



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY Meán Scoil Mhuire

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby

Principal (A): Ms. Mairéad Lyons

Date: 27th August 2024

Introduction

Mission Statement:

Meán Scoil Mhuire is a Voluntary Secondary Catholic School. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women.

Aims

- We respect the dignity of each person with her unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs.
- We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially and culturally.
- We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills, which enables them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, parents, students and the local community.
- Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition. We also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities

In line with the Mercy philosophy, the holistic development and full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, are of utmost importance. We strive to create an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy education is committed to on-going whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the board of management, teaching staff, parents and the wider community.

Rationale

This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional educational support for students with SEN

- 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 working document and will be reviewed periodically.
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

- The principle aim of learning support in Meán Scoil Mhuire is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional

development of students with SEN and to enable each to realise their individual potential.

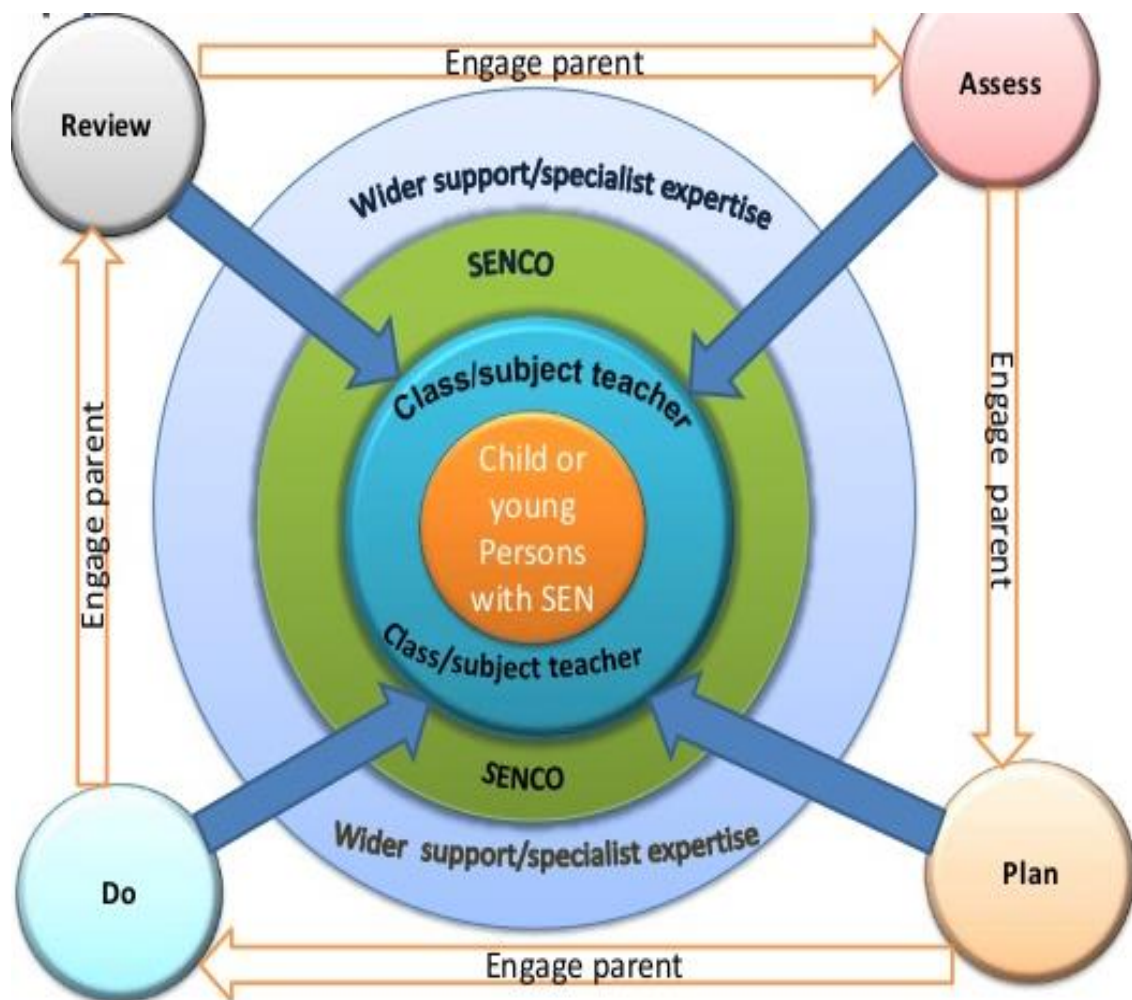
- In line with our ethos and official Department of Education (DE) recommendations, learning support strategies will actively seek to include the diverse range of cultures and abilities of its students.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all students with SEN, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Meán Scoil Mhuire. It is also intended to serve the school community including B.O.M., the Principal, the Teaching Staff, Ancillary Staff and Parents/ Guardians.

