



Additional Needs Policy 2023

1) Mission Statement

Presentation Brothers College is a Catholic school founded by the Presentation Brothers. It is a Christian community of students, staff, parents and management with a strong tradition of family loyalty. The characteristics of this school community are Respect, Care, Tolerance, Compassion and Justice. The College believes in a positive approach to discipline. Students are guided and encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.

The College values academic excellence and offers a curriculum which best meets the needs of the students within the context of available resources. Our wish is to enable the release of the God-given talents and potential within each student. We follow a six-year cycle.

The education offered includes the development of confidence and a healthy self-image. Therefore, skills and competencies necessary for life are promoted and actively encouraged, as are sports, culture and leisure-time activities. As a Catholic school in the Presentation tradition, religious education has a central place in the life of Presentation Brothers College.

There is a social dimension to the education offered by the College. The College has for generations actively supported the mission of our founders, the Presentation Brothers, whose primary role has been to provide education for the less privileged here in Ireland and, indeed, in many parts of the developing world. Over the years, the mission of the Presentation Brothers has expanded beyond education to embrace many different aspects of community development - though its primary focus remains rooted in social justice and the formation of Christ in the young. The College continues to be a major supporter of the Presentation mission both financially and spiritually and retains strong associations with the congregation in Ireland and abroad. Parents and students who wish to learn more about the Presentation Brothers and about the many ways in which the College supports the congregation's mission are invited to speak to the Principal and other staff members who have a particular interest in this area. We seek to develop in our students an awareness of their social responsibility as Christians which expresses itself in positive action for justice and the poor in our society.

It is hoped that our students will look on their years in Presentation Brothers College as happy and fulfilling and will continue the strong tradition of loyalty to the College.

2) Aims and Objectives

1. To facilitate the social, emotional, educational (including literacy and numeracy) and physical wellbeing of students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN).
2. To ensure that P.B.C. is an inclusive learning environment that enables students with Special Educational Needs to live a full life and to realise their full potential as unique individuals through access to an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum.
3. To enable students with AEN to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential.
4. To help students with AEN develop the skills they need to continue learning in adult life.
5. To ensure that parents/guardians are involved in decisions about their children's education.

3) Inclusion

Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles (including a baseline component). This gives stability to schools' staffing arrangements over a number of years. It offers schools greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly, based on students' needs, without the requirement for a diagnosis of disability.

In addition, a fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in an optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for students with special educational needs. *Special Education Circular 0014/2017*

4) Categories of AEN

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

1. Physical disability
2. Hearing impairment
3. Visual impairment
4. Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
5. Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
6. Mild general learning disability
7. Borderline general learning disability.
8. Specific learning disability.
9. Moderate general learning disability.
10. Severe or profound general learning disability.
11. Autism/autistic spectrum disorder.
12. Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome.
13. Specific speech and language disorder.
14. Multiple disabilities.
15. Gifted and Talented students.

5) The Continuum of Support

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs. This framework recognises that special 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.

6) Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

1. Ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated.
2. Approve the policy.
3. Consider reports from the principal for the implementation of the policy.

The Principal and Deputy Principals

The Principal and Deputy Principals have overall responsibility for ensuring that the needs of all students are met. In this regard, they will work in close co-operation with the AEN Team. They must ensure that all teachers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to students with AEN and must also arrange for the continuous professional development of staff in this regard.

The SEN Coordinator (SENCO)

The Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for co-ordinating the Additional Needs Team in P.B.C. and for ensuring the provision of support for all students identified as having additional needs.

The SENCO in conjunction with the Principal/Deputy Principals:

1. Oversees the day-to-day operation of our school's AEN policy, including formulation, implementation and review.
2. Supports our school's management team in terms of management and responsibility for the provision of AEN within the school.
3. Formulates, assesses and reviews the Yearly AEN Department Plan and the School Provision Plan.
4. Liaises with management in allocating additional teaching hours to pupils, as appropriate i.e. team-teaching, small groups and/or one to one withdrawal.
5. Advises management of pupils who have Irish exemptions as directed by a psychological assessment.
6. Organises the continued testing of pupils on an annual and individual basis, where deemed necessary.
7. Sources resources for use with AEN students.
8. Seeks to identify students with specific learning difficulties.

