



Deansrath Community College

AEN and Inclusion Policy 2023

Ratified by the Board of Management: 25 April 2023

Deansrath Community College is a Co-educational Community College under the trusteeship of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB.

The terms of this Additional Educational Needs Policy to include Inclusion and Diversity are informed by the Mission Statement of the College;

Our **Mission Statement** strives

to create a safe learning environment within the community which acknowledges diversity, fosters mutual respect, celebrates achievement, recognises the needs of the individual and challenges all to meet their full potential.

Inherent in this is an understanding that individual needs and learning differences should not restrict a student from reaching their full potential. We recognise the dignity of each student in our school community and we aim to promote a sense of self-esteem and achievement through both academic and non-academic experience.

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and this is reflected in our whole-school approach to supporting students with individual needs. Our policy also aims to enable students whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community.

For the purpose of these Guidelines, the one that is used is the definition of Special Educational Needs given in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004).

In this act, the term “Special Educational Needs” is defined as;

A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of;

An enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition...

(Government of Ireland, 2004b, Section 1)

‘Inclusion of Students with Special Education Needs’

Post Primary Guidelines (2007)

School Description and Aims with regard to AEN

Deansrath Community College offers second level education to children from the catchment area, as outlined in our Admissions Policy. The College is managed by a Board of Management operating under Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB. It operates within the regulations and guidelines as set down by the Department of Education and Science. The College has an active Parents' Council, Student Council and a Prefect System.

Deansrath Community College aims to provide the best possible environment in order to cater for the educational, social, and cultural values and traditions of all students. We make every effort to ensure the uniqueness and dignity of each student is respected and responded to.

Working together as the School Community, the Board of Management, parents, staff and students aim to provide an environment which allows each student to develop intellectually, physically and socially to enable them to reach their full potential and to fulfil their role in society.

Deansrath Community College welcomes students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and in line with the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 recognises "the need to provide education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment". It endeavours to ensure that these students are free to participate in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable. The College accepts that no student should be bullied or out for unfair treatment as a consequence of their disability. Proactive steps are taken to ensure that the College provides an inclusive environment that is non-judgemental and supportive.

Rationale for forming our Additional Educational Needs School Plan

This policy document seeks to outline the form and procedure that additional educational support for students with Additional Educational needs (AEN) takes in the college and the philosophy which underpins it. It is intended to provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our AEN procedures and practices and outlines the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.

It is written in the context of the Education Act 1998, and takes account of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Act (EPSEN) published in 2004. Our AEN Policy is also informed by DES and NCSE circulars, guidelines and publications on best practices in AEN.

Particular attention is given to Circular 0014/2017 (New Model of Allocation) and supporting guidelines on the new model which includes English As an Additional Language (EAL)

While EAL falls under our AEN policy in Deansrath Community College, EAL has its own comprehensive subject plan, detailing aims, objectives, methods, progress tracking and other relevant areas. This is available on Share-Point in an updated format each year. Details of specific targets, resources and schemes are accessible through the EAL subject plan.)

This AEN and Inclusion Policy bases its rationale on the principles laid out in the EPSEN Act which state that:

- The education of people with SEN shall take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.
- People with SEN shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from, appropriate education as do their peers.
- That people with SEN leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

The Department of Education's new model for AEN; '**A Continuum of Support**' has been introduced and is implemented in Deansrath Community College. We ensure that all students have access to support, especially students who have been identified as having Additional Educational Needs.

Current practice within the AEN Department supports the following principles;

Inclusiveness – particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability or other Additional Educational needs.

Equality – with respect to maximum access and participation in the school and its community

Parental Choice – The Board of management of Deansrath Community College recognises the right of parents to send their child to a school of their choice.

Respect for the ***diversity*** of beliefs, languages, traditions and ways of life in society.

Principles and Aims informing our whole-school approach to provision for students with AEN

Resources that are provided to support students with AEN are used to facilitate the development of our inclusive college here in Deansrath Community College.

Supports provided to students with AEN are based on identified needs and are informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.

The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with AEN and EAL.

AEN teaching supports are used to support students with identified AEN, including those students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

Students with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support, and wherever possible, these students are supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.

We establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of students with AEN. All members have access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of students with Additional Educational Needs.

We aim to ensure that students with AEN are identified and in line with the new model of allocation, are provided for and supported in a fair and equitable way so that their learning potential, dignity and self-worth is developed and respected.

