

Holy Family Secondary School



Additional Needs Policy
Whole School Inclusion Support

Contents




- Section 1:** Link to Mission Statement
- Section 2:** Aims of our AEN policy and AEN department in Holy Family
- Section 3:** Rationale & Context of AEN Policy
- Section 4:** Roles & Responsibilities of AEN Partners
- Section 5:** Legal and Policy Context of Additional Education Needs Policy
- Section 6:** Terms and definitions
- Section 7:** Models of Provision and the Continuum of Support
- Section 8:** Allocation of Support to Students
- Section 9:** Communication

Appendix 2: Policy Review Timeline

Holy Family Secondary School staff, the Parents' Association, the Student Representative Council, the Board of Management, amongst others, were consulted during the formation of the policy.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 12th December 2024

Proposed Next Policy Review date: As required

		
Chairperson, Board of Management Mr M. Carew	Secretary, Board of Management Ms S. Allen	Diocesan Representative Sr. K Cuskelly

Section 1: Link to Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states:

'We promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family. Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each student so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues'

Holy Family Secondary School continuously strives to create a progressive learning environment for our students, guided by Christian values.

Section 2: Aims of our AEN Policy and AEN Department in Holy Family Secondary School

The aim of the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department is to facilitate the social, emotional and educational (including literacy and numeracy) and physical wellbeing of students with additional educational needs. This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- Ensure that Holy Family Secondary School is an inclusive learning environment that enables students with AEN to live a full life and to realise their full potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum and through engagement with appropriate co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that there is a coordinated, continuous, appropriate and caring response to students with AEN.
- To identify additional educational needs that our students have and, assess and support students as early as is possible and/or practicable.
- To involve parents and students in the identification, assessment and delivery of Learning Support and to strive for close co-operation between all concerned.
- To meet the needs of students who have additional educational needs, by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of available resources.
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of our students with additional needs including those that may be particularly gifted.
- 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 the AEN team, guidance teachers, the Pastoral Care Team, school management, teaching staff and parents/guardians.

Using the Continuum of Support framework, HFSS can identify students' educational needs,

including academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The framework emphasises the importance of looking at a student's needs in context. Many students will have their special educational needs identified prior to their transfer to post- primary school. It is important for our school to gather information on students' learning from primary schools and parents to plan provision and to ensure continuity and progression in the students' education. **To ensure these aims are fulfilled, the Board of Management needs to be explicitly made aware of any special and/or additional needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed. This information must be communicated to the school by the parent(s)/guardian(s).** The Board of Management, in conjunction with parent(s)/guardian(s), forward all relevant information received, to the National Council for Special Education Needs (N.C.S.E.) who allocate resources based on Department of Education policy. In making provision for special need students the Board of Management needs to know whether the incoming student has had access to any of the following:

- *Special Needs Assistant or Classroom Assistant*
- *A Special Class*
- *Help, for specific needs, from any Resource Teacher*
- *Assistance with behavioural modification*
- *Psychological assessment - report to be provided*
- *Any additional resources to help with their special needs*
- *Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance*
- *Exemption from Irish*
- *Any resource in relation to travel or mobility, etc.*
- *Other resources not listed above*

NOTE: If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available, as far as is practicable.

Having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, the school will assess how the special needs of the students can be met. Please note, it is never the school's intention to delay allocations or the implementation of strategies, but it may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. **Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their child's specific educational needs well in advance of their child's commencement in first year.**

The school will use the resources provided by the Department of Education to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs. Further to the procedures outlined above and in accordance with Section 14.1(e) of the E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004, the school shall ensure that *"teachers and other relevant employees of the school are aware of the importance of identifying children and students who have special educational needs."*

This policy as a working document reflects our current practice in Holy Family Secondary School in relation to facilitating and promoting a whole school approach to additional educational needs.

Section 3: Rationale and Context of AEN Policy

Additional Needs are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) 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...”

Holy Family Secondary School, in compliance with its Mission Statement welcomes applications from students with AEN. The school operates an open admissions policy; promoting equality of access, participation and benefit for all, in as far, as the school can fulfil the needs of an individual student. This is consistent with the provisions of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2002, Section 2, which provides that;

“a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or the degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with

*(a) the best interests of the child in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
(b) the effective provision of education with whom the child is to be educated.”*

The various categories of additional educational needs, the definitions of these categories are set by the Department of Education (DE) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and are as follows:

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems
- Mild general learning disability
- Borderline general learning disability
- Specific learning disability
- Moderate general learning disability
- Students who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of their peers
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Students with temporary emotional trauma
- Students who fall behind from the general level of progress of the class because of other reasons (i.e. illness)
- Students whose first language is not English – English as an additional language (EAL)
- Students who are particularly gifted and need additional stimulus
- Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Students with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome
- Specific Speech and Language disorder
- Multiple disabilities

The policy applies to all students with AEN, including students with exceptional ability, who attend Holy Family Secondary School. It is also intended to inform best practice and policy across the school community including Board of Management, the Principal, the teaching and ancillary staff and parents.

