



Portmarnock Community School

Additional Educational Needs Policy A Whole School Approach

This Policy applies to all students with Additional Education Needs (AEN), including students with exceptional ability, who attend Portmarnock Community School. It is also intended to serve the school community including the board of Management, the Principal, the Teaching and Ancillary staff and Parents.

Ratified by the Board of Management of Portmarnock
Community School on 10 June 2025

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Mission Statement

‘To instil a spirit of intellectual enquiry and academic endeavour, to foster the desire for participation and challenge, and to build individual and compassionate young people of character.’

1.2 Consultation

This Policy was formulated in consultation with the Teaching Staff and Management of Portmarnock Community School, Parents of students with Additional Educational Needs, the Board of Management (BOM), Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)

1.3 Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to all students with Additional Educational Needs, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Portmarnock Community School. It is also intended to serve the school community including the Board of Management, Principal, Teaching and Ancillary Staff and Parents.

1.4 Rationale

- The Policy aims to outline Portmarnock Community School’s provision of additional educational support for students with AEN.
- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision.
- The Policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below.
- The Policy is a reflection of our current practice. It is a working document and will be reviewed annually in light of new developments both internally and nationally.

1.5 Philosophy

The principal aim of additional educational support is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with AEN and will enable each to realise their individual potential. In line with our ethos, and official Department of Education (DE) recommendations, additional educational strategies will actively seek to include the diverse range of and abilities of its students wherever possible, in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs. Our practice reflects the standards set out in LAOS 2022, particularly in relation to inclusive student experiences (Domain 1) and staff collaboration and leadership (Domain 3).

Portmarnock Community School promotes a positive school culture and climate throughout the school community which is welcoming of difference and diversity. A realistic inclusive curriculum is

offered in consultation with students, parents, relevant outside agencies and staff. Inclusion of all students is strengthened through various curricular and extra-curricular activities e.g. SPHE, Religion, Pastoral Care, Sport etc but also, as a Restorative and Relational School, within the interactions and relationships built within the school on an ongoing basis.

All students within Portmarnock Community School should feel safe and accepted during their time in school. Any bullying of a student based on their AEN will not be accepted within school and will be dealt with through our Anti-Bullying Policy.

1.6 Legal Framework

Portmarnock Community School sets out to provide education for all of its students, with reference to legislation regarding students with SEN 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)
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- Current DE Circular Letters
- DE Circular 0055/2022 - Exemptions from the Study of Irish - Revising Circular 0053/2019
- Department of Education (Circular 0064/2024)
- Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes (2024), Department of Education (Circular 0064/2024)
- NCSE Toolkit - Building on Ability to Support the Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model 2017
- NCSE Report Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs 2014
- 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 Service (SESS)
- Looking at our Schools 2022

1.7 Allocation

Allocation of additional teaching resources will be provided in line with the new model of allocation as outlined in DES Circular 0064/2024. Under the revised SET Allocation Model (Circular 0014/2017, updated via 0064/2024), resources will be closely linked with the additional needs of students. It

allows the school to allocate resources to students, taking into account their individual additional needs, as opposed to requiring a particular diagnosis of disability.

Staff of Portmarnock Community School's AEN Department will reference the following documents when allocating resources to students with AEN using the Continuum of Support Process:

- Department of Education (Circular 0064/2024) - Special Education Teaching Allocation
- NCSE Toolkit - Building on Ability to Support the Special Education Teacher Allocation Model, 2017
- Circular 0055/2022 - Exemption from the Study of Irish

The following principles guide the implementation process:

- Support provided to AEN students 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 (NEPS 2010).
- Subject Teachers have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in their classroom, including students with additional educational needs.
- Students with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these students should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who will provide continuity of support
- Portmarnock Community School has and will maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of students with additional educational needs. This team should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of students with additional educational needs.
- The role of the Support Teacher is to provide additional support in either a small groups setting, a team teaching setting or in an individual setting, depending on the learning needs of the student.

1.8 Aims of this Policy

The principal aim of additional educational support in Portmarnock Community School is to provide a positive learning environment which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with additional needs and to enable each to realise their individual potential within an inclusive environment.