We aim to ensure that students with individual needs are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way by all members of staff.

We aim to ensure high standards are maintained for students with AEN and provide them with appropriate support, guidance and encouragement to achieve their full potential.

Admissions Policy and Students with Additional Educational Needs

- (a) In line with Deansrath Community College's Admission Policy, students with Additional Educational needs are welcome and will be supported through the Continuum of Support. We aim to achieve this through accepting the aims and principles outlined in "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs", Post Primary Guidelines (2007) as set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).
- (b) The college will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or additional educational needs so that these students are free to participate in the life of the college in so far as is reasonably practicable.
- (c) Deansrath Community College recognises the right of parents to have a school of their choice for their children, and welcomes applications from students with additional educational needs.
- (d) The Board of Management must be made aware of any additional educational needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed where possible.
- (e) Parents are invited to outline the details of a child's additional educational need/special need on the Application form which is filled out by parents in October of the year prior to entry into first year. However, parents are welcome to consult with the college at any time before the formal enrolment procedures commence.
- (f) The Principal and AEN co-ordinator, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation will then assess (if)/how the needs of the student can be adequately met.
- (g) The AEN co-ordinator/Principal may request a meeting with the parents of the student to discuss the application and the student's needs. The parents/guardian of the student may also meet with the AEN co-ordinator to discuss the student's educational or other needs.

Categories of Additional Educational Needs

In the context of Deansrath Community College, students with AEN are those cohort of students whose needs are not met by standard mainstream provision. Some of these students may present with co-existing learning needs. These needs may include, but are not restricted to the following;

- *Physical Disability*
- *Hearing Impairment*
- *Visual Impairment*
- *Emotional Disturbance*
- *Severe Emotional Disturbance*
- *Borderline Mild General Learning Disability*
- *Mild General learning Disability*
- *Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders*
- *Specific learning Disability (eg. Dyslexia)*
- *Assessed Syndrome*
- *Specific Speech and Language Disorder*
- *Exceptionally Able Students*
- *Multiple Disabilities*
- *Students whose first language is not English*
- *Students whose attainment and progress are hindered due to adverse circumstances.*

Roles, Responsibilities and Key Personnel

- Board of Management
- Principal and Deputy Principal
- AEN co-ordinator/SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Class Teacher
- Resource Teachers
- SNAs
- Guidance Counsellor
- School Counsellor and Care Team
- Year Head and Class Tutor
- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Outside Supporting Agencies

Board of Management

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on AEN provision. The Board of Management oversees and directs the development, implementation and school review of school policy on AEN. The BOM also ensures that adequate classroom accommodation, effective teaching resources and secure space and facility for the storage of records in respect of students with AEN are provided for.

The Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the College's Policies.

The Principal's role includes the following;

- Responsibility for the development of the College's policy and procedures relating to the inclusion of students with additional educational needs and EAL.
- Ensure adequate timetabling of hours for AEN and EAL support.

- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established and implemented to facilitate the effective involvement of teachers, SNAs, parents, students, outside agencies and external professionals.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of students with AEN and ensure that all school staff are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in the realm of AEN.
- Ensure effective engagement with feeder schools to support the transition of students with AEN and EAL.

AEN/SENCO co-ordinator

- The AEN co-ordinator communicates with the Principal in relation to AEN matters and supports the AEN Team and subject teachers.
- She chairs the weekly AEN meeting to ensure effective communication and support for students with additional needs
- She collaborates with the Principal and Deputy Principal in creating timetables for additional support for students with AEN.
- She monitors AEN provision in the school, identifying students with AEN and providing support and adequate provision.
- She co-ordinates the standardised testing, including the selection and the administration of such assessment instruments, interpretation of assessment results, scoring and feedback.
- She liaises with external agencies and professional practitioners about the provision and assessment for students with AEN.
- She coordinates the completion of RACE applications and the setting up of Special Centres for examinations.
- She makes application for Irish exemptions (where appropriate) in consultation with parents/guardian, Irish teacher and student. This exemption, if granted is then signed by the Principal.
- She liaises with feeder Primary schools to ensure all relevant information is received in relation to incoming first year students with AEN. This information is then communicated to all subject teachers.
- She ensures all relevant information with regard to AEN is transferred to staff and addresses the issue of AEN at staff meetings and relevant other meetings.