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities of Additional Education Needs Partners

The AEN partners are the Principal, Deputy Principals, the AEN Coordinator and the Guidance Counsellors, the Pastoral Care Team, AEN teachers, Mainstream teachers, SNAs, parents and students. The AEN Coordinator works closely with Year Heads, Class Teachers and mainstream teachers when the need arises. The team is advised by the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist as well as other agencies and professionals involved with students with AEN in the school.

The Role of the Board of Management is to:

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed regularly and to ensure that the school meets its requirements in relation to inclusion under the Education Act (1998) and all relevant legislation.
- Ensure that a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is provided so that students learn the skills necessary to participate in society.
- Ensure that necessary resources are sought and provided on behalf of students with AEN.
- Promote inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of AEN is instilled in all the school community.

The Role of the Senior Leadership Team is to:

- To oversee and develop the implementation of the HFSS policies on AEN.
- Inform the Board of Management of issues with AEN.
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special needs and learning support services.
- Appoint an AEN Coordinator and work closely with the Co-ordinator.
- Deploy staff and allocate resources in collaboration with the AEN coordinator.
- Consult with the AEN Coordinator and other personnel who liaise with the Department of Education and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) regarding needs and provisions.
- To ensure adequate timetabling of hours for learning support and resource hours and to allocate time for staff to reflect, review and plan curricular arrangements, for planning for students with AEN, for consulting with support personnel and other professionals regarding the needs, progress, and review of individual students.
- Access available resources and promote a whole school approach to additional educational needs.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to provide appropriate staff development in this area.
- Promote the development of positive partnerships with parents of AEN students.
- Provide leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/assessment, inclusion/integration.

- Manage the implementation of policies and practices.
- Ensure that systems are in place for effective sharing of relevant information on students' needs with all subject teachers.
- Direct the work of the SNAs.

The Role of AEN Coordinator (AENCO) is to:

- To coordinate the collection of assessments of incoming students and work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and feeder schools to identify students with special and/or additional needs.
- To work effectively with Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). To meet regularly with SNAs..
- To work with the Senior Leadership Team in the allocation of AEN timetabling and provision.
- To be responsible for the submission of N.C.S.E. forms and be responsible for liaising with external service providers i.e. N.E.P.S. and the Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.)
- To coordinate the exemptions from Irish and to arrange the applications for reasonable accommodations for the State Examinations.
- To organise assessments with NEPS and to liaise with external agencies.
- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the AEN Department.
- Communicate with the Senior Leadership Team in relation to AEN/SEN matters on an on-going basis.
- Coordinate provision for students with AEN in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Lead policy development and promote best practice.
- Create and maintain a school register of students with AEN.
- Assist in the identification of students with AEN.
- Collaborate with the AEN team in providing additional support.
- Ensure that Student Support Files (SSFs) / Personal Pupil Plans (PPPs) / Individual education plans (IEPs) are up to date.
- Support collaboration between Subject Teachers and Additional Educational Needs Teachers (AENTs) through team-teaching.
- Assist the School Leadership Team in the allocation of resources.
- Administer, correct and oversee standardised assessments in collaboration with the AEN team.
- Liaise and communicate with parents to plan and review student progress.
- Ensure that systems are in place for the referral of students by teachers, parents etc.
- Facilitate a weekly meeting of the AEN core team and SNA team.

The Role of the AEN Core Team is to:

- Develop, implement, and monitor a whole-school approach to the education of students with additional educational needs.
- Develop, implement, and monitor a whole-school approach to the assessments of students with additional educational needs.

The Role of the Year Head is to:

- Support the creation of an inclusive climate within the school and contribute to the work of the AEN team, where appropriate.

- Facilitate the inclusion of any individual student with additional educational needs by monitoring the student's progress within the year group.

