

**Mount Temple
Comprehensive School
Additional Educational
Needs Policy
November 2023/24**

Introduction

The school mission statement states:

“All of us are different, all of us are equal. We respect this diversity and promote inclusion. We endeavour to create an environment in Mount Temple in which all members of the school community have the right to feel safe and to be protected; and to enjoy learning, teaching, working and extra-curricular activities in the school. The school emphasises tolerance, appreciation of diversity, politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property as basic principles of behaviour.”

Mount Temple School welcomes and provides an inclusive environment for persons with Additional Educational Needs (AEN). As per the ‘Persons with Special Needs Act 2004’ the school recognises that the ‘education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment’. Mount Temple seeks to ensure all students’ participation in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable, to access and benefit from its education and activities to the fullest extent possible.

Rationale for developing this Policy

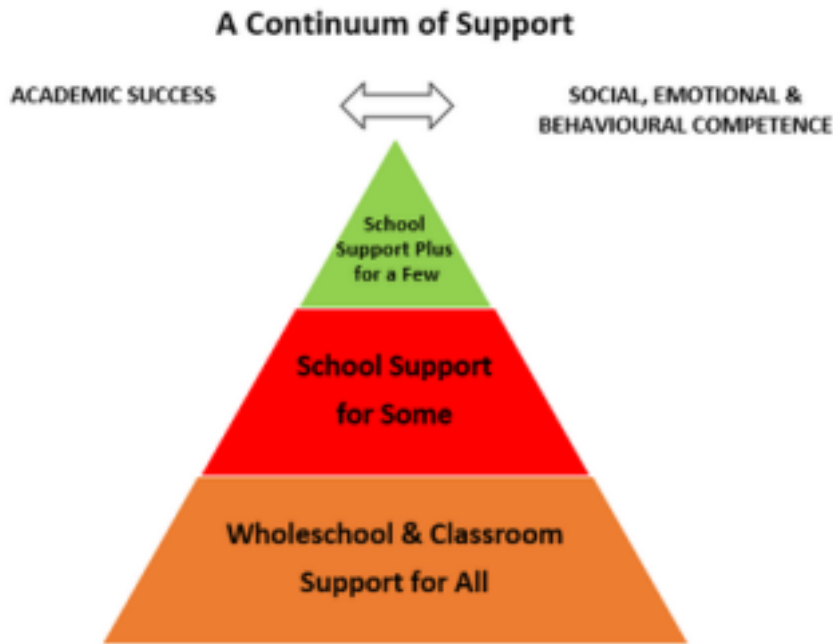
The rationale for this policy is to provide a clear and structured framework for AEN provision within Mount Temple. This policy in line with Circular 0014/2017 will help to ensure that all the resources and supports available to the school will be utilised to their optimum by the whole school community, pupils, parents/guardians and teachers. This policy will comply with current legislation and provide an inclusive education for all pupils in this school. (See Appendix 1)

The School’s AEN policy is based on the Continuum of Support Model which focuses on including all students in the process of learning and development. This model recognises that Additional Educational Needs occur along a continuum, it encompasses a framework of assessment and intervention comprised of three distinct school based processes:

“Support for ALL is a process of prevention, effective mainstream teaching and early identification. These systems are available to all students and effectively meet the needs of most students.

School Support (for Some) is an assessment and intervention process which is directed to some students, or groups of students who require some additional input.

School Support Plus (for a Few) is generally characterised by more intensive and individualised support. This level of intervention is for students with complex and/or enduring needs and relatively few students will need this level of support.”



Definition of Additional Educational Needs. (A.E.N)

" "special educational needs" means, in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly;"

Ref.: Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, Section 1 'Interpretation' available at:
<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/section/1/enacted/en/html#sec1>. Accessed 5th December 2023.

Those with such needs could be:

Students who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children in their class group.

Students with sensory or physical disability that hinders their use of everyday educational facilities.

Students with specific learning difficulty/Dyslexia.

Students with emotional or behavioural difficulties that may be short or long term.

Students with emotional trauma.

Students with Speech and Language disorders.

Students who are Neurodivergent/ASD

Students who fall behind the general level of progress of the class for other reasons e.g. through illness.

Students from the Travelling Community.
Students whose first language is not English.
Some pupils may fall into more than one of the above categories.

Aims of this Policy

Meet the needs of all students.
Provide a framework for a whole school approach to teaching and learning for pupils with additional educational needs.
Provide effective learning for all by implementing a preventative, early intervention approach.
Develop cohesive and inclusive practices which help us to embrace differences within the student population.
Develop and hone inclusive teaching strategies within the classroom, such as differentiation, team teaching, and teaching support, to enable pupils with disabilities to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.
Facilitate a team approach (Subject teachers, A.E.N year coordinators, SET/AEN teachers, special needs assistants, counsellors, year heads, chaplain, senior management), for all staff involved in A.E.N provision in the school.
Provide a framework for frequent dialogue to encourage the involvement of parents/guardians and students with additional needs, as well as other professionals and agencies involved with students.