Subject Teachers

- Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all students in their classes and have a key role in bringing about the successful inclusion of students with AEN and for their educational progress in mainstream classes. The academic progress of students in the College rests in the first instance with the mainstream teacher.

- Subject teachers will make themselves fully aware of the AEN students in their classes and will implement differentiated approaches to teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that the skills of all students, including students with AEN and EAL are developed.
- Subject teachers will create a positive learning environment within the classroom that accommodates and takes account of learning and physical difficulties.
- Subject teachers will liaise with the SNA, where relevant in relation to the needs of students with AEN in order to plan effectively.
- Subject teachers will be aware of the college's policy and procedures for working with students with AEN and will take responsibility for continuous professional development where relevant.
- Subject teachers will inform themselves of attainment levels and student profiles of students in their classes to inform their planning for students with AEN.
- The subject teacher also plays an important role in the early identification of students with AEN and is alert to the possibility of learning needs. This concern is then brought to the Principal or AEN coordinator.

AEN/Resource Teacher

The Resource Teacher will;

- Support and facilitate the learning needs of students with AEN by familiarising themselves with a range of teaching methodologies, approaches and resources planned to meet the learning needs of students assigned to them.
- Liaise with class teachers to assist in the implementation of whole school strategies aimed at intervention.
- Liaise with class teachers and AEN coordinator to identify priority learning goals for each student in receipt of School support and to offer advice and support across the curriculum.
- Communicate with parents regarding any concerns about their child and to provide regular updates and feedback regarding their progress.
- Discuss the needs and progress of students on their caseload at planned meetings.
- Be responsible for the planning, implementation and review of all learning intentions for AEN students assigned to them.

Special Needs Assistants

- The duties of the SNA carried out according to the Guidelines for Special needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills, the SNA will meet the care needs of the AEN students to which they have been assigned in accordance with Circular 30/2014.
- Special Needs Assistants have responsibility for the care and well-being of the student in a manner that values, respects and supports the student while also promoting independence and empowerment.
- Special Needs Assistants will be involved in training and will attend meetings relevant to their role.

- Special Needs Assistants will also carry out duties as assigned by the Principal/Deputy Principal and SENCO in accordance with the specified guidelines.
- The role of the Special Needs Assistant is pivotal and very important in the College and we recognise the enormous and most valuable contribution our SNAs make to the college.

Guidance Counsellor

- The Guidance Counsellor works closely with the AEN Personnel in facilitating the education of students with AEN and their inclusion in the College.
- The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the AEN coordinator in the administration of the CAT4 which is administered to incoming first year students in February of each year. She also liaises with the AEN coordinator in relation to DARE, HEAR and RACE applications to ensure appropriate accommodations are in place for State Examinations and in the CAO process.

The Guidance Counsellor also undertakes work in the following areas;

- Counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Provides career information, including consultation with parents and staff
- Provides vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience.
- Works closely with Year Heads and AEN coordinator to identify students requiring support.
- Advises students and parents on subject choices particularly on progression to Senior Cycle.
- Facilitates individual appointments and advises on progression routes for all students.

School Counsellor and Care Team

- The School Counsellor and The Care Team liaise with the AEN coordinator in relation to AEN students when necessary. The School Counsellor works closely with students who have been referred to her based on referral and personal need. Students that come to the attention of The Care Team may have AEN and suitable accommodations and supports are put in place where relevant.
- The Home School Liaison Person regularly links in with the AEN coordinator regarding student concerns and this sometimes involves home visits and further referral to outside professionals if required.

Parents

- Collaboration, parental involvement and sharing of relevant information between home and school is essential and critical for the continued success of all aspects of school life.

- Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.
- A meeting of the First Year Head and parents/guardians of all incoming first year students takes place in May/June each year. Parents are invited to submit all relevant information regarding their child's educational welfare.
- Parents are invited to contact the AEN Department throughout the year, in addition to meeting the AEN teachers at Parent/Teacher meetings to discuss their child's progress.
- Parents are encouraged to actively communicate with the College if they observe any learning difficulties. This is often relayed through the Year Head or Academic Year Monitor and subsequently communicated to the AEN coordinator.
- Parents are invited to share any information, reports, or reports pending from health professionals/practitioners with the AEN coordinator and The AEN Department in order to put appropriate supports in place to support their learning needs.

Students

- The involvement of students in the direction of their learning and development is an important principle that underpins effective AEN provision.
- Students are encouraged to develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.
- Students are encouraged to contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Students are encouraged to achieve at their potential.