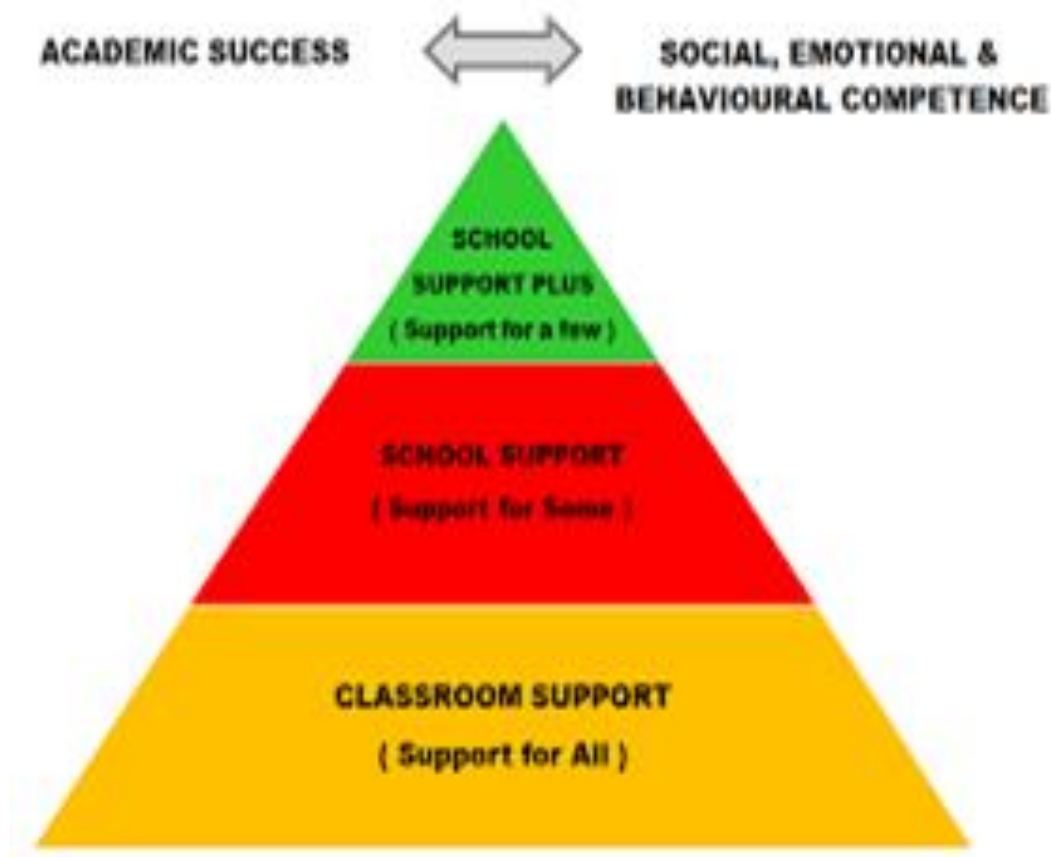
Special Educational Team (SET) Framework

We adopt a whole school approach to the Education and Welfare of our students', therefore the student is central to all our endeavours.



The Continuum of Support Model

The continuum of support model is currently being implemented in MSM in line with guidelines from the NCSE and NEPs to provide a whole school support system for students.



Support for ALL is a process of prevention, effective mainstream teaching and early identification. These systems are available to all students and effectively meet the needs of most students.

School Support (for Some) is an assessment and intervention process which is directed to some students, or groups of students who require some additional input.

School Support Plus (for a Few) is generally characterised by more intensive and individualised supports. This level of intervention is for students with complex and/or enduring needs and relatively few students will need this level of support.

Legal framework:

Meán Scoil Mhuire sets out to provide education for all its students, with reference to legislation regarding students with Special Educational Needs 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)
- The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, E.P.S.E.N. (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DE Circular letters
- The Guidelines published by the N.C.S.E.
- The Guidelines on Student Support files and Plans.
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (N.C.S.E).

Learning support provision seeks to:

- Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education.
- Provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy and numeracy, social and emotional skills..
- Involve parents in the support of their daughter's education.
- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of a whole school policy on learning support for pupils.
- Protect and enhance the self-esteem of the learner.
- To include the most recent best practice in SEN.
- To reflect the most recent recommendations, most particularly the continuum of support at post-primary schools (NEPS).
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with SEN.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of students with SEN in the school and in one-to-one and small class support groups and in our Autism Class. .

- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Ensure that students with SEN are educated in an inclusive environment.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the specific needs of students and of the contribution they can make in this area.
- Ensure that SEN is not viewed in isolation, but in the context of the whole school and community.
- Ensure that students with SEN are offered a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum and that they are provided for in an inclusive way.
- Set high standards for students with SEN and provide them with appropriate guidance, encouraging them to achieve to their full potential.
- Develop staff expertise in supporting students with SEN.
- Encourage and foster positive partnerships with parents, in order to achieve appropriate support at home and at home.
- To outline procedures and practices that will be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with SEN.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with SEN (Learning Support Guidelines)

Inclusion

Meán Scoil Mhuire welcomes students with Special Education Needs (SENN) and in line with the Education for Person's with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 recognises "the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment". It will endeavour to ensure that these students are free to participate in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable. Pro-active steps are taken to ensure that the school provides an inclusive environment that is non-judgemental and supportive.

Definitions

Special educational needs: In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the term "special educational needs" is defined as "*A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person*

learning differently from a person without that condition...” (Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/a3004.pdf>

Inclusion:

For the purposes of this document, the following definition by the N.C.S.E, 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 (N.C.S.E. 2010, p.39)

http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/ncse_inclusion.pdf

Special Class for Autism

Special classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enable students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. A special class offers a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream setting, even with support, for most or all of their school day. Students enrolled in special classes should be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible, in line with their abilities. In addition there may be opportunities for reverse inclusion, whereby mainstream students participate in the special class also.

Following advice from the SENO, Meán Scoil Mhuire opened the school’s first Autism class (Room 4) in August 2022. The purpose of the Room 4 class is to assist students with ASD to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the best of their ability, in an inclusive way in society and to live independent lives.

The ASD support class in MSM is funded and resourced by the Department of Education. Specific criteria apply for gaining access to the Autism class. These criteria are clearly outlined in the Admissions Policy. Please see the school website for further details.

www.scoilmhuirelongford.ie Under guidelines from the Department of Education the number of places in an Autism Support class is limited to six.

Roles and Responsibilities of Partners in the SET team:

The SET team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal(s), the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), the Special Education Teachers, EAL (English as an Additional Language) Teacher/s and the Guidance Counsellor(s). The team also includes any SNAs, as approved by the NCSE and DE.

The team is advised by the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and NEPS psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with SEN students in the school. The specific roles and responsibilities of personnel are as described in the DE/NCSE inspectorate publication, Inclusion of Students with Special Needs, Post-Primary guidelines (2007).

Board of Management

- To ensure that there are procedures in place to assist in assessment and support for students with additional educational needs.
- To ensure that the school has an up to date SEN policy in place, monitor the implementation of that policy and ensure its evaluation.
- To ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society.
- To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with SEN.
- To ensure the development of positive partnerships with parents and other relevant agencies and ensure that parents are informed of their child's SEN and how these needs are being met.
- To ensure that parents are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child's education.
- To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy under Section 14 of EPSEN.
- To promote inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled in all of the school community

Principal

- To appoint a SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) and work closely with the co-ordinator.

- To update the Board of Management on SET provision in the school.
- To consult with the SENCO and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education and Skills regarding needs and provisions.
- To ensure the effective and efficient use SET allocation, resources and funding.
- To establish a “Special Needs Support Team” in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN.
- To promote a whole school approach to special educational needs, make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to facilitate appropriate staff development in this area.
- To promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of SEN students.
- To ensure that procedures exist for consultation with primary schools with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN.
- To assist and support the process of application for Irish Exemptions.
- To provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion.
- To manage the implementation of policies and practices.
- To provide strategic support for evidence based interventions.
- To assign roles and responsibilities.
- To keep records of those receiving support and of the level of support provided.
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements as legislation evolves.
- To facilitate liaison with outside agencies and to encourage continuing professional development to develop capacity in SET work within the school.
- To direct the work of the SNAs and ensure a Pupil Personal Plan (PPP) is put in place for each student with SNA access.

SENCO- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator(s)

- To co-ordinate/ devise a school SET plan on an annual basis.
- To create and maintain a school register of students with SEN and those receiving additional support.
- To communicate the needs of students to teachers.
- To assist in the identification of students with SEN and coordinate/ oversee the creation and updating of Student Support Plans.(SSP)
- To liaise with SNAs to ensure that SSPs are put in place for students with S.E.N.