This plan aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- Identify additional educational needs that our students have
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of our students with additional needs
- Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs
- Track, monitor, review and report on the progress of students with additional needs
- Communicate information between AEN Team, SMT, Staff and Parents/Guardians

Section 2: Categories of Additional Educational Needs

Additional Educational Needs are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 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...'*.

As per our School Admissions Policy, Portmarnock Community School welcomes students with additional educational needs and strives to *'provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment'* (Ibid, 2004)

For the purpose of this document, the following definition of Inclusion by the NCSE, has been adopted. Inclusion is defined as a process of *'addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/ her attendance at school.'* (Literature Review of the Principles and Practices relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs, NCSE, 2010)

The Department of Education (DE) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) have set the various categories of additional educational needs, the definitions of these categories, the criteria for the allocation of additional of additional resources and the procedures for application and are as follows:

- Physical Disability
- Hearing/Visual Impairment
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Severe emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems
- Borderline general learning disability
- Mild general learning disability
- Specific learning disability
- Moderate general learning disability

Students who are particularly gifted and need additional stimulus:

- Autism
- Students with additional educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome
- Specific speech and language disorder
- Multiple disabilities

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

- Students with temporary emotional trauma

- Students who fall behind from the general level of progress of the class because of other reasons
- Students whose first language is not English

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities of Partners in the Additional Educational Needs Team

The AEN Team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principals, the AEN Coordinator, AEN Teachers, the Guidance Counsellors, the Chaplain, Mainstream Teachers and any SNAs and School Transport Escorts that have been approved by the Department of Education. The AEN Coordinator is also part of the Pastoral Care Team in the school and works closely with the Student Support Team and with Year Heads. The Team is advised by the SENO and NEPS Psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with AEN students in the school.

3.1 The Role of Board of Management is to:

- Ensure the development, implementation and review of this Policy
- Ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of AEN students
- Ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided so that students learn the necessary skills to participate in society

3.2 The Role of the Senior Management Team is to:

- Assume the overall responsibility for ensuring the needs of SEN students are met
- Inform the Board of Management of issues with AEN
- Appoint an AEN Coordinator and work closely with the Coordinator
- Consult with the AEN Coordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education and the NCSE regarding needs and provisions
- Apply for and liaise with the SENO for necessary resources from the DE to meet the needs of AEN students
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds
- Establish and promote whole school policies and procedures supporting the learning of all students including those with AEN
- Promote a whole school approach to AEN and make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area
- Promote positive partnerships with parents of AEN students
- Process applications for Irish Exemptions
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Direct the work of SNAs

3.3 The Role of the AEN Coordinator (AENCO) is to:

- Oversee the day-to-day coordination of the AEN Department
- Assist in the identification of students with AEN

- Create and maintain a school register of AEN students
- Keep records of students receiving support and the level of support provided
- Ensure that parents/guardians are consulted and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education
- Ensure procedures exist for consultation with primary schools regarding incoming AEN students
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours
- Liaise with the Department of Education regarding needs and provisions
- Process applications for Irish Exemptions
- Process applications for Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examinations (RACE)
- Direct the work of SNAs; advise and collaborate with them around the care needs of individual students
- Promote inclusion by ensuring an awareness of AEN is instilled in all of the school community
- Promote a whole-school approach to AEN by making staff aware of their responsibilities
- Communicate the needs of AEN students to teachers and advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students
- Communicate with staff via whole staff meetings
- Attend care team meetings of each year group on a regular basis
- Liaise with outside professionals
- Meet with parents in order to plan and review interventions
- Oversee the completion of Individual Education Plans
- Administer an correct standardised assessments
- Facilitate a weekly meeting of the AEN Team
- Participate in Student Support Team meetings
- Identify appropriate CPD for AEN Teachers
- Develop and review the practice of the AEN Team

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

3.4 The Role of the Additional Educational Needs Teacher is to:

- Collaborate with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student
- Provide 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 post-primary curriculum
- Provide team teaching /cooperative teaching when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student
- Provide diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention
- Contributing at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate
- Collecting and analysing school-wide data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records and gathering information from Subject Teachers/other staff

