

# Donabate Community College



## Additional Educational Needs Policy

### *Creating a Diverse and Supportive Learning Environment*

This Whole School Inclusion policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

This Policy was agreed on: 28/05/2024

Signature: Adrian Henchy

(Chairperson to the Board of Management)

Principal: John Doyle

Date for Review: 31/05/2024

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**1. Introduction**

Donabate Community College, established in 2008 under the Patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board, is dedicated to promoting excellence in all aspects of our school. Our mission is to instill the values of respect, hard work, and positive citizenship in our students. With a commitment to providing a comprehensive school experience tailored to each student's needs, Donabate Community College strives to facilitate the realization of each student's full potential.

Aligned with the five ETB core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community, and Respect, Donabate Community College is a state-funded, co-educational, multi-denominational, inclusive, learner-centered, and community-focused institution. Our educational philosophy is rooted in nurturing personal, social, and spiritual development while fostering an environment of mutual respect. We prioritize supporting every student to develop their unique potential, equipping them with confidence and self-esteem to effectively engage with society.

This policy document outlines our approach to providing support for students with additional educational needs, while upholding relevant legal considerations, including the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Act (2000), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Data Protection Act (2018), the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), the Inclusion of Students with Special Education Needs - Post Primary Guidelines (2007), the Exceptionally Able Students Draft Guidelines for Teachers (2007), the SNA Scheme (2014), the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2020), Special Education Teaching Allocation (2019), and the Exemption from the Study of Irish (2022).

### **Commitment to Student Development**

Donabate Community College is dedicated to ensuring a positive and nurturing school climate where all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This commitment is shared by the school's Board of Management, Senior Management, AEN Coordinator, ASD Coordinator, AEN Anchors, Support Teachers, Subject Teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNA), parents, and students.

### **Definition of Students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN)**

Students with additional educational needs are individuals whose participation in and benefit from education may be limited due to enduring physical, sensory, mental health, or learning disabilities, as well as conditions resulting in unique learning styles (EPSEN Act 2004).

## **Definition of Exceptionally Able Students**

Exceptionally able students are those who require enrichment and extension opportunities beyond the general curriculum, catering to their advanced learning needs.

## **2. Access to learning support**

The following criteria guide the provision of learning support at Donabate Community College:

- Students with specific or general learning difficulties.
- Students with physical, visual, or hearing impairments.
- Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), flagged by a Cambridge test score of A1 or A2.
- Students identified through standardized testing.
- Students flagged by teachers for difficulty in one or more subjects.
- Students receiving external support needing additional in-school assistance.
- Students with emotional or behavioral challenges requiring extra support.

Learning support will be tailored to individual students' needs, with ongoing assessment to adjust interventions as necessary.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

*Board of Management:*

- Oversees the development, implementation, and review of the Whole School AEN policy.
- Ensures parents' rights, as mandated by legislation, are respected.

*Senior Management:*

- Holds overall responsibility for meeting the needs of students with additional educational needs.
- Ensures mainstream teachers understand their responsibilities for all students, including those with additional educational needs.
- Prioritizes AEN as a recurring topic in staff meetings.
- Monitors support implementation and student selection for learning support.
- Provides professional development for all staff.

*AEN Coordinator:*

- Manages support for students with additional educational needs throughout their educational journey.
- Develops individualized student support files in collaboration with students, parents, primary schools, AEN team, and external agencies.
- Coordinates information gathering from external assessment reports and standardized test scores.
- Works with stakeholders to create a comprehensive school plan for supporting AEN students.
- Facilitates information exchange with primary schools regarding incoming students' learning needs.
- Guides mainstream teachers in effective inclusion strategies.
- Monitors learning support implementation and student selection.
- Offers advice to mainstream teachers as needed.
- Collaborates with external organizations.
- Engages parents of AEN students and maintains communication.
- Oversees reasonable accommodations for exams.
- Ensures GDPR compliance for data and documentation.

- Manages Irish or modern foreign language exemptions per policy.
- Assess EAL pupils' proficiency in English using assessment materials.
- Inform parents about available supports.

*ASD Coordinator:*

- Holds responsibility for meeting the needs of students in the school's ASD classes.
- Contributes to a school-wide plan for supporting ASD students.
- Gathers learning needs information for students in ASD classes.
- Collaborates with stakeholders for holistic inclusion.
- Provides guidance to mainstream teachers and SNAs.
- Engages parents of ASD students.
- Supports the Junior Cert Level 2 programme (L2LP) and follow on Senior Cycle Programme.
- Manages the ASD centre.

*Special Education Teacher (SET)*

- Collaborates with senior management, AEN and ASD coordinators, and mainstream teachers.
- Offers targeted support classes or in-class assistance.
- Adapts methodologies for students with additional educational needs.
- Communicates with relevant staff about student needs.
- Maintains records of planning and student progress.