9. Keeps all records regarding student progress in the area of special needs education.
10. Arranges educational assessments.
11. Makes applications to SENO (SNA support, assistive technology, transport etc.).
12. Is responsible for the School Provision Plan to be completed, monitored and reviewed.
13. Coordinates management and timetabling of the AEN team (team teachers/learning support teachers/SNAs).
14. Coordinates and allocates duties for SNAs.
15. Liaises with and advises colleagues in relation to AEN.
16. Liaises with the Guidance Counsellor and the Chaplain.
17. Participates in Student Support Meetings.
18. Coordinates the formulation, implementation and review of Student Support Files.
19. Monitors and tracks students with AEN.
20. Coordinates provision for students with AEN e.g. withdrawal of students for individual/group instruction, in class support etc.
21. Oversees the records/reports/register on students with AEN.
22. Liaises with parents/guardians of students with AEN.
23. Contributes to the in-service/upskilling of staff as appropriate.
24. Facilitates the identification of Irish and third language exemptions.
25. Assesses and tests students for eligibility for Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations RACE.
26. Coordinates and organises the application for RACE.
27. Liaises with feeder schools, teachers and parents of incoming students.
28. Liaises with external agencies and support services as appropriate including:

The Special Education Teachers (SETs)

The role of the Special Education Teacher is:

1. To be responsible for diagnostic assessment, programme planning, consultation with parents, teachers and pupils, communication with the whole staff and for teaching, monitoring and evaluating students' progress. (*Learning Support Guidelines 2000*)

2. To provide additional teaching support to students with low achievement in literacy or numeracy and to those with mild or transient difficulties in such areas as language, motor co-ordination, organisation, behaviour, socialisation and attention. Priority and high level of support will be given to students with the highest level of need.
3. To familiarise themselves with the Continuum of Support and put in place the required provision to the students (*Support for some* or *Support for few*)
4. To liaise with the Subject Teacher in order to implement a plan that will benefit the student (modified exam papers, differentiated work and provide support in specific areas.
5. To be aware of their students' profiles, learning styles and needs and teach and support them accordingly.
6. To take an active role in the classroom during Team Teaching or In Class Inclusion. For each classroom intervention, a written comment should be added to the Student LS record file.
7. To get involved in the writing process of the Student Support File, familiarise themselves with the targets and review the plan termly with the SENCO.
8. To plan lessons, programmes, interventions and record them on the Student LS Record File. Short-term planning should reflect the Support Plan targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for students should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes should also be used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.
9. To record any incident, concern or discussion that may occur with a student or a parent during class/meeting and send it by email to SENCO.
10. To source resources for use with AEN students.
11. To identify students with specific learning difficulties.

Depending on the learning needs identified, a student with AEN may be supported at classroom level or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models. Members of the AEN team should have the necessary experience and ongoing access to professional development to support the diverse needs of students. The AENs team helps ensure that those students with the greatest level of need have access to support from teachers with the necessary experience and expertise.

The Guidance Counsellor

1. Counselling in personal, educational and career development.
2. Personal and social development.
3. Career information management.
4. Consultation with parents and staff.
5. Consultation with community organisations.
6. Vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience.
7. Referrals to other professionals and agencies.
8. Evaluation of the guidance and counselling needs and services.
9. Coordination of DARE applications.

The Chaplain

1. Facilitating personal, pastoral and spiritual development.
2. Personal and social development.
3. Consultation with parents and staff.
4. Consultation with community organisations.

The Subject Teachers

Mainstream teachers are obliged to make themselves aware of the special needs of students in their classes. Subject teachers have access to information that is relevant to the teaching or supervising of such students, via files that are shared on VShare and with the permission of the SENCO, psychological reports which are kept in the AEN office. A list of all students with AEN is given to subject teachers at the beginning of the school year and via regular updates.

Subject teachers' role is also to:

1. Differentiate their teaching practice to cater for students with learning difficulties
2. Be alert to the possibility of general and specific learning difficulties and bring concerns to the attention of the AEN department.
3. Treat information on students with AEN in a highly professional manner.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

The school has an allocation of special needs assistants (SNA) whose brief is to provide care assistance to named students following the approval of the local SENO and whose specific duties are set out by the Principal.

SNAs are recruited specifically to assist pupils with disabilities in an educational context and are appointed to the school. SNAs may be involved in supporting the student both within the classroom and in the wider sphere of their personal and social education outside of the classroom.

