> <li>• Working with the class teacher to further develop strategies at home</li> </ul>
<p>Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil voice is an essential part of the Individual Learning Plan</li> <li>• Sharing their areas of interest (to use as a teaching strategy)</li> <li>• Sharing the areas they find challenging</li> </ul>
<p>Board of Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed, and recommendations are communicated to the school community.</li> <li>• Ensure the policy is highlighted and promoted on a schoolwide basis within the school,</li> <li>• Ensure that all members of school staff (under the direction of the principal) have sufficient familiarity with the school's Autism lass Policy to enable them to</li> </ul>

	effectively and consistently apply the policy
School Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Autism policy</li> <li>• Implementation of policy</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; review of policy</li> <li>• Apply Code of Conduct when necessary</li> <li>• Report to Board of Management</li> <li>• Raise awareness of autism spectrum condition and strategies to support learners with ASC</li> <li>• Exploit opportunities provided by the school curriculum to raise awareness, foster an attitude of respect for all and influence attitudes towards neurodiversity in a positive manner</li> <li>• Support and lead initiatives with other staff members</li> <li>• Consult with and seek assistance from external agencies</li> </ul> <p>(NEPS, HSE, social workers, community workers, bus drivers, Gardaí...etc.) where necessary</p>

<p>Special Needs Assistants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report Child Protection concerns to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection) when necessary</li> <li>• Assisting with the care/safety/supervision needs of students in the classroom, around the school and on school trips.</li> <li>• Assisting with the development and implementation of Student Support Plans</li> <li>• Guiding the student through tasks and activities designed by their classroom teacher.</li> <li>• Data collection/ reporting on progress, as determined by the Class coordinator</li> <li>• Providing special assistance to the student, using computers, visuals, visual timetables, task analysis etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Autism Class Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being the main point of contact for parents.</li> <li>• Involving parents in the education planning process (e.g., Student Support Plans, home/school communication, phone calls and meetings as necessary)</li> <li>• Overseeing the preparation of Student Support Plans with the student, their parents, their teachers and in consultation with their multi-disciplinary teams.</li> <li>• Setting up the environment to suit the sensory preferences of the learner</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinating the supporting work on the SNAs on a regular basis</li> <li>• Working with mainstream class teachers to identify suitable opportunities for integration</li> <li>• Working with mainstream class teachers to identify and implement accommodations that the student may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom</li> <li>• Attending meetings with the leadership team</li> <li>• Gathering information on new students in the class</li> <li>• Meeting with relevant multi-disciplinary professionals</li> <li>• Organising and facilitating a range of structured lunchtime activities</li> <li>• Holding weekly progress meetings with the SNA team.</li> <li>• Holding meetings with the teaching team</li> <li>• Regular communication with parents/guardians</li> <li>• Assessing and recording students' strengths and areas in need of support</li> <li>• Setting SMART targets for each student</li> <li>• Monitoring and managing student progress</li> <li>• Direct teaching of the students on a one-to-one or group basis within the Autism class.</li> </ul>
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<p>Classroom Teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating with autism class coordinator and subject departments regarding adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of the learner.</li> <li>• Attending regular meetings with the autism support team</li> <li>• Supervision of students on school trips</li> <li>• To ensure that work is set and submitted to substitute teacher in the event of an absence.</li> <li>• It is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure L2LP portfolios are up to date for each learner.</li> </ul>
<p>Learning Support Teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an individualised plan based on the Individual Learning Plan for each target student</li> <li>• Working on a one-to-one basis with the learner deliberately targeting an area in need of support according to their ILP</li> <li>• Liaising with class teachers and autism class coordinator to create a holistic scheme of work for the learner</li> </ul>

Other members of staff – Tutors, Guidance counsellors, AEN staff – may have specific role.

St. Mary's reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES procedures to seek the assistance of agencies such as the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), the HSE Túsła, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary.

In situations where an incident (bullying or misconduct) is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the matter will be referred to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The school may consult with Túsła or other relevant agencies to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the Túsła or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

#### **Links with Outside Agencies and Services**

The EPSEN Act (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 this act, the school will work with the local S.E.N.O, the local N.E.P.S. psychologist, and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of our students. It may be necessary to hold case meetings with relevant professionals with the permission and knowledge of the student's parents (and their attendance) to determine the best approach and provision for the students in question. Notes from such meetings will be recorded and maintained in the student's file.

#### **4. MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

This autism class policy is made available to school personnel, the parent's association and members of the school community. A copy of the policy is published on the school website. The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the principal and updates reported to the Board of Management. The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of

the Autism class policy and its implementation.