- To liaise with Year Heads on SET recommendations for students in their year group.
- To advise teachers on the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.
- To assist and advise the Principal on the allocation of SEN teaching resources, conducting a review process or the application for additional Teaching hours/ SNA support/ Assistive Technology, Irish exemptions as required..
- To process applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Exams (RACE).
- To provide RACE during house exam where possible given the resources available
- To co-ordinate and lead the Special Education Team.
- To liaise with outside professionals and agencies.
- To facilitate meetings with parents as necessary.
- To coordinate the administration and correction of standardised assessments.
- To ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents, etc.
- To report annually to the BOM.
- To attend meetings and contribute relevant information to the Student Support Teams on a weekly basis.
- To coordinate applications for Irish Exemptions in line with Circular 0055/2022.
- To advise and collaborate with SNAs around the care needs of relevant students.
- To facilitate a weekly meeting of the SET and collaborate on the creation of timetables for additional support.
- To oversee the application process for Irish exemptions as required, according to current DE Circulars.

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

ASD Class Co-ordinator

- To create and maintain SSPs for student with access to the ASD class.
- To collaborate with ASD class teachers and SNAs to identify the strengths and needs of the ASD class students.
- To update and review files and plans on a regular basis.
- To liaise with and advise teachers on the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students in the ASD class.

- To contribute at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies where appropriate.
- To communicate and liaise with parents as required.
- To advise the Principal on ASD class emerging needs, resources and cpd requirements etc.
- To attend weekly SET team meetings.

Year Head

- To liaise with the SET team and ASD class coordinator as appropriate and to support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school.
- To facilitate the inclusion of individual students with special educational needs by monitoring the student's progress within the year group.
- To encourage a respect and inclusion amongst students for everyone regardless of ability and special educational needs.
- To attend and contribute to weekly SST meetings.

Special Education Teacher(s) / EAL Teacher(s)

- Providing diagnostic and informal assessments for students at regular intervals in order to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention
- Collaborating with subject teachers by giving advice on teaching methodologies best suited to a student.
- Providing direct teaching to students with SEN 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 second level curriculum.
- To engage with team teaching/ cooperative teaching methodologies when withdrawal from the classroom may not be the most appropriate means of supporting the student.
- To contribute at meetings involving parents and/or outside agencies when appropriate.
- To collect and analyse school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records. Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff
- To plan, implement and review individual and/or group interventions
- To seek external professional advice in consultation with SENCO and Principal as needed.
- To advise SNAs around the needs of relevant students.
- To contribute and support the development of individual SSPs.

Guidance Counsellor(s)

- To work with the other members of the SET team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school.
- To provide counselling in personal, educational and career development for students with additional needs.
- To co-ordinate a number of assessments including the CAT4 prior to entry of students to the school.
- To provide career information.
- To present at the Options Information Evening for parents/guardians of students progressing to Senior Cycle.
- To consult with parents/guardians and staff.
- To liaise with external agencies and professionals as appropriate.
- To provide advice on vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience.
- To work closely with Year Heads and the SET team to identify students requiring support and to attend weekly SST and SET team meetings.
- To facilitate individual appointments for students in Third year, TY, Leaving Cert Applied and Leaving Cert to support them in making career decisions
- To advise students and parents/guardians on subject choice and subject load.
- To liaise with students, parents/guardians and the SET team in relation to D.A.R.E. and H.E.A.R. applications.

Main Stream Teachers

- To be aware of the School's policy and procedures for dealing with students with SEN and ensure all students' needs are met.
- To seek advice from the SET Department regarding students with SEN.
- To participate in CPD in the area of SET.
- To devise a plan, in consultation with the Learning Support Teacher, EAL Teacher or SENCO, on the most effective use of an SNA for a student in the class.
- To support and encourage independence in the student.
- To differentiate teaching and learning activities for students, including exceptionally able/gifted students
- To create a positive classroom environment for all students.

- To create opportunities for success for all students.
- To use assessment for learning and comment-only marking when appropriate.
- To establish and teach behavioural and learning expectations.
- To assess/ monitor progress and give feedback to all students.
- To consider the needs of students with SEN in all aspects of classroom planning.
- To inform SENCO of additional students who display signs of learning difficulties in class e.g. progress, application, communication, behaviour or interaction with other students.
- To complete referral forms, transfer of information forms, etc as required by the SET team.
- To contribute to group or individual planning and review sessions as requested.
- To implement agreed strategies.
- To prepare information for SSP / PPP planning meetings as requested.
- To implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies.
- To direct the work of the SNAs in the classroom.
- To inform parents of the progress of students through Parent-Teacher meetings and school reports.
- To contribute to the school development planning for their subject area whilst always having concern for students with additional needs.
- To build a bank of differentiated resources pertaining to their subject area, which are shared collegially.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

- To provide assistance to named students who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these students.
- To be familiar with the SET plan, devised by the Special Needs Teaching Team, and identify their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To 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.
- To attend both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- To assist / escort students on school trips.