- Plan, implement and review individual and/or group interventions
- Seek external professional advice as needed
- Advise and direct SNAs around the care needs of relevant students
- Work with other members of the AEN Team in facilitating the provisions of education for students with AEN and their inclusion in the school
- Work closely with Year Heads and the AEN Team to identify students requiring support

3.5 The Role of the Year Head is to:

- 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 additional educational needs by monitoring the student's progress within the year group
- Encourage an awareness of students's additional educational needs including maintaining a respect for students with AEN

3.6 The Role of the Mainstream Teacher is to:

- Have the first line of responsibility for the learning progress of all students in their class, in accordance with the Education Act 1998. Therefore, it is imperative that the Mainstream Teacher leads the day-to-day education of students with AEN and provides these and all students in their class with a stimulating and supportive classroom environment. This is reinforced in DE Circular 0014/2017.
- Be aware of the school policy and procedures for supporting students with AEN and ensure that the needs of students are met
- Differentiate learning and teaching methodologies for students, including exceptionally able students
- Seek advice from the AEN Department regarding students with AEN
- Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies
- Consider the needs of students with AEN in all aspects of classroom planning
- Identify students who may be at risk - considering general progress or organisational, communicational, behavioural, emotional or social needs
- Support/encourage independence in the student
- Create positive environment for all students
- Use Assessment for Learning and Comment-Only Marking
- Establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations
- Assess/monitor progress
- Complete referral forms or information forms as required by the AEN Team
- Direct the work of SNAs in the classroom
- Inform parents of the progress of students through parent teacher meetings and school reports
- Contribute to school development planning for their subject area whilst always having concern for students with AEN

3.7 The role of the Guidance Counsellor is to:

- Work closely with Year Heads and the AEN Team to identify students requiring support
- Liaise with primary school regarding the transition of students to post-primary school e.g. School Ambassador Programme
- Facilitate individual appointments for students to support them in making career decisions
- Organise and manage student trips to various third level institutions
- Organise speakers from various institutions and careers to talk with students
- Organise and run the Careers Fair for Transitions Year and Fifth Year students
- Advise students and parents on subject choice and subject load
- Assist with the administration of testing eg. CAT4
- Administer the DATs to Transition Year students
- Liaise with students, parents and the AEN Team in relation to DARE/HEAR applications and to process them
- Liaise with community organisations

3.8 The role of the Chaplain is to:

- Support the students through collaboration with the AEN Department, Guidance Counsellor and school management

3.9 The role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is to:

- Provide care assistance to named students with AEN
- Be aware of the AEN Plan/IEP, devised by the AEN Support Team and given guidance of 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
- Attend weekly SNA meetings with the AEN co-ordinator
- Attend AEN Department and Staff Meetings, when appropriate
- Assist/escort students on school trips
- Give special assistance, as necessary, for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping AEN students with typing, writing or other use of equipment
- Assist with clothing, feeding, toileting, hygiene and administering medication, being mindful of health and safety of the student
- Assisting with House Examinations, when appropriate
- Assist teachers in the supervision of students during assembly, recreation and in the movement from one classroom to another
- Accompany individual students or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the class
- Give general assistance to the Subject Teacher
- Participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and cooperate with any sudden changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process
- Engage with parents of students with AEN as required and directed by school management
- Treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school

SNAs may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when AEN students are absent or when particular urgent work is required

3.10 The role of the School Transport Escort is to:

- Supervise students while travelling on school transport
- Maintain a good working relationship with the driver of the transport
- Act as liaison between Principal and/or Class Teacher and parents when required i.e. conveyance of messages and letter to parents
- Observe confidentiality in all aspects of work
- Be aware of particular Additional Needs of the student on the transport and be briefed by the Principal on how to deal with same e.g. epilepsy etc
- Perform any other duties relevant to the position of escort which may be assigned by the Principal from time to time
- Unless under exceptional circumstances, the escort should never leave the transport
- The escorts position on the bus should be where maximum control of students is achieved i.e. at back of bus
- Report all concerns to the Principal and/or Class Teacher