Outside Agencies

Deansrath Community college has fostered and maintained positive links with a significant number of outside agencies that support our students.

These include;

- *DDLETB Psychological Support Services (PSS)*
- *Special Education Support Services (SESS)*
- *National Council for Special Education (NCSE)*
- *State Examinations commission (SEC)*
- *National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)*
- *HSE Social Work Department*

- *Enable Ireland*
- *Visiting Teacher Service for Hearing Impaired*
- *Visiting Teacher Service for Visually Impaired*
- *Public and Private Services include Psychologists, Clinical psychologists, Occupational Therapists*
- *Speech and Language therapists and Medical practitioners*

Identifying Students with Individual Needs and Learning Differences

Access to Support

The new model of allocating teaching resources to students (September 2017) is fully embedded at Deansrath Community College. Individual students are no longer granted specific hours from the NCSE based on their diagnosis. Once students' needs have been identified, additional educational needs teachers are deployed to address these needs as required. Decisions on the support offered to students is based on a number of criteria;

- Information gathered from Primary Schools including STEN scores
- Information gathered from parents
- Information gathered from a psychological assessment (if presented)
- Formal and informal school assessment - CAT4, DATS, Standardised Tests, WRAT5
- Observation by Teachers and subsequent referrals
- Student self-referral
- Communication with outside agencies

Methods and Processes of Identifying students with Individual Needs and Learning Differences

Parents begin the enrolment process in October and are encouraged to make the College aware of any physical/learning/social or emotional difficulties their child may have. Parents are also invited to submit/provide any documentation in relation to their child's AEN.

The SENCO and/or Principal may meet with parents in order to ensure that adequate resources and provision can be accessed by the student.

It is a consideration and to be understood that the ability of the College to respond to the educational needs of any student applying for admission is dependent on the Department of Education and Skills providing the appropriate facilities and resources to enable the College to meet those needs and in the best welfare of the student. It may therefore be necessary for The Board of Management to defer enrolment of a student.

The SENCO contacts feeder schools in advance of the February Incoming First Year Assessments in order to facilitate any students with AEN on Assessment day.

All First Year students are screened using the CAT4 which is administered by the Guidance Counsellor. These results are collated and are used as part of the system used to identify students in need of support. These results are also available to teachers who are encouraged to refer to them in order to differentiate lesson plans in their classes.

Standardised Tests – The English Access Test and The Maths Access Test is administered to First Year Students in the first week of the Autumn term. Students achieving below the 10th percentile are those students identified as requiring Resource/Learning Support.

In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, students may have specific needs in other areas as oral language, social and emotional difficulties, behavioural difficulties. These students are identified through information from Feeder schools, parents or outside agencies and provision will also be made for these students through the AEN Department.

Students with AEN transferring from another post-primary school are expected to present with their educational passport and ensure that all information is passed to the SENCO.

In the whole-school context, students are also identified through;

Observations by mainstream subject teachers

Consultation with parents/student

Consultation and referral by Year Head/Academic Year Monitor, Guidance Counsellor, School Counsellor.

Consultation with Behaviour For Learning personnel/Behavioural record if appropriate

Review of in-house exams and reports.

It can also emerge that students presenting with emotional/social difficulties be referred to a relevant outside agency or practitioner.

All of our operations are guided by The New Model of Allocation.

Allocation of NCSE Resources and Strategies Employed

In accordance with the model of allocation for resource hours, NCSE resource hours are directed and deployed to address the identified needs of students, those with the highest level of need accessing the greatest level of support.

Outcomes of our screening and assessment are interpreted and the most appropriate form of support and intervention is provided in consultation with parents, subject teachers, SNAs and relevant outside agencies.

Models of Provision and Approaches to Learning

Deansrath Community College aspires to provide for students with AEN in an inclusive setting within the mainstream class setting, supported by an SNA, where allocated.

- Our **Transition Programme** from Primary School into Secondary School for incoming first year students into Deansrath Community College runs for the first week of the Autumn term when the first term commences.

This programme, Belonging + fosters a climate of support that is flexible and allows for creative responses to individual needs. Our transition programme is fully inclusive and strives in this transition period, to treat the admission of all students into our college with sensitivity coupled with a realistic and positive outlook.