- To liaise directly with parents/guardians of students in their care in relation to minor issues e.g. illness, trips away, equipment required for class etc.
- To give assistance to students with particular difficulties as required e.g. helping student with typing, writing or use of equipment to support students learning and accessing the curriculum, as identified in the SSP.
- To develop PPP plans for individual students and assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene, being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- To assist with house examinations if appropriate for the students in their care.
- To assist the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- To accompany individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a student from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SET Department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.
- To give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers.
- To participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- To engage with parents/guardians of students with SEN as required and directed by school management.
- To undertake other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- SNAs are expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SENCO with a copy.

Links with Outside Agencies

The EPSEN Act (2004) assures interlinking provision between the National Council for Special Education Needs (NCSE), The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), and the

Health Service Executive and the school. In accordance with this act, the school will work with the local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), the local National Educational Psychologist Service (NEPS) psychologist, the local resource teachers for Travellers, the Blind and the Hearing impaired, psychologists, or psychiatrists from the social welfare Department and the Health Service Executive, School Completion Programme (SCP) and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of any student. It will be customary to hold case meetings with relevant professionals with the permission and knowledge of the student's parents/guardians (and their attendance) to determine the best approach and provision for the student(s) in question.

Involvement of Parents/ Guardians

The school recognises it's responsibility under Section 14 of the EPSEN Act 2004, with regard to informing and consulting with parents on all matters relating to their child's education.

Meán Scoil Mhuire provides support to Parents/Guardians by:

- The Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCLO) working in partnership with parents.
- Liaising with parents prior to transfer and organising an Induction Meeting prior to the student transferring from primary school.
- Running an 'Induction Programme' for all incoming students.
- Informing parents about the range of extracurricular activities available for first-year students so that the parents can encourage their child to participate.
- Having an effective anti-bullying policy (including a 'peer mentor' system), and keep parents informed of issues relating to bullying.
- Actively encouraging parents to contact the SENCO, HSCLO.
- Parents/Guardians are kept informed of interventions and consent is sought for referrals to outside support agencies.

Parents and the transmission of information

The parents of a child with SEN can provide valuable information to the school in relation to their child's learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning preferences. The SET team seeks relevant professional reports from parents of students with SEN upon enrolment. Parents/ Guardians are asked to complete a form indicating if student has had educational/medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and if they have previously attended learning support/resource. Guidance Counsellor visits the feeder primary schools to

support the transition of incoming 1st years students to secondary school. Copies of Professional Assessment Reports, and student support plans are requested from their previous school.

Parents and Home-School Links

Under DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCLO) seeks to promote partnership between parents, teachers and community family support services. The HSCL Coordinator is released from teaching duties, in order to work intensively with and support parents/guardians. The overarching goal of the HSCL Coordinator is to improve educational outcomes for children through their work with the key adults in the child's life. Home Visits are the primary point of contact for HSCL Coordinators, as this is where strong relationships are built with parents/guardians.

The school provides parents with regular reports on the progress of their child.

- The school journal is used for weekly/ daily home-school communication, and parent-teacher meetings are held once a year for face to face communication.
- Students receive a written school report twice in the school year (at Christmas and Summer)
- For some students with SEN a differentiated report may be provided.
- Special arrangements may be made with the parents/guardians in relation to the homework that each individual student with SEN is expected to undertake.
- Regular communication is available through meetings on request.
- Parents help the school by keeping the teachers informed of the progress/ difficulties, they observe in their child's learning as they progress through post primary school. This should include showing an interest in the completion of homework and familiarising themselves with approaches taken in school.

Involvement of students

The SET department fully involve students in skills audits and discussions around their learning needs.

- Students have input into their learning targets.
- Students are involved in the planning of their Student Support Plan.
- Students on behaviour support plans are encouraged to self monitor.

**The school believes that achievements are maximised when students take ownership of their learning.*

Provision and the Continuum of Support

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised in Meán Scoil Mhuire, is underpinned by recognition that special 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 NEPs Continuum of Support.

1. Student Support Plans (SSPs)
2. Pupil Personal Plan (PPP)

SSPs are compiled if a student is in receipt of Learning Support/ Resource hours. **PPPs** are completed for each student with SNA access. The SET Coordinator, subject teacher, outside agencies, the student and, where possible, the parent are involved in the development of the programme at the start of the academic year.

Monitoring and assessing is the responsibility of SET Coordinator, class teacher and Learning Support Teacher.

Reviewing the programme and targets is undertaken throughout the year.