3.11 Parents/Guardians

The school recognises its responsibility under Section 14 of the ESPEN Act 2004 with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education. Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our AEN plan. Parents/Guardians, through their unique knowledge of their own children, have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, IEPs/Student Support Plans and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of up-to-date professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage.
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in the child's learning
- Attend Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Inform post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage, by contacting the AEN Coordinator prior to their child leaving primary school

3.12 Students

Student who are in receipt of support teaching should, as appropriate:

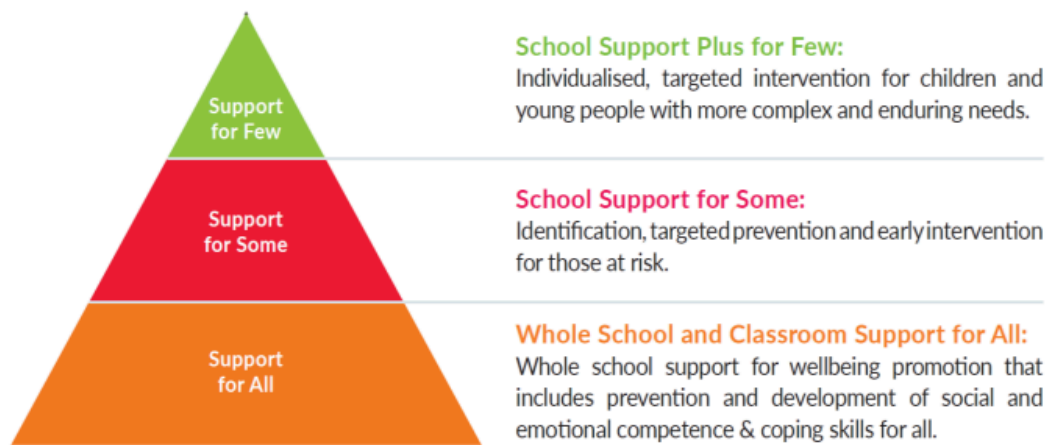
- Be involved in audits of their skills and discussions around their learning needs
- Have input into their learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets what have been set for them

- Develop ownership of their skills and strategies that are taught and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

Section 4: Models of Provision and the Continuum of Support

4.1 Continuum of Support

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Portmarnock Community School, is underpinned by recognition that additional educational needs occur along a continuum, from mild to severe and from transient to long term. Our response to the needs of students is organised according to NEP's Continuum of Support.



NEPs Continuum of Support

4.2 Identification of Known, Documented and Emerging Needs

- Guidance Department will organise for PCS School Ambassadors to visit 6th Class students to introduce them to the school and key personnel relevant to the students
- AEN Coordinator and Year Head will visit or contact feeder Primary Schools to collect up-to-date information
- AEN Coordinator will:
 - Liaise with Primary School and Parents of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school
 - Meet/speak with parents/guardians of AEN students
 - Establish communication with the Primary School AEN Teacher
 - Apply for any extra assistance required by incoming AEN Students eg. Assistive Technology

- All incoming First Year students sit the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) in January prior to entering PCS and the PPAD-E Literacy Test when they are in First Year . These tests can be used to identify strengths and needs of incoming students with AEN. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including the exceptionally able students.
- The AEN Team seeks relevant professional reports from Parents/Guardians of AEN students with the acceptance of a place in the school. Once they have accepted a place in PCS, Parents/Guardians are asked to complete a form indicating if their child has had any educational/medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and if they have previously attended learning support/resource. Copies of IEPs/SSPs are also requested
- The information on the student's Educational Passport from Primary School, if received, is added to the data available on the student
- If a student transfers during the school year, the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal will seek information from their previous school (Educational Psychologist Report, School Report, Attendance etc). Any relevant information is then passed on to the AEN Coordinator
- At the beginning of each academic year all students on the AEN Register are reviewed individually in terms of type of support needed and curriculum load

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concerns may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems e.g. CAT4, In-class assessment, informal observation, parental concern). A referral form is available to teachers who have concerns about a student's academic performance or behaviour. Alternatively, teachers can make contact with the AEN Coordinator. Some students will need further diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs. Where possible, parents are contacted and consent is sought before the tests are administered.