- Compiles Student Support Plans (SSP).
- Provides feedback to parents and class teachers.
- Completes both individual & group testing, where required.
- Deliver appropriate language programmes to EAL students.

*EAL Anchor, **where possible.***

- Collaborates with senior management, the AEN coordinator, the ESOL development officer and mainstream teachers.
- Collaborates with the AEN co-ordinator in identifying EAL students who require additional support
- Collates information on identified EAL students & identifies needs-based support classes.
- Devise & deliver appropriate language programmes.
- Record and monitor pupils' progress.

*Learning Support Teacher*

- Collaborates with senior management, AEN and ASD coordinators, the AEN anchor and mainstream teachers.
- Offers targeted support classes or in-class assistance.
- Adapts methodologies for students with additional educational needs.
- Maintains records of planning and student progress.
- Considers Student Support Plans (SSP) while group planning.
- Provides feedback to parents and class teachers.



*Subject Teacher:*

- Holds primary responsibility for student progress.
- Supports the Whole School AEN policy.
- Incorporates needs of students with additional needs into lesson planning.
- Collaborates with AEN and ASD coordinators as needed.
- Adapts curriculum to cater to diverse learning needs.
- Implements & considers Student Support Plans (SSP) within their planning.
- Provides varied teaching methodologies and materials.

*Special Needs Assistant*

- Supports inclusive education for students with additional needs
- Follows teacher's directions during student support
- Maintains student progress records confidentially

*Parents:*

- Encouraged to actively participate in their children's education.
- Invited to contribute to the consultation process for Student Support Plan (SSP) development & review.
- Consulted for Student Support Plan development/review.

*Students:*

- Valued members of the school community.
- Actively participate in the school life of Donabate Community College, engage with staff in the classroom and extra curricular activities. Engage with staff by contributing to Student Support Plans.
- Expected to adhere to college policies and contribute to their learning goals.

#### **4. Procedures**

Identification

- Parents can indicate additional needs during enrolment. The AEN coordinator may contact parents for additional information and/or to complete applications for the Assistive technology Grant or to access the ASD class.
- Standardized tests help identify potential support needs.
- The AEN coordinator collaborates with primary teachers when visiting feeder primary schools. The primary passport & reports are reviewed from feeder primary schools.
- Class teachers can refer students through the Student Support Team (SST) form.
- Winter and Summer exam results reviewed during SST meetings.
- Individual Standardised tests, class standardised tests and class spelling tests throughout 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year may also inform this process.

*Students with Additional Needs:*

- Student Support Plans (SSP) are developed in collaboration with parents, the student and staff.
- Identify priority needs, set goals, and establish timeframes.
- Develop a scheme of work and review progress.

- Maintain support files for each student.

*Students with ASD:*

- Student Support Plans (SSP) in consultation with parents, the student, staff and outside agencies.
- Identify priority needs, set goals, and establish timeframes.
- Develop a scheme of work and regularly review progress.
- Maintain support files for each student.

## **5. Learning Support Model**

Donabate Community College utilizes various models in collaboration with parents, students and staff:

- small group withdrawal
- individual withdrawal
- group withdrawal
- reduced timetable
- team teaching

*Withdrawals:*

- Consultation with teachers and parents guides student withdrawals.
- Some AEN/ASD students may be on reduced timetables.

*Irish Exemptions:*

- Exemptions granted in exceptional cases, as per circular 55/22.
- Allocations based on needs and may vary annually.

*Modern Foreign Language Exemptions:*

- Considered on a case-by-case basis. Principal makes final call based on evidence collected.

*Sharing of Information:*

- AEN register and SSP accessible to all staff through SharePoint.
- Staff briefed on supporting AEN students at the start of each year.
- Parents informed about provisions.
- Weekly meetings among AEN team and Student Support Team.
- Students receive support class timetables.
- Parents can request standardised test scores & Student Support Plan (SSP) targets

*Examinations:*

- SEC applications for reasonable accommodations (RACE) managed by the guidance and AEN teams.
- Consent obtained from parents before applying for RACE.
- Every effort will be made to accommodate AEN students during in-house exams.

*Exceptionally Able Students:*

- Donabate Community College identifies exceptionally able students using a variety of methods such as information passed from their primary schools, entrance exams, DOTs, school assessments, teachers' professional judgements. We also recognise that parents and guardians are paramount to student success and a positive alliance with parents will maximize student social, emotional and academic potential.
- Offer additional in-class and extracurricular supports.
- Encourage participation in external opportunities such as the BT young scientist, Trinity Walton club, Scifest, Maths and Science Olympics, DCU CTYI, IBM Quantum Computing Course, Pierce Debates, Thomas Meagher programme, DCU Early University Entry course for TY, the MiniMed, MiniPharma, MiniPhysio courses run by RCSI, STEM@Universi-TY run by Trinity College. *This list is not prescriptive and may vary from year to year.*
- Promote involvement in various clubs such as science club, chess club, book club, debating club and musical clubs.