Their duties are assigned by the Principal/Deputy Principals and their work is supervised either by the Principal/Deputy Principals or another teacher as determined by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

7 The Support Process for Students with AEN

Identification of those with AEN

Enrolling First Year Students

As per our school admission policy, PBC welcomes students with AEN and endeavors 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 AEN will be the same as that of any other applicant.

Following the conclusion of the enrolment process, it is necessary to determine which students have specific learning needs and plan for the learning of these students and the transition to secondary school of all students

Prior to entry, all parents/guardians are asked to complete a school transfer form which asks for information regarding each child’s learning needs, previous assessments and interventions. Permission is also sought to allow PBC access to all relevant records from the Primary School. The Student Passport, supplied by the Primary School will also be available to the Intake Team.

Collaboration between primary and post-primary schools is also important in helping to identify those who might be at risk during transition, so that monitoring can be put in place for students who may have emerging needs.

Sometimes a student, who had been receiving School support or learning support at primary school, may revert to Support for ALL in post-primary school. Equally, a student who had no School Support or learning support in primary school, may need School Support Plus in post-primary school, perhaps due to the more complex structure of post primary education

Enrolled Students

PBC follows the Guidelines for Teachers in A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools.

For most students with significant AEN in post primary schools, their difficulties have been identified during primary schooling and are well documented. For a smaller group of students, needs may emerge in post primary, perhaps arising out of an acquired injury, the more complex school environment, changes in home circumstances or perhaps needs may emerge as new students from abroad join the school community.

Mainstream teachers raise concerns to the SENCO about a student who experiences literacy, numeracy or emotional difficulties. The SENCO then assesses the student, liaises with the parents/guardians and the principal for actions to be taken if support is needed.

Screening tools utilised:

Post-Primary Assessment and Diagnostic Test – English (PPAD-E) (administered in First Year).

Drumcondra Literacy and Numeracy Standardised Tests (Post-Primary) (administered in Second Year).

Aptitude testing (Fourth Year).

Diagnostic tools utilised:

Woodcock Johnson IV (Literacy & Numeracy).

WIAT III (Literacy).

DASH & DASH 17+ (Handwriting).

As per Circular 0014/2017, the Identification of Students for Support takes into account the following:

1. Standardised tests can be used to screen and identify students' performance in reading and mathematics. Those students performing below the 10th percentile should be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy.

2. Students who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
3. Students who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010). This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment and behavioural, social and emotional functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Schools should also take into account needs set out in professional reports, where available.
4. Students with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties.
5. Students who have specific learning disabilities.
6. Students with significant AEN. For example, students with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These students need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
7. Schools should also carefully consider the needs of other students who may present with a range of learning whose interaction may present a significant barrier to the students' learning and ability to access the curriculum.
8. Students who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those students who need additional English Additional Language Support.

Supporting Students with AEN

Withdrawal (Support for a Few)

A curriculum reduction facilitates the withdrawal of students for support by SETs. This can be both in a small group or a one-to-one setting. The needs of each individual student are set out in the Student Support Plan (SSP). The SSP is agreed and reviewed on an annual basis between the school, the student and the parents/guardians.

Team Teaching (Support for Some)

Team Teaching is embedded in the time table of all First-Year students in English and Maths. Students with difficulties that do not withdraw for support based on a curriculum reduction are supported via this arrangement. In most instances a SET will be the co-teacher in a Team Teacher arrangement. This facilitates the SET to observe how students in the Support For a Few category

perform in the mainstream class environment. Team Teaching also occurs in other subjects as the need arises.

In Class Support (Support for All)

Supporting students with AEN is also the responsibility of the mainstream subject teacher. Teachers undertake a differentiated teaching and learning approach when setting learning outcomes in lessons.

Supporting Students with AEN During Exams

RACE & State Exams

In the annual booklet provided to the school, the State Examinations Commission states:

The scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE) 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

All applications for RACE are prepared by the SENCO and the AEN Department. The necessary support documentation is prepared by the AEN team in the months before the application deadline.

The necessary measures for the running of special centres are put in place by the school ahead of the state exams.

Accommodations in House Exams

Every effort is made to facilitate students with the same accommodations in house exams that they have been granted by the State Exams Commission. However, it should be noted that this is at the discretion of the school and is subject to various logistical matters.

Irish Exemptions

Currently, the granting of exemptions from the study of Irish is guided by Department *Circular 0054/2022*. It clearly states that exemptions from the study of Irish are to be granted in exceptional circumstances only.

The exemption from the study of Irish does not automatically give the student access to Learning Support.