The SSPs & PPPs are kept on the students file in the Principal's office. A second copy for the purpose of regular update by the SET team is kept in the Learning Support Room. No further duplication of student information is permitted. (reference Data Protection Policies of Meán Scoil Mhuire). Professional reports e.g. Psychological Assessments, Speech and Language Assessments, Occupational Therapists reports, Audiology Reports etc. will be held on the student file in the Principal's office. No duplication is permitted. The SET team may access relevant information from the student files when deemed necessary by the Principal.

The SSP process involves:

1. Gathering Information: Personal/ Background details.
2. Educational details (primary school details/assessment and learning support details)
3. Categorisation of need (assessment reports/ information attained from parents)
4. General profile based on formal/informal assessment.
5. SEN provision
6. Priority Need
7. Setting targets for each priority learning need:

8. Identifying the strategies and resources required:
9. Relevant documentation
10. Annual review: A review occurs each academic year. However it may occur more often dependent on student progress and circumstances

These SSP aims to include the most relevant information in a clear and concise manner.

Meán Scoil Mhuire agreed to follow the NEPS guidelines for creating learner profiles in the academic year 2017-2018. These are a working document and will/can be altered throughout the academic year as needed.

Enrolment

The schools admissions policy outlines the procedures with regard to the enrolment of students with SEN and ASD. For further information please view these policies on the school website www.scoilmhuirelongford.ie

Provision for students with known and documented needs:

Transfer from Primary School:

The transfer of information from primary level to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. Following acceptance of a place in the school, parents of incoming first years are invited to attend an information meeting outlining practical supports, structure of learning support and resource teaching hours, pastoral care structures and information regarding Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Exams (RACE). The DEIS status of Meán Scoil Mhuire includes access to the additional support of the Longford School Completion Programme (SCP). Individual students may be referred may be via the HSCLO and designated School Project Worker to access these supports. This is done with parental consent.

The SENCO will:

- Liaise with the Guidance Counsellor regarding information collected from the feeder Primary Schools.
- Liaise with Primary School and parents/guardians of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school.
- Meet with the parent/ guardian of incoming students with SEN.
- Establish communication with the primary school resource/ learning support teacher.

- Liaise with the Principal in the application process for Special Education Teaching Hours/SNA support/Assistive Technology.

Once accepted to Meán Scoil Mhuire:

- All incoming first year students take a Cognitive Ability Test; CAT 4. These tests can also be used to identify strengths and needs of incoming students with SEN. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including exceptionally able students.
- The Post-Primary Assessment and Diagnosis – English (PPAD-E) is a standardised test of literacy in English that is administered to all first year students. It is a screening and diagnostic tool for assessing literacy skills and supporting teaching and learning. It was developed by the Department of Education, through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in collaboration with the Educational Research Centre (ERC).
- Additional school based assessment will be carried out on all first year students in the core subjects of Irish, English and Maths to ascertain students in need of additional support. Students may avail of smaller core subject divisions, subject to parental consent and DE allocations.
- At the beginning of each academic year all students on the SEN Register are reviewed individually in terms of type of support needed and curriculum load.

Students transferring into other Year Groups

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychological Report, School Reports, attendance, etc.) This is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal(s). Any relevant information is then passed to the Year Head and the SENCO.

Provision for students with emerging needs

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT 4, in class assessment, informal observation, parental concern). Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Parental consent is obtained before diagnostic tests are administered.

Model of SET provision

The post-primary continuum of support is followed. The students with the greatest level of need get the greatest level of support. The chart below is not prescriptive or exhaustive but serves as an example of supports that may be put in place.