- Various Team-Teaching models are employed across most subject areas and is the preferred method of provision in the College. Support for achieving learning outcomes or intentions is provided by the support teacher. Co-teaching – where students with AEN and all students are supported in the main-stream class with a SET supports this also.
- Small group classes are arranged on the basis of similar need profiles as identified through screening and testing and on the capacity to withdraw students at the same time. Small group withdrawals usually occur at times when the students have official exemptions from subjects, most commonly Irish. This organisation is arranged by the SENCO and in full consultation with the Principal, parent and relevant subject teacher.
- Individual support classes are only used where a student requires specialised individual support as identified in their learning profile.

- In addition to literacy and numeracy support, Social Skills, Curriculum Support and Technology support is also given during individual and small group withdrawals where appropriate.
- Subject teachers are encouraged to consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion in their classes such as differentiation and peer mentoring.
- The level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual students as set out in their support plans and are informed by monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level while others may require more intensive supports.
- The SENCO liaises with The Department of Education and Skills and the NCSE to secure and facilitate application for personal equipment, such as laptop computers for eligible students with individual needs and learning differences.
- Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE) is applied for by the SENCO to facilitate eligible students with individual needs and learning differences during State Examinations. Eligibility is based on the criteria as set out by the SEC. Parental permission is always sought at this stage.
- Students with individual needs and learning differences sit house exams in accordance with the College procedures. Students who have officially been granted RACE for State Examinations will be accommodated similarly where possible and within resource constraints. Other students requiring high levels of support will be accommodated where possible and within resource availability. Subject teachers are encouraged to differentiate for in house examinations for students with AEN.
- Deansrath Community College has a Special Class, established to cater for the Additional Educational Needs of students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Placement in the ASD class is dependant on the stated recommendation in the student's psychological report.

(See Admissions Policy for detailed information)

Tracking, Recording and Review Process

Provision for students with AEN and EAL is enhanced through clear identification processes. Plans of intervention and support to address identified needs, target setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of our integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

Student Support Plans for students with AEN are developed by SET and subject teachers and are reviewed regularly.

Specific Care Plans are developed for students accessing SNA support and are reviewed regularly in consultation with parents, SNA, teachers and SENCO. Interventions are employed as necessary to track the student's pathway through the Continuum of Support. This facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to students.

Feedback and Progress Reports are given to parents regularly and also at planned meetings.

Data Protection and Information Sharing

- All educational and psychological assessments along with other relevant supporting documentation is stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCOs office. This documentation is made available to all teachers on request. Pertinent information is inputted on the student's profile on VSware to be accessed by all subject teachers.
- An AEN Register is developed and contains a comprehensive listing of students with AEN in the College. This Register is updated regularly and can be accessed on the College website through the Staff-Area of Share Point. Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this listing and to be fully aware of students with AEN in their classes.
- Assessment Results are made available through Share Point for all teachers.
- CAT4 profiles of students are filed and stored by the Guidance Counsellor and the SENCO and are made available to all teachers if requested. Student learning profiles are disseminated to all staff at a staff meeting at the onset of each academic year.
- Any new information in relation to any student with AEN is communicated regularly to all staff through the College email, informally and at planned meetings.
- Staff can communicate with any member of the AEN Department at any time during the term and every effort is made to address any issues of concern.
- The AEN Department meets at a scheduled time each week and items in relation to AEN are discussed.

Health and Safety Issues, Supervision and Child Protection

At Deansrath Community College, every staff member is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of all and

particularly for students with AEN. When a place is offered to a student with AEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the student is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members are informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

- Where students receive support on an individual basis, the AEN teacher should ensure that this teaching takes place in a classroom setting or other space that is clearly visible through a glass door or panel.
- Where a student has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the student from the class if necessary, but only temporarily and in agreement and consultation with the subject teacher.

A strong culture of Continuous Professional Development is fostered in Deansrath Community College and all teachers are encouraged and supported in undertaking new courses and developing new skills. Relevant CPD will be further encouraged to facilitate training and in-career development in the area of AEN as opportunities present and is necessary.

Implementation and Further Development

This AEN and Inclusion Policy 2020 adheres to the terms of other policies in Deansrath Community College. The Principal, Board of Management and the AEN Department are fully aware that this is an area of education that is constantly developing and that we must be prepared to develop also to meet the challenges of providing education to students with Additional Educational Needs.

This AEN and Inclusion Policy was ratified by The Board of management of Deansrath Community College on 25 April 2023.