Objectives

Support the personal, social and emotional development of all students with additional educational needs.
Identify and meet those needs through liaison with professionals and parents/guardians, screening, assessment and observation.
Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in students.
Develop a graduated approach of action and intervention
Disseminate information about students with additional educational needs, with due regard to confidentiality.

Identification

The school will establish the child's requirements and learning needs based on all available information, including professional reports, primary school reports and passports and school visits, home contact, previous support, AENCO advice, teacher referral and professional judgement. Screening first year intake to identify strengths and needs. Monitoring of student progress (across the age range).

Organisation of Class Groupings

Class Groupings: The majority of classes in Junior and Senior Cycle are of mixed ability. From second year there is generally a banding of Irish and Maths classes. In Senior Cycle mixed ability also exists for optional subjects and English, Irish and Maths are streamed. The school runs the L2LP and LCA programmes where required.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mainstream Teacher (DES Circular 14/2017)

Be aware of the School AEN policy and procedures for dealing with students with AEN, and ensure all students' needs are met.

Seek advice from the AEN Department regarding students with AEN.

Participate in CPL in the area of AEN.

Support/encourage independence in the student.

Differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students.

Work as a team teacher as required for the needs of students.

Create a positive and inclusive classroom environment for all students.

Create opportunities for success.

Use assessment for learning.

Establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.

Assess/monitor progress.

Consider the needs of students with AEN in all aspects of classroom planning.

Identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress, application, communication, behaviour, or interaction with other students).

Complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, etc. as required by the AEN team.

Contribute to group or individual planning and review.

Implement and contribute to the development of individualised and specialist

programmes and strategies.

Direct the work of the ANAs in the classroom.

Inform parents/guardians of the progress of students through the parent/guardian-teacher meeting and school reports.

Special Education Teachers (DES Circular 14/2017)

Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention.

Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching

methodologies best suited to a student.

Providing direct teaching to a student with AEN either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the second level curriculum.

Provide team teaching/co-operative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student. Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate.

Collecting and analysing school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance, behavioural records and information from subject teachers

Collaborating with Year Heads to provide appropriate support to identified students.

Planning, implementing and reviewing individual and/or group interventions. Seeking external professional advice, as needed.

To advise ANA's around the care needs of relevant students.

Additional Needs Assistants

Provide care assistance to named students who have additional educational needs. Like all Mount Temple staff they make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.

Be made aware of the support plans devised by the Additional Needs Support Team and the Student Support Team and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.

Recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.

Assisting/escorting students on school trips.

Assisting with house examinations, Mock Exam Special Centres (if appropriate).

Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.

Engagement with parents of students with AEN as required and directed by school management.

Other appropriate duties may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.

The ANA may be re-assigned by the ANA co-ordinator to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.

To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly

confidential.

Parents/Guardians

Mount Temple at all times recognises the parent/guardian as the primary educator of the child. The parents/guardians of a child with AEN can provide valuable information in relation to their child's learning difficulties and learning

preferences. The AEN team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with AEN with the acceptance of a place in the school. The quality of a child's experience in making the transition to post-primary education can determine how they will settle in school. Parents/Guardians can provide valuable support to a child with AEN while the child is making the transition. Mount Temple provides support to parents/guardians by:

Liaising with parents prior to transfer from Primary

Encouraging parents to contact the AEN co-ordinator.

Hosting an AEN parents information evening prior to entry.

The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child.

The school journal is used for home-school communication, and parent-teacher meetings are held once a year.

Parents receive a written school report at Christmas and Summer

The AEN co-ordinator and special educational teachers are available to meet parents on request.

Collaborating with parents in devising and reviewing Support plans and updated targets.

Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/difficulties they observe in their child's learning as they progress through the school.

Parents can support the work of the school by ensuring regular attendance

Students

Students have a responsibility to participate in setting and achieving targets.

They must strive to improve and take ownership of their learning. Good class behaviour and study habits will maximise achievement.

AEN Co-ordinator

Coordinates resource hours, timetable, programmes, facilities and resources. The AEN department will make applications to the NCSE for assistive technology based on psychological and OT recommendations. Where we deem a student needs assistive technology support, we may recommend that parents purchase the equipment to be used in class and at home with the caveat that the student may not always be granted the use of this technology in state exams.

Assesses pupils when a referral is made

Coordinate/devise a school AEN calendar.

Create and maintain a school register of students with AEN.

Communicate the needs of students to teachers.

Assist in the identification of students with AEN .

Ensure that support plans are in place for students with AEN.

Advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.

Assist the Principal in the allocation of resources.

Process applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Exams (RACE).

Provide RACE of in-house exams where possible given the school's

resources available.