The Differential Aptitude Test (DATs) are completed by all students in TY to help decide what subjects are linked to strengths and to help with areas of need.

4.3 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
- Curricular reduction - for students with AEN who experiences challenges coping with the breadth of the current curriculum, a reduction in the number of subjects taken is considered. This occurs after all avenues have been exhausted and there is consultation with Parents/Guardians and, if necessary, the Year Head and Guidance Department. Parents/Guardians must give written consent giving permission for reduced subject load.
- Team Teaching/Cooperative Teaching
- In-class Support/Differentiation
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal

- Organisation and Life Skills lessons
- Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP) - a programme that is designed for students who are unable to access Level 3 Junior Cycle Curriculum

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. 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. All decisions in this regard are discussed with Parents/Guardians, Class Teacher, the Student, Principal and, if necessary, the Guidance Department

Section 5: Allocation of Support to Students

5.1 Allocation of Additional Supports

Once students' needs have been identified, additional educational needs teachers are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy AEN Teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet students' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of students with additional needs are met inclusively.

The period of intervention recommended for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need. 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. All decisions in this regard are discussed with Parents/Guardians, Class Teacher, the Student, Principal and, if necessary, the Guidance Department.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of students. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.

In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many students will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

A Student Support File or Individual Education Plan (IEP) is devised for students with AEN who attend an Additional Educational Teacher for support, with students who have more complex needs having a more detailed IEP.

Individual Education Plans contain the following information:

- Personal/Background details
- Educational details - Primary School details/Assessment and formal testing results
- Categorisation of need based on Assessment Reports
- General profile based on formal/informal assessment
- AEN Provision
- Priority Learning Needs are highlighted
- Targets set for each Priority Learning Need through consultation with the student by the AEN Teacher
- Strategies to improve learning and resources required
- Relevant documentation
- Date for review - a review occurs each academic year however it may occur more often depending on student progress and circumstances.

These Individual Education Plans and Student Support Files aim to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner. IEPs and Student Support Files are documented on the school's shared systems - Schoolwise and Google Docs - to allow for them to be dynamic, working documents.

5.2 Reasonable Accommodations for State and In-House Examinations (RACE)

Applications are made for RACE provision for students with AEN sitting a Junior Cycle or Leaving Certificate Examination by the AEN Coordinator.

Accommodations are granted by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The school makes applications for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Cycle and these accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Certificate, with the school being satisfied that the student still has need for the accommodation. Further details are available in the RACE Guide for Exam Students 2024 at www.examination.ie

Where resources permit, and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students, who qualify for and have been granted these accommodations by the SEC, at Mock Exams and other In-House Assessments.

5.3 Exemptions from Irish

- Incoming First Years with Irish Exemptions are noted
- Certificates of Exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application
- Effort is made to arrange withdrawal for additional support for students with AEN, who do not study Irish, during the Irish class time. This is not guaranteed as it may be limited by staff availability and timetabling restrictions and completed in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, Supporting Students with Special Education Needs in Mainstream Schools'
- New applications for Irish Exemptions are made in writing to the school Principal. All paperwork relating to this is kept on file.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education in Circular 0055/2022 will be strictly adhered to when considering granting Exemptions from Irish.

5.4 Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP)

- L2LP is available to students with AEN who have ability scores in the lower mild to higher moderate range of learning disabilities and whose ongoing participation in the Level 3 Junior Cycle Curriculum is not feasible
- Students' participation in L2LP will be discussed with all relevant parties prior to the decision being made. Eligibility is based on IQ level, achievement in in-school testing and/or consultation with the Parents, Students, AEN Department, Subject Teachers and Senior Management along with Primary Schools and NEPS Psychologist, if needed

- The L2LP Teacher works closely with Mainstream Teachers and AEN Teachers to allocate the learning outcomes of the Priority Learning Units (PLUs) each year. Completed work is then tracked and uploaded to measure achievement in each PLU

5.5 ICT and Acceptable Use Policy

Portmarnock Community School may provide SEN students with internet access, Assistive Technology, desktop computers, digital imaging equipment, laptop or tablet devices, video-conferencing, virtual learning environments, online collaboration capabilities, online discussion forums, email and more.