The Board of Management will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas of improvement identified by the annual review. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website. Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management meeting that adopted the review and a record and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the DES.

On-going review and evaluation of the autism class policy and support plans will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g., from the Department of Education and Skills or the Department of Children and Youth Affairs), legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

This policy was ratified on: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management:



Date: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Date of next review: **14<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

## ASC Enrolment Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Admission Policy for St. Mary's Secondary School.

The aim of the AS Class is to offer a positive & meaningful educational experience to each student that allows her/him to develop to their full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period observing, assessing and interacting with the student, an Individual Education Plan will be developed following consultation with Parents/Guardians and with other relevant professional staff (e.g., NEPS Psychologist, Co-ordinator/Teacher(s) of Special Educational Needs/ASD, Occupational Therapist, School Principal/Deputy Principal etc), as deemed appropriate.

The aim of the AS Class is to offer a specific learning environment within the mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student. External Support Services Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible. Furthermore, St. Mary's Secondary School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. St. Mary's Secondary School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for the Parents/Guardians alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

*St. Mary's 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.*

*St. Mary's will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).*

## Pre-enrolment

All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-V and ICD



10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable. A prospective student for the AS Class must have a professional recommendation from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class. All applications in relation to each child should be provided to the school for

assessment by the Admissions Team\*/Board of Management. The withholding of such reports may invalidate an enrolment application at any time. Parents/Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in each AS Class is 6 students. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the AS Class. The Board of Management require that Parents/Guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the AS Class. The Parents/Guardians of the applicant must accept and agree to the St. Mary's Secondary School Code of Conduct and the terms of this policy. The AS Class in St. Mary's Secondary School will only cater for children that are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question.

### Enrolment

All applications for enrolment in the AS Class will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy. Where the number of applicants exceeds the places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- Current students enrolled in the school
- Siblings of current students in St. Mary's Secondary School who apply
- Applicants resident within the defined school Catchment Area (see General Students Admission Policy) and are attending;
  - (1) an AS class in feeder schools (if applicable) OR
  - (2) attending the local feeder National Schools
  - (3) applicants not attending the above-named feeder schools but for whom St. Mary's Secondary School would be nearest to their home address.

Parents/Guardians should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria numbered above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, then the date of birth of the applicant will be considered with priority being given to the oldest applicant and continuing thus forth until all places are filled. If two or more applicants share the same date of birth, then places will be allocated based on need as determined from report in conjunction with the SENO.

## Application Process

An Enrolment application Form, a copy of which is available from the school, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is published in the Annual Admission Notice for the relevant year.

This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the applicant and accompanied by all the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessments(s) and diagnostic report(s). The Enrolment Application form must also be accompanied by school reports and relative documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended. Proof of address is necessary.

Only applications that meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered. Students that are currently enrolled in an AS Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer during the school academic year. Students enrolled in a AS Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer at the end of a school academic year unless the family have moved residence into the catchment area of St. Mary's Secondary. The advice, support, and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be *considered* in the decision-making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the AS Class.

It is important that Parents/Guardians note that St. Mary's Secondary School may, in certain clarified circumstances and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that

- (a) the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare, or security grounds to themselves and/or others, or (ii) admission of the applicant will make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the education provision by St. Mary's Secondary School as an educational establishment of its services to others.
- (b) The Admissions Teams in conjunction with the Board of Management will make the final decision on all applications to enrol.

### **On acceptance of a place:**

The Parents/Guardians of a child being offered a place in the AS Class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child.

Any information requested by the Parent/Guardians will be provided at this meeting.

The Parents/Guardians may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff in St. Mary's Secondary School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned to observe the student in a classroom situation.

The Parents/Guardians will be invited to accompany their child to visit St. Mary's AS Class and meet staff.

- The Parents/Guardians may be consulted about the Education Plan for their child.
- The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Education Plan
- A child may be phased gradually into the AS Class through a mutually agreed process between Parents/Guardians and the Management of the school.
- Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the AS Class will be assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class for integration purpose by school management. The placement of every student within the AS Class will be subject to regular review, by school management, staff and where appropriate the professional services external to the school. Decisions will follow whether to continue within the AS Class in St. Mary's Secondary School to integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary or seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student if St Mary's is unable to meet the educational needs of the student. In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff of St. Mary's will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student.

### Code of Conduct

As already indicated above the Parents/Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to St. Mary's Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of this policy. Children with additional educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Student Support Plan. All students, including those with additional educational needs, are subject to the school Code of Conduct/Discipline and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management of the school. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the AS Class or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents/Guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child. The Board of Management of St. Mary's reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are

refused admission to St. Mary's will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Ratified by Board of Management on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.