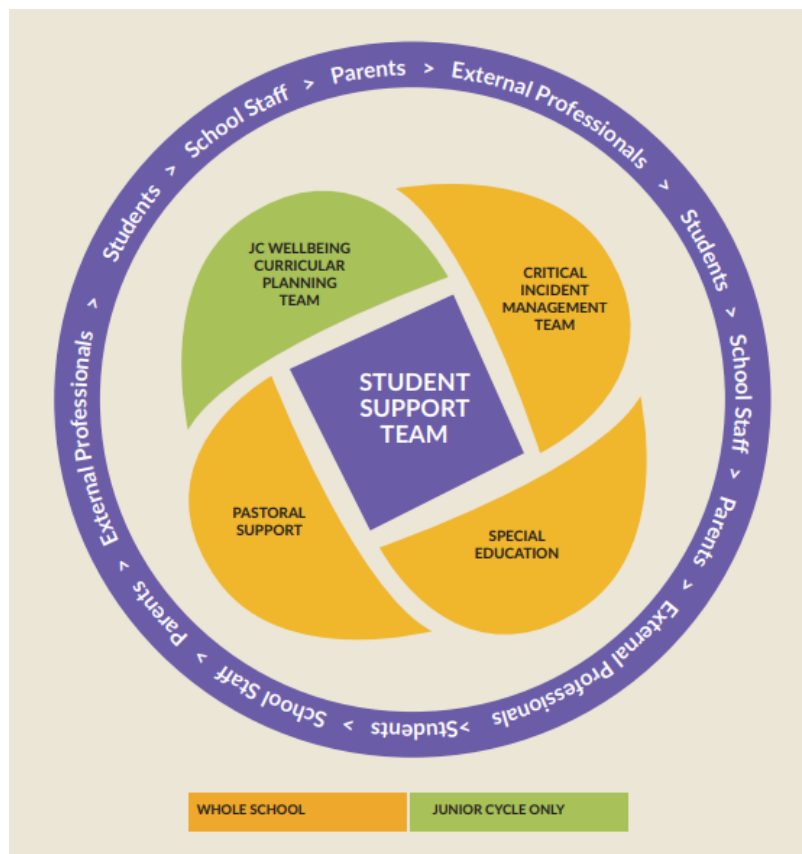
Whole-School and Classroom (Support for All)	<p>The Post-Primary Continuum of Support contains a range of ideas and resources to assist in identification, intervention and monitoring of outcomes. The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students in the class. Identification of those needing additional support can be informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake screening e.g. CAT 4 • Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport • PPAD-E • Teacher observation and Teacher assessment • Learning Environment Checklist • Student Support Team involvement • Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy • Student consultation • Parental consultation <p>Where students continue to present with significant difficulties, despite whole-school interventions (such as differentiated teaching, a mentoring programme or social skills group), School Support (for Some) is initiated.</p>
School Support (For Some)	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures /assessments • Parent/student interview • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties • Access to Cubbie • Purple Pass Access <p>Support at this level can take many forms, for example: team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, peer mentoring, inclusion in social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems, L2LPs. A Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
School Support Plus (For a Few)	<p>At this level, subject teacher(s), parents and special education teachers, in collaboration with outside agencies, as required, engage in a more detailed and systematic approach to information gathering and assessment. This involves using a broad range of formal and informal assessment and diagnostic tools, including teacher observation, student interview, measures of cognitive ability and social, emotional, behavioural and adaptive functioning, Cubbie, Purple Pass, SNA access as appropriate. SCP referral as required. Data generated from this process are used to plan appropriate interventions and serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A Support Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised, and to involve longer term planning and consultation. Access to ASD class granted by SENO where appropriate.</p>

Small Group or Individual Intervention

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 teachers, the student, principal and guidance counsellor.

Student Support Team (SST)

There are two student support teams in the school, one focusing on Junior Cycle Students (1st-3rd years) and one focusing on Senior Cycle students (TY, LCA, 5th and 6th years). The student support team is a central part of the student support system in the school. It is the overarching team concerned with the progressing of actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students. It is a mechanism through which many of the existing student supports are co-ordinated and planned. A student support team acts as a school hub, bringing coherence to the support system by coordinating the valuable work of departments, teams and/or groups such as the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Curricular Planning team, the Special Education Needs (SEN) department, the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) along with guidance and pastoral staff. School Leadership also has a significant role guiding and supporting the school's student support team. Student support teams meet on a weekly basis throughout the school year.



Reasonable Accommodations for State and In House Examinations (RACE)

In consultation with the principal applications are made by the SENCO for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate, Leaving Cert Applied or Leaving Certificate Examination. Information relating to RACE is provided to parents on an annual basis. A range of accommodations are available to the students as per circular criteria. The school will make application for the relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Cycle level and these accommodations can be reactivated for Leaving Cert, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need for the accommodation. Further details are available in the RACE Guide for Exam Students at www.examinations.ie. Where resources permit and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations may be available to students who qualify for such accommodations at mock exams and other school assessments. Specialised reports may be created where the student has sat many differentiated exams during in-house assessments.

Communication

SET Team

- The SENCO and the SET team aim to meet formally once a week. Informal meetings occur on a daily basis.
- Members of the SET team may meet with mainstream teachers formally or informally. There may be formal meetings at the beginning of the year between the mainstream teachers and SET team with regards to incoming first year students with SEN and updated information on students in other year groups.
- The SET Team aims to communicate with each other as much as possible.
- At the end of each year, the SET team may collect relevant student information to use as reference for the following school year, should a change of SET teacher occur.

Mainstream Teachers

- At the beginning of each school year, the SET Coordinator updates a register of information including the incoming first years with SEN. This information is shared with teachers at the start of each school year.
- SEN is on the agenda at every staff meeting.
- Information is also communicated via the Year Head and student support structures such as the Student Support Teams.
- At the end of each year, the subject teacher completes a transfer of student information sheet for each student with SEN in their class detailing interventions that work for the student, assessment of course work, homework, behaviour and attendance. Completion and storage of these forms is the responsibility of the S.E.T. Department under guidance from the Principal. The forms are made available to new teachers of the student in each particular subject area and are retained in the student file.

- Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Registers- Are maintained by the SET team and made available to teachers through the password protected information management system.
- Tabhair Aire Codes- A colour coded list of all students experiencing difficulty in school may be maintained and updated regularly at the SST meetings. This is only available through the schools password protected information management system.

Parents

Communication with parents is achieved in the following manner:

- HSCLO
- School Open Day
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Letters to the parents
- Student Journal
- Telephone Calls
- Text message, VShare communications
- Email
- Meetings involving external agencies
- Meetings with the SET Coordinator and Principal/Guidance Counsellor/Year Head where relevant.

Record-Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept on the individual students file at the Principals office in a locked cabinets. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Exemptions from Irish

- Incoming first years with Irish exemptions are noted.
- Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted by parents/guardians with the enrolment application.
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant documentation.
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular M10/94). http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/ppc10_94.pdf
- Where possible, withdrawal for Learning Support is arranged for students with SEN who are exempt from the study of Irish, during Irish time. This is not guaranteed and is limited by timetable restrictions and staff availability.

Link to other School Policies

➤ Admissions Policy

➤ Acceptable Use Policy

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ➤ Anti-Bullying Policy | ➤ Enrolment Policy |
| ➤ Assessment Instruments Policy | ➤ Expulsion Policy |
| ➤ Attendance Policy | ➤ Health & Safety Policy Statement |
| ➤ Child Protection Policy | ➤ Homework Policy |
| ➤ Code of Behaviour | ➤ R.S.E. Policy |
| ➤ Data Protection Policies | ➤ School Visitors Policy |
| ➤ DEIS Plan | ➤ S.P.H.E. Policy |
| ➤ English as an Additional language
(E.A.L. Policy) | ➤ Suspension Policy |

Links to Supporting Documentation

- A Continuum of Support- Resource Pack for Post-Primary Schools
<https://assets.gov.ie/40658/f896b4d014464ad1b9241e91c5405370.pdf>
- Circular 0055/2022- Exemptions from the study of Irish-Revising Circular 0053/2019
<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f33d5-exemptions-from-the-study-of-irish-post-primary/>
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f1dd1-exemption-from-the-study-of-irish-forms-and-documents/>
- A continuum of support for post-primary schools
<https://assets.gov.ie/40658/f896b4d014464ad1b9241e91c5405370.pdf>

Priority Areas for Development

- Ongoing professional development opportunities for all staff in the area of special education, curricular changes, technological supports, accessibility options is encouraged.
- Raising teacher awareness of, and expertise in team-teaching and differentiated teaching methodologies to support student learning.

Consultation

- This policy was formulated in accordance with circular 0014/2017 and in consultation with the teaching staff and management of Meán Scoil Mhuire, parents of students with special educational needs (SEN), the board of management (BOM), special needs assistants (SNAs), the national educational psychological service (NEPS), and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

Review, Assessment and Evaluation

- An evaluation of the SET provision in the school will be carried out at the end of each school year, May-August.
- This policy will be reviewed by management and the SET team in May 2026 or earlier pending any review of the allocation model by the DE and NCSE.

APPENDIX A:

Abbreviations:

ASD	- Autism Spectrum Disorder
BOM	- Board of Management
CAT 4	- Cognitive Ability Testing 4
DARE	- Disability Access Route to Education
DE	- Department of Education and Skills
DEIS	- Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
EAL	- English as an Additional Language
EPSEN	- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
HSCLO	- Home School Community Liaison Officer
HEAR	- Higher Education Access Route
LCA	- Leaving Cert Applied
L2LP	- Level 2 Learning Programme
NCSE	- National Council for Special Education
NEPS	- National Educational Psychological Service
PPP	- Pupil Personal Plan
RACE	- Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations
RSE	- Relationships and Sexuality Programme
SCP	- School Completion Programme
SEC	- State Examinations Commission
SENCO	- Special Education Needs Co- Ordinators
SENO	- Special Educational Needs Organiser
SESS	– Special Education Support Service
SET	- Special Educational Teachers/Teaching
SNA	- Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	- Social, Personal and Health Education
SSP	- Student Support Plan
SST	- Student Support Team
TY	- Transition Year