The Role of the Additional Education Needs Teacher(s) (AENT) is to:

- 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 second level curriculum.
- Provide team 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.
- Collaborate with subject teachers on teaching methodologies best suited to the student.
- Collect and interpret school-wide screening data, including first year screening assessment, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records. This also includes gathering information from subject teachers / other staff.
- To plan for and support Personal Pupil Plans/Individual Education Plans, implement and review individual and/or group interventions.
- Report on progress of their allocated student.
- To advise subject teachers and other departments on employing differentiated teaching methods and resources in their subject teaching.
- To support ongoing testing and monitoring of the needs of the student body.
- Meet where necessary, the relevant professionals from outside agencies.
- Advise teachers of the recommendations made in professional assessments relating to individual students.

The Role of the Guidance Team is to:

- To participate in the preparation of the AEN Policy of the school and to work with the Special Needs Team and other staff in the implementation and review of this policy.
- To liaise on an ongoing basis with the other members of the AEN Team and Pastoral Care Team as relevant matters arise and to provide a range of services to all students, including careers information, study skills and examination techniques, consultation with parents, referral services etc. with an awareness of the AEN of students
- To work together with AEN. Team to conduct assessments of incoming first years and other students new to the school and to advise the Principal of any matters arising from such assessments.
- To support students who have been referred and to advise on supports available at third level for AEN students and to assist students in assessing these supports
- Work closely with Year Heads to identify students requiring support.
- Facilitate individual appointments for students in transition year and sixth year to support them in making career decisions.
- Advise students and parents on subject choice and subject load.
- Assist with the administration of testing e.g. CAT4, etc.
- Liaise with students, parents and the AEN team in relation to DARE / HEAR applications and to process them.

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

- To carry out duties as assigned by the Principal, in consultation with the AENCO in accordance with Circular 0030/2014.
- To meet regularly with AENCO.
- To cater for the care needs of the AEN Students including assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting, general hygiene and, where appropriate administering medication.
- To provide assistance where necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. writing, typing, photocopying etc.
- To provide assistance on out-of-school activities as may be required.
- Be involved in the Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) devised by their primary AEN teacher/AENCO and give guidance on 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 and staff meetings when appropriate.
- Assist/escort students on school trips.
- Be mindful of the health and safety needs of the student
- Assist with RACE for in house examinations (when appropriate).
- Assist teachers in the supervision of students during assembly, recreation and in movement from classroom to another.
- Accompany individuals or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the class.
- Participate with school development planning, when appropriate, and cooperate with any such changes with policies and practises arising from the school development process.
- Engage with parents of students with AEN as required.
- Treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- Provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the School Leadership Team and AEN Coordinator with a copy.

The Role of the Mainstream Teacher is to:

- To implement the AEN policy, by considering the needs and learning styles of all their students and to employ suitable teaching methods so that all students can access the curriculum at an appropriate level (for example, differentiation, appropriate class tests/exams etc.)
- **The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with special and/or additional educational needs, including exceptionally able/gifted students.**
- Be aware of the school policy and procedures for supporting students with AEN and ensure the needs of students are met.
- Seek advice from the AEN Department regarding students with AEN.
- Plan for the effective use of an SNA for students in the class. This can be done in consultation with AEN Teacher.
- Support / encourage independence in the student.
- Identify students who may be at risk (considering general progress or organisational, communicational, behavioural, emotional, or social needs).
- Complete referral forms or information forms as required by the AEN team.
- Create a positive and inclusive environment for all students.
- Create opportunities for success.
- Establish behavioural and learning expectations.
- Assess/monitor progress.

- Inform parents of the progress of students through parent teacher meetings, school reports and VS Ware.
- Contribute to school development planning for their subject area to include students with AEN.

The Role of Parents/Guardians is to:

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/Guardian should:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of up-to-date professional reports and reviews should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage and thereafter throughout the child's educational journey in HFSS.
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend parent-teacher meetings.
- Inform HFSS of their child's needs, at the transition stage.

The Role of Student is:

- To contribute to the drawing up of learning programmes by adding input regarding effective methodologies.
- To contribute to the review of learning programmes.
- To co-operate with the agreed programme and its evaluation by participation in appropriate tests and assessments.
- Become familiar with the learning focus that has been set for them in different subjects.
- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of learning focus.
- Develop 'ownership' of the 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.

Links with Outside Agencies and Services

The E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004) assures interlinking provision between the National Council for Special Education Needs (NCSE), TUSLA and school. In accordance with this act, the school will work with the local S.E.N.O, the local N.E.P.S. psychologist, the visiting teachers for the Blind and the Hearing impaired, psychologists, psychiatrists from the social welfare Department and the Health