Liaise with outside professionals. The AEN department links with various agencies

such as NEPS, CAMHs, Jigsaw, Pieta House and any other that is necessary for the needs of the students.

Meet with parents in order to plan and to review interventions.

Assist in coordinating the administration of standardised assessments.

Ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents/guardians, etc.

Be a member of the Student Support Team

Advise and collaborate with ANAs around the care needs of relevant students.

Year Head

Support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute significantly to the work of the AEN team.

Facilitate the inclusion of any individual student with AEN by monitoring the student's progress within the year group

Encourage an awareness of additional educational needs from the students including a respect for students with AEN.

Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate.

Collaborating with the AEN team to provide appropriate support to identified students.

Seeking external professional advice, as needed.

Advise ANAs around the care needs of relevant students (i.e. students with non-academic/medical needs such as diabetes).

Guidance Counsellor

To work with the other members of the AEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with AEN and their inclusion in the school.

Counselling in personal, educational and career development.

Participating in a number of assessments including the CAT 4 on entry & again in Transition Year

Providing career information.

Presenting at the Options Information Evening for students and parents/guardians of students progressing to Senior Cycle.

Consulting with parents/guardians and staff.

Consulting with community organisations.

Providing vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience.

Working closely with Year Heads and the AEN team to identify students requiring support and to plan appropriate supports and interventions for these students

To be a member of the Student Support Team

Advising students and parents on subject choice and subject load.

To liaise with students, parents and the AEN team in relation DARE/HEAR

The Principal

The Principal has the overall responsibility for the operation of services for students with additional educational needs.

Board of Management

The Board has the responsibility, implementation and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of students with additional educational needs.

Provisions for Students with emerging needs.

For students with emerging needs, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT4, informal observation, parental/guardian concern). Teachers are asked to complete a referral form for students whom they have a concern about that focuses on the student's behaviour, academic performance, homework etc. Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Where appropriate, relevant information from professional reports is shared with school staff most notably through the AEN spreadsheet and in some cases student support plans are devised in collaboration with parents, students and staff.

Models of AEN provision

In assessing and deciding which students need to be in receipt of supplementary teaching and which students may benefit from support within the mainstream context the following options are considered:

- Curricular differentiation
- Team teaching/Co-operative Teaching.
- In-class support/differentiation.
- Inclusion of ANA in specific classes.
- Small group withdrawal.
- Individual withdrawal.
- Organisational skills.
- Social Skills.
- Emotional Support

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. The decision on withdrawal of students versus co-teaching is based on the nature and extent of the needs and levels of the students. The duration of provision is varied and is reviewed throughout the intervention. There are cases where support is needed on a short-term basis, after which the student is in a position to recommence with the regular curriculum. The aim is to promote student independence where

possible. All decisions in this regard are discussed with the parents/guardians, class teachers, the student, principal and guidance counsellor.

Exemptions from Irish and Foreign Languages

Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted. Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application.

Where possible, withdrawal for Additional Education provision is arranged for AEN students who do not study Irish, during Irish class. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability and completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2007) and with parental/guardian consent.

A revised circular was introduced by DES in September 2019 – Circular 0053/2019 sets out the exceptional circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting a student an exemption from the study of Irish. A parent/guardian on behalf of the student, must make a formal application to the school for an exemption from the study of Irish. Applications for Irish exemptions on the grounds of AEN are processed by the AEN co-ordinator and signed by the Principal.

Success Criteria

Whole school involvement
Provision of intensive early intervention
Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
Review of set targets

Monitoring Procedures

AEN Department Meetings
Student Support Team Meetings
Communicating with parents and students regarding set targets

Review

The policy will be reviewed after two years

Glossary

A.E.N : Additional Educational Need

SET Teacher : Special Education Teacher

CPL : Continuous Professional Learning

ANA : Additional Needs Assistant

OT : Occupational Therapist

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Services

NCSE : National Council for Special Education

AENCO : Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator

CAMHS : Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service

LCA : Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

L2LP : Level 2 Learning Programme

ASD : Autism Spectrum Disorder

CAT4 : Cognitive Abilities Test 4

DARE : Disability Access Route to Education

HEAR : Higher Education Access Route

Appendix 1

Legal Framework that Mount Temple sets out to provide education for all its students, with reference to legislation regarding students with AEN as listed below:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003) ● The Equality Act (2004) ● The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

DES Circular Letters

- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS)
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Services (SESS) ● New Junior Cycle Framework

Circular 0030/2014

Circular to the Management Authorities of Primary Schools, Special Schools, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Educational Training Boards The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme to support teachers in meeting the care needs of some children with special educational needs, arising from a disability.

Circular 0075/2022

Commencement of Education (Provision in respect of Children Special Educational Needs) Act 2022

Commencement of the remaining sections of the Education (Admission to schools) Act 2018

Additional Section in the Admissions policy