

Moyle Park College



Inclusion Policy

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislative Context
3. School Policies
4. Inclusion
5. Key Objectives
6. Supporting Students with Additional Educational Needs
 - 6.1 Model of additional support
 - 6.2 Support for “all”
 - 6.3 Support for “some”
 - 6.4 Support for “few”
7. Guidelines for the Identification and Prioritisation of students for Additional Support
8. Admission to the School
 - 8.1 Admission Statement
9. Wheelchair Access
10. Transition from Primary School to Secondary School
11. The Additional Educational Needs / Resource Department: Roles and Responsibilities
 - 11.1: The role of the Board of Management
 - 11.2: The role of the Principal
 - 11.3: The role of the Inclusion co-ordinator
 - 11.4: The role of the Special Education teacher
 - 11.5: The role of the Subject Teacher
 - 11.6: The role of the Special Needs Assistant
12. The Curriculum
 - 12.1 Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations
 - 12.2 Irish Exemptions
 - 12.3 Assistive Technology
13. External Agencies
 - 13.1: National Education Psychological Services
 - 13.2: Other External Agencies
14. Individualised Planning
15. Evaluation
16. Parents/Guardians: Communication and Participation
17. Students: Communication and Participation
18. Grievance Procedure
19. Additional Resources
20. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Moyle Park College is a Catholic voluntary secondary school established in Clondalkin by the Marist Brothers in 1957. ‘Respice Finem’ conveys the school’s philosophy of setting objectives and ideals and working towards them. The management and teaching staff of Moyle Park College, in cooperation with parents/guardians, are committed to the provision of a broadly based education. The college is dedicated to achieving a balance between the academic, social, cultural and spiritual components of education within the tradition established by St. Marcellin Champagnant, founder of the Marist Brothers.

This policy document aims to outline the structure of Additional Education Needs (AEN) for students with additional educational needs or additional care needs in Moyle Park College and the philosophy which underpins it. This is written in the context of the *Education Act* (1998), in particular sections 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 21, and 33 and the *Equal Status Act* (2000). It also takes into account the *Education for Persons with Special Needs Act – EPSON* (2004) and the *Persons with Disabilities Act* (2005). It also takes into consideration the *General Allocation Model* (2018) as set out by the National Council For Special Education (NCSE).

We base our model on the Continuum of Support Framework: “*A continuum of support framework recognises that students’ care needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified care needs*” (DES, 2017). Using this framework helps to ensure that support is incremental, moving from whole-school support to more targeted support to more intensive support, as required. This model is premised on the principle that students with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.” (*School Inclusion Model Pilot Frontloaded Allocation of Special Needs Assistant Support for Students in Primary and Post Primary Mainstream Classes* (2020) p.4.)

Legislative Context

This policy is drafted in the context of specific provisions and definitions regarding children with additional educational needs and the statutory requirements placed on the school and the Board of Management by the following acts:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2004
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN Act) 2004
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998, and 2003)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015
- NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2017
- Circular 0014/2017
- Circular 0015/2017
- “Exceptionally Able Students- Draft Guidelines for Teachers” (NCCA 2007)
- Exemption from the Study of Irish – Revising Circular 0053/2019 (Circular No 0055/2022)
- Education Provision in respect of Children with Special Educational Needs Act 2022 along with the commencement of the remaining sections of the Education Act 2018.
- Circulars 0075/2022 - New measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision.

2. School Policies

This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement, Health and Safety Policy, Whole School Guidance Plan, Critical Incident Policy, Administration of Medication Policy and any other relevant policy.

3. Inclusion

It is the policy of the school that the term “all students” in the mission statement includes students with additional educational needs and/or additional needs. The principal aim of this policy document is to enable these students to access, participate in and benefit from the education normally provided in the school, to the fullest extent possible and to do so alongside students who do not have such difficulties, unless the nature or degree of these needs of the student is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

- the best interests of the student as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under the EPSEN Act (2004)
- the effective provision of education for students with whom the student is to be educated.