Portmarnock Community School computer network is intended for educational purposes

- All activity over the network will be monitored and retained
- Access to online content via the network is restricted in accordance with our policies and the DES through its agency, the National Centre for Technology in Education. Students are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a student believes it shouldn't be, the student can ask his/her teacher to submit the site for review. This is done via Oide (professional support for teachers) technology filtering service BrightCloud.
- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline - these rules are found in the Portmarnock Community School's existing Code of Behaviour and should be signed by parents at the beginning of each academic year.
- Misuse of school resources may result in disciplinary action
- We make a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies
- Students are expected to alert his/her teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

5.6 Autism Class

Portmarnock Community School established its first Autism Class and Sensory Room in 2022, with its second Autism Class due to open September 2024. Teacher and SNA support in the Autism Class is as per guidelines reflecting the needs and movements of the students.

Our Autism Classes allow the school to include Autistic students in our school community, who may not have otherwise engaged with mainstream education. These students are integrated into as many aspects of school life as is beneficial for them and other students. The Autism Class and Sensory Room allow for safe and comforting environments for our students when they become overwhelmed with their surroundings. While PCS promotes inclusion into mainstream classes and through participation at school events etc, in as far as possible for these students, the school acknowledges that Autistic students need the space and opportunity to exclude themselves in order to allow them be an active participant of our community.

For enrolment procedures for Portmarnock Community School's Autism Class please see our Enrolment Policy

Under guidelines from the Department of Education, the number of places in the Autism Class is limited to six students per class. Applications for enrolment to our Autism Class are sent to the SENCO who makes the final decision on which student(s) is to be registered in the Autism Class based on strict criteria. The decision is also subject to Board of Management approval.

Section 6: Communication

6.1 AEN Team

- The AEN Coordinator and the AEN Team meet formally once a week. Informal meetings occur on a daily basis.
- Members of the AEN Team meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the academic year between Mainstream Teachers and the AEN Team regarding incoming First Years students with AEN.
- The AEN Team aims to communicate with each other as much as possible through school email, Schoolwise, Tyro and Google Docs.
- At the end of each year AEN make recommendations on the students' IEP/SSF to use as a reference, should a change of staff occur

6.2 Mainstream Teachers

- At the beginning of each school year, the AEN Coordinator updates a register of information focusing on the Incoming First Years with AEN. This information is shared using Schoolwise and Tyro and all teachers are made aware of its existence at the start-of-year staff meeting and are encouraged to consult it regularly
- Teachers are kept up-to-date with regards to all AEN students through email and through AEN updates at each staff meeting
- Information is also communicated via the Year Head and support structures such as the Student Support Team Meetings

6.3 Communication with Parents/Guardians

- School Journal is used for basic communication with parents
- Parent-Teacher meetings are held once a year for face-to-face communications and the AEN Team are available to meet with the Parents/Guardians of the students who engage with them
- Written school report is available for Parents/Guardian on Tyro three times a year - December, March, June
- Regular communication is available through direct email to the AEN Coordinator or through the main school office
- School Open Night
- First Year Parents' Information Evening
- Emails/Phone Calls to Parents/Guardians

- Including Parents/Guardians, where appropriate, in meetings involving external agencies
- Meetings with AEN Coordinator and Principal/Deputy Principal/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head where relevant
- Parents help the school by keeping teachers informed of progress/difficulties they observe in their child's learning as they progress through post-primary school. Thai should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school.

6.4 Record Keeping

A full record of Psychological Reports, outside agency reports and records of meetings are kept in Individual Student Files in the main school office in a locked cabinet and/or on password protected Schoolwise/Tyro/Google Docs.

All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information Acts and Data Protection Acts.