Additional Educational Needs (AEN) are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 as, “a restriction in the capacity of the students with additional educational needs: students whose educational difficulties or additional care needs prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education normally provided for students of the same age”. See *School Inclusion Model Pilot Front Loaded Allocation of Special Needs Assistant Support for Students in Primary and Post Primary Mainstream Classes* (2020) p.4:

“Additional care needs are needs that represent a significant barrier to students’ ability to learn and participate in the school environment. They are described as additional care needs because they arise to the extent that some other or more intensive extra support, over and above what teachers can reasonably be expected to meet, is essential to include students with additional care needs and to provide better outcomes for them. In this document the term ‘care needs’ is used in its broadest sense to include students who may require therapy support, ISL support, Braille support and so on. It should not be taken to refer only to those who require personal or nursing care”.

5 Key Objectives

"Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level" (Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, 2017)

The general educational objectives for students with additional educational needs are the same as for all students. Key objectives are functional literacy and numeracy and social skills training. The main aim is to help each pupil reach their full potential according to their capabilities. To create a happy, healthy and inclusive environment in which all students may develop their own personal gifts and interests and be valued for who they are. To enable pupils to participate in a broad and balanced curriculum so that they can reach their full potential.

6. Supporting Students with Additional Educational Needs

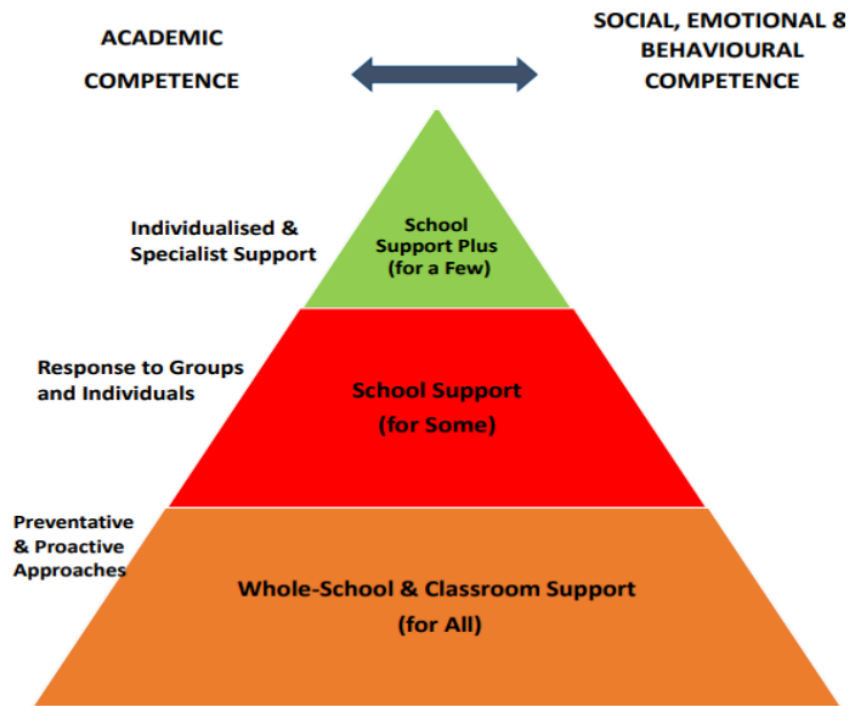
Revised Additional Education Teaching Allocation The Department of Education provides additional education teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles. This allocation is being made to allow schools to provide additional education teaching support for all students who require such support in their schools. The school will deploy resources based on each students' individual learning needs without the requirement for a diagnosis of a disability. Additional education teaching supports provided to schools should be used solely for the support of students with identified additional educational needs, including those students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). Students with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and, whenever possible, these students should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support. The decision of how teaching resources are distributed within the school is decided on by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the AEN team.

6.1 Model of Additional Education Teaching Support

Additional Education Teaching Support in Moyle Park College is organised in line with the NEPS 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools' (DES, 2007) model. According to this model, support is organised at three different levels:

- Support for ALL students,
- School Support (for some students)
- School Support Plus (for a few students)

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs. This framework recognises that additional educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress. *School Inclusion Model Pilot Frontloaded Allocation of Special Needs Assistant Support for Students in Primary and Post Primary Mainstream Classes (2020) p.4.*



A Continuum of Support

6.2 Support for All Students

This is a whole-school level of support available to every student. Intervention at the whole school level is intended to be proactive. It aims to support and promote positive student behaviour and learning for all. Supports at this level in Moyle Park College include:

Literacy Support and Interventions

1. Access for all first-year students to Literacy, Numeracy and Transition & Transfer programmes – promoting reading & writing, practical mathematical operations and coping skills.
2. Drop Everything & Read, & Literacy promotion events such as Word of the Week, and Spelling Bees.
3. Paired reading programmes.
4. PPAD-E – (Post Primary Assessment and Diagnosis – English) with all first years at the beginning of the school year. This test has been developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in collaboration with the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and it has been recently standardised with First Years in Ireland.

Numeracy Support and Interventions

1. Access for all first year students to numeracy programmes – promoting practical mathematical operations.
2. Pre and post screening of numeracy skills for all first year students at the start and end of first year.
3. Numeracy Promotions such as the Maths Club and Paired Maths.

Curricular Support and Interventions

1. Differentiated teaching techniques and learning activities – School wide promotion of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and active teaching methodologies.
2. Staff CPD throughout the year.
3. Co-teaching – in class support allocated to classes to support all students in that subject where necessary.
4. Assessment and monitoring of student progress at Christmas and Summer exams.
5. Tracking exams for 2nd and 5th year students in October and March.
6. Communication and collaboration with teaching staff regarding concerns about students' behaviour and learning.
7. Collection and analysis of school wide screening data and transfer information, attendance and behavioural records by the AEN co-ordinator.
8. Peer academic support at lunchtime in The Learning Hubs that are facilitated by the Teaching & Learning Coordinator.

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Support and Interventions

1. Access for all first year students to “Transition and Transfer” programme
2. Lunchtime Clubs.
3. School wide system of promoting and reinforcing positive behaviour, e.g., plus points, attendance drives etc.
4. School Awards – promotion of academic achievement and participation of all students in the school.
5. Core Care Team - Explore and implement effective supports and interventions for students from first to sixth year who are experiencing mental, physical or emotional challenges. Provide a safe, confidential space to share sensitive information. Ensure a unified and transparent response to each student’s care needs. Regularly review and monitor students requiring additional support.
6. SET and SNAs have regular meetings to discuss how best to support the needs of students.
7. Big Brother Programme - where TY students are trained to support first year students in their transition to post primary school.
8. The Marist Student Leadership Induction Programme - where senior Marist Leaders support first year students as they transition from primary to post primary school.
9. Mentor programme – a “buddy” system where by fifth year students are trained to support first year students in their transition to post primary school
10. Student Council - representing the views of all students in the school.
11. Mentoring Programme - sixth year students are paired up with a teacher in a field of study that students are interested in at third level.
12. Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) – a social inclusion programme that is aimed at students who are identified as being at risk of being socially or academically isolated or at risk of early school leaving before the Junior Cycle Programme has been completed.
13. Transition Year, Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) and Leaving Cert Vocational Programme (LCVP) programmes at senior cycle level.
14. School Completion Programme (SCP)

6.3 School Support – Some

Support at this level is targeted at those students (around 10%-20% of the school population) who do not respond to the whole-school strategies sufficiently and who need more support. A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which may be short-term, while others may be longer term. These may include:

- A process of consultation and planned intervention with parents
- Group and/or individual plans and interventions
- Subject goals
- Accommodations to support learning and social interaction

Support at this level in Moyle Park College may include:

Literacy and Numeracy Support and Interventions

Access to small group Literacy or Numeracy support.

Curricular Support and Interventions

1. Academic monitoring
2. First Year Homework Club organised by the School Completion Programme.
3. Additional support at Irish and/or Modern Language class times for students with Irish Exemptions
4. Involvement in JCSP (Junior Certificate Schools Programme)
5. Collaboration and communication with teaching staff about the learning needs of students.
6. Students may be involved in an attendance monitoring programme with others.
7. Participation in the Trinity Access Programme (TAP) and Bridge 21 project.

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Support and Interventions

1. Transfer to Second Level support programme organised by School Completion Programme.
2. School Completion Programme - Group intervention and Check & Connect support for identified students
3. Access to small group Emotional and Behavioural/ Social Skills support programmes.
4. Access to organised lunch time activities.
5. Liaising with students' parents to discuss progress or organise an educational assessment or CAMHS referral if necessary.

6.4 School Support Plus – FEW

These students, typically about 2%-5% of the school population, have significant difficulties and may require intensive, individualised interventions. Interventions at this stage are likely to include:

- Student Support Plan
- Involvement of additional professional input such as psychologists, speech and language therapists, etc.
- Specialist interventions.

Support at this level in Moyle Park College may include some of the following:

1. SNA Support.
2. Liaising with specialist teams e.g., Visiting Teacher for Visually Impaired, Speech Therapists, Social Workers, or CAMHS teams.
3. Work with NCSE/NEPS on a Behaviour Support Plan.
4. Students may work with an AEN teacher on a one to one and a group basis.
5. Students may be linked in with our in school guidance counsellors.
6. Individualised planning.
7. Reduced curriculum.
8. One to one work with a member of the School Completion Programme team.
9. Lego Therapy.
10. Level Two Learning Programmes.

7. Guidelines for the Identification and Prioritisation of students for Additional Support

In line with DEY Circulars, students are prioritised for support on the following criteria:

- Students performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests in numeracy or literacy
- Students who previously received supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher in Primary School and who continues to experience significant difficulties
- Students who are identified as having significant needs based on school-based assessment of attainment, including ongoing monitoring of academic performance in House Examinations and behavioural, social and emotional functioning

- Students who present with mild, or short-term, educational needs, including those with speech and language difficulties, organisational, co-ordination or attention control difficulties
- Students who present with additional needs which are set out in professional reports, for example those with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, etc.) and General Learning Difficulties (Mild, Borderline, Moderate, Severe)
- Students with significant and complex additional educational needs, for example significant behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorders)
- Students who have additional literacy or language learning needs, including those students who need English Additional Language Support (EAL)

8. Admission to the school

In line with the Education Act of 1998 and the Equal Status Act of 2000, the College will not discriminate in its admission to the school against any student. As per our school admission policy, Moyle Park College welcomes students with additional educational needs (AEN) and endeavours to “provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment” (Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, 2004). The application process for a student with additional educational needs will be the same as that of any other applicant.

To assess the needs of a student with additional educational needs, the school authorities will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the student’s needs and the school’s ability to meet those needs. A copy of the student’s educational, medical, or where appropriate psychological reports will be requested prior to enrolment.

Moyle Park College will strive to ensure that an education appropriate to their needs is provided for students with additional educational needs and will seek to: identify the needs of students in advance, acquire the necessary resources, and do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities if required. We aim to ensure that Moyle Park College provides an inclusive and supportive environment for all our students, supports the acceptance of diversity and will take proactive steps to guard against unfair treatment as a consequence of disability or additional need.

We recognise that all our students are entitled to an education appropriate to their needs including those who may be gifted and talented. We therefore endeavour to facilitate all our students reaching their full potential by providing a level of challenge equal to each student's ability through differentiation, additional materials and an accelerated rate of learning.

8.1 Admission Statement

Moyle Park College 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.”

Moyle Park college will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).”

Moyle Park College will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, ‘civil status ground’, ‘disability ground’, ‘discriminate’, ‘family status ground’, ‘gender ground’, ‘ground of race’, ‘religion ground’, ‘sexual orientation ground’ and

‘Traveller community ground’ shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Single gender schools

Moyle Park College is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Post-primary denominational schools

Moyle Park College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Marist religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of Catholic Faith in preference to others.

9. Wheelchair Access

It is the school objective to make the school buildings, general classrooms and specialist classrooms more accessible to people with physical disabilities and to take measures when necessary, to ensure that these students have real access to the full curriculum.

10. Transition from Primary Schools to Secondary School

Regular communication exists between the Principal, Career Guidance Department, AEN Department and the main feeder primary schools.

Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school of any additional education needs and to forward any relevant reports when making an application for a place in the college. Information evenings for incoming first years take place to provide information to prospective parents/guardians. The AEN team present at this meeting and hold 1:1 meetings with parents/guardians following this to gain an insight into these students prior to them beginning their first year in Moyle Park. All students complete a CAT IV test on school grounds during their final year in primary school which gives the school further invaluable information as to what students may require support in their first year.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

11.1 The role of the Board of Management:

The Board of Management is responsible for upholding the Marist characteristic spirit of the school and ensuring that the needs of all students are met through the implementation of all relevant DEY policies and procedures.

11.2 The role of the Principal:

- The Principal is responsible for establishing, implementing and monitoring whole school policies, programmes and procedures which support the learning of all students in the school.
- The Principal ensures that all AEN resource hours are allocated in accordance with the NCSE's Continuum of Support and in line with DEY guidelines.
- The Principal works in collaboration with the SLT, AEN, SCP and Core Care teams to ensure that the needs of the students are met.
- The Principal works in partnership with outside agencies, where relevant.

11.3 The role of the SET/ AEN teacher:

- Consultation with subject teachers, to plan interventions to address students' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant SSF.
- Implement short-term planning reflecting the support plan addressing each student's specific needs.
- Routinely assessing, recording and reviewing progress to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.
- Familiarity with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning preferences and to meet a variety of needs.
- Implementation of interventions based on identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary.

11.4 The role of the Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator (previously known as the AEN coordinator), in conjunction with the Principal, oversees the day to day operation of our school's AEN policy, including formulation, implementation and review. This role also includes the following duties:

- Liaises with feeder schools, teachers and parents/ guardians of incoming students to support the transition of students from Primary to Secondary.
- Supports the school's management team in terms of management and responsibility for the provision of AEN within the school
- To apply for assistive technology to SENO
- Coordinates management and timetabling of the AEN team
- Coordinates and allocates duties for SNA's
- Organises professional learning opportunities for staff to enhance the learning of students with AEN.
- Coordinates the formulation, implementation and review of Student Support Files (SSF)
- Identifies, monitors and tracks students with AEN
- Coordinates provision for students with AEN e.g. withdrawal of students for individual/group instruction, in class support etc.
- Oversees the records, reports and registers of students with AEN
- Liaises with parents/guardians of students with AEN
- Contributes to the inservice/upskilling of staff as appropriate
- Liaises with the Principal in the processing of Irish exemptions in accordance with DEY guidelines
- Coordinates the application for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)
- Liaises with external agencies and support services as appropriate.

11.5 Role of the Subject Teachers:

- The subject teachers are familiar with the NCCA Guidelines for Teachers of AEN (see www.ncca.ie), the Student Support Files and the Continuum of Support Document
- The subject teachers liaises when possible with the SET and parents/guardians of any child with AEN
- The subject teacher ensures their classes are an inclusive learning environment with differentiation in learning styles catered for.
- Where possible in mainstream classes general education and

additional education teachers work together to plan lessons, teach, monitor student progress, and manage the class. It's an approach that makes it easier to teach all students the same content and hold them to the same educational standards.

These duties are reviewed regularly and may change to ensure the priority needs of the AEN department are met.

11.6 Special Needs Assistant

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is an important member of the support staff for students with additional educational needs.

The SNAs support students and teachers within the classroom and the role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is followed as outlined in Department of Education and Science Circular 0030/2014 and National Council for Special Education 2018.

Duties:

1. Provide care assistance to named students who have additional educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.
2. Give special assistance as necessary to students with specific difficulties e.g. helping students with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
3. Assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of the health and safety needs of the student as necessary, when required to meet the specific needs of students.
4. Are aware of the AEN plan and are given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
5. Recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development.
6. Attend both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
7. Assist with RACE during house examinations.
8. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities
9. Assisting teachers in the supervision of children with additional needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods
10. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have withdrawn temporarily from the classroom
11. Liaise with the teacher and support the learning in the classroom for the student with additional needs.
12. Update student support files with the AEN co-ordinator
13. Administer medication following permission from

- parents/guardians
14. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non teaching nature.
 15. Engagement with parent/guardians of students with additional needs in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management

12. The Curriculum

It is school policy that all students, including students with additional educational needs, should have access to the broad and balanced curriculum provided in the school. Students with additional educational needs require more flexibility of choice and special care is taken with option subjects chosen. Key issues here are equality of access and parental/guardian and student choice.

12.1 Reasonable Accommodations (RACE) in State Examinations

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) operates the Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) scheme. The 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 **physical, visual, hearing and/or learning difficulty**. The scheme assists candidates who have additional educational needs to demonstrate what they know in certificate examinations, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. These needs may include learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, or other conditions.

Examples of exam accommodations may include some the following:

- Use of a word processor
- Spelling and grammar waiver
- Access to an individual reader
- Access to reading assistance
- Use of an exam reading pen
- Access to a shared special centre
- Access to modified exams

Key considerations for RACE applications

1. Since the introduction of the new model for RACE in 2016, which places the onus on the school to carry out school-based assessments, it is the policy of the AEN department to identify students who may qualify for

reasonable accommodations in the state exams and then carry out the relevant testing.

2. RACE applications will be made by the AEN department on behalf of any candidate whose eligibility for reading and writing accommodations has been established, based on the results of standardised testing administered by AEN personnel.
3. An application to re-activate accommodations is submitted for the Leaving Certificate examinations. The accommodations provided at Junior Cycle will be provided at Leaving Certificate subject to confirmation by the school authority of an identified and continuing need.
4. Applications for the Junior Cycle examinations are submitted in third year.
5. Further information and eligibility criteria are available from: <http://www.examinations.ie/>.

12.2 Exemption from the study of Irish

Certain students with additional educational needs may be exempt from the study of Irish. Details are available in the revising Circular 0053/2019 (Circular No 0055/2022). Only students with officially granted exemptions are allowed to give up Irish in Moyle Park College. This is strictly adhered to, regardless of the Irish tuition received at primary level. In line with the Department's policy schools are expected and encouraged to provide all students, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs. As such an Irish exemption does not automatically qualify a student to SET support, however if a need is identified then students will receive small group support during this time.

12.3 Assistive Technology

As per circular 0010/2013

At Moyle Park College, assistive technology plays a crucial role in supporting students within the mainstream classroom. We employ a range of tools and software designed to aid students with diverse educational needs, enhancing their accessibility to curriculum content and facilitating more effective learning experiences. Our approach to assistive technology is guided by the principle of inclusive education, ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual challenges, have equal opportunities to engage with and benefit from our educational offerings. As per Circular 0010/2013, such equipment will only be provided where a medical or professional report outlines that the degree of the communication disability is such that the equipment is essential to allow the

student to access education and set out how the equipment will provide for this. This technology includes, but is not limited to, text-to-speech software, audio books, screen readers, and specialized learning applications that cater to a variety of learning styles and needs. Assistive technology in our college supports students within the mainstream classroom.

Procedures for new entrants to the school

- If a laptop has been granted to a student by the NCSE in his Primary School, the laptop should be transferred with the student on his transition to Secondary School.
- All laptops which are grant-aided by the NCSE are the property of the college, and may be used by the student for the duration of their education in the school.

Although the equipment will be sanctioned for a particular pupil, the equipment will, as a rule, remain the property of the school and will be available for allocation to subsequent pupils with similar disabilities.

However, some of the equipment which is sanctioned is of a specialist and individualised nature and may not be suitable for other students in the school. In such circumstances, it is not efficient that such equipment should be retained in a school, when the students for which the equipment was sanctioned transfers to a new school and would have to be sanctioned for similar equipment in the new school.

Students are required to ensure that equipment is maintained and managed carefully, while in their possession.

Procedure for students who are already enrolled

- If on entry to 1st year or at a later stage, it becomes obvious that due to hand-writing speed, motor co-ordination difficulties or other reasons, use of a laptop is necessary, an Occupational Therapist report will be sought which states the laptop is **essential** to allow a student to access the curriculum, then an application will be made to the NCSE on the student's behalf.
- The Resource Department Team will assess the student's eligibility for a RACE application to use a laptop for exams. The SEC has issued clear criteria for this application process, and the Resource Department Team will follow these guidelines, and apply where a student meets these criteria.
- Where students have access to assistive technology, where possible, the college will facilitate these students using laptops in house exams.

13. External Agencies:

13.1: National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS)

currently under the umbrella of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The AEN department is in regular contact with NEPS Psychologists whose support is almost exclusively aimed at students with additional needs.

The Psychologist supports these students:

- In the application for resources
- In the application for reasonable accommodations in State Examinations
- By offering advice to students and parents/ guardians as well as to teachers
- By counselling students
- By carrying out Psychological Assessments free of charge.

Parents/ guardians may choose to have their child privately assessed. The Psychologist serves a number of schools in the general area and in recent years visits our school approximately eight times a year.

13.2: Other external Agencies and Personnel

Other agencies the school has dealings with are:

- Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) - NCSE
- Inclusion Support Service
- National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- Department of Child Psychiatry, ERHA.
- St. James Hospital
- The Schools Completion Programme
- Traveller Liaison Officer/ Exchange House
- Various Medical Specialists
- Visiting teacher for the deaf and blind (NCSE)
- Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapists (NCSE Demonstration Project)

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and other agencies may be involved that are not listed here.

14. Individualised Planning

The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSN) 2004 requires that each child diagnosed with additional educational needs should have a student support plan (SSP) drawn up to meet the individual's needs. Relevant sections of this act include section 3, 4, 7 and 9. A Student Support Plan (SSP) is a written plan that guides a student's learning and progress. This plan states the

nature of the pupil's learning support needs. It then sets out the targets to be achieved by a student over a certain time and it lists the teaching strategies, resources, and supports that are needed to help a student to reach these goals. It should be developed and reviewed by teachers in conjunction with parents, students and, where necessary, others involved in the student's learning. The SSP states targets relating to the overall development of the student. It records that which is additional to, or different from, the differentiated curriculum that is already being taught to all students in the classroom situation. SSPs are not, therefore, a substitute for the curriculum being taught to all students in the school but may complement a student's access to the curriculum.

15. Evaluation

The evaluation of educational provision is a complex process whether normal provision or additional support is being evaluated. Basic success in the State Examinations and basic literacy and numeracy are interlinked. The State Examinations are widely used in schools as a blunt measurement of achievement. The success of students with additional educational needs in school in state examinations is highly valued, especially by the students themselves and by their parents/ guardians.

Teacher observation, class tests, inhouse examinations, tracking in second and fifth year are important regular forms of formal and informal assessment for students with additional educational needs.

16. Parents/Guardians: Communication and Participation

Communication between teachers and parents/guardians has traditionally been excellent in Moyle Park College. The school believes parents/ guardians play a positive, guiding and supportive role in student education. An objective of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill is *“to ensure that parents have a central role in all important decisions concerning the education of their children.”* (Explanatory Memorandum p.1)

This is already the case for parents of students in Moyle Park College. It is essential that the school informs and involves parents/ guardians when additional support is being provided. The school recognises its responsibility under section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents/ guardians on all matters relating to their child's education.

17. Students: Communication and Participation

The general body of students respond positively to the education provided in the school and students with additional educational needs are particularly appreciative of the additional support provided. Student voice is encouraged and participation with the Student Council is promoted throughout the whole student body.

18. Grievance Procedure

Parents/guardians /students who are concerned and who wish to discuss or make suggestions about any aspect of educational provision should approach the relevant teacher, form tutor, year head or the AEN coordinator.

If necessary, an issue can be dealt with by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Board of Management.

19. Additional Resources

The additional support outlined above is dependent on additional resources. Most of these additional resources are granted annually and it is school policy to seek a more permanent arrangement, e.g. (ex-quota Resource Post)

20. Conclusion

It is important to re-emphasise the principle objective of the additional education support outlined in this document, namely, to enable students with additional educational needs to access, participate in and benefit from the education normally provided in the school to the fullest extent possible.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management. This policy is organic by its nature. It is envisaged that with changing perceived needs and with insights gained that it will need to be constantly appraised and, if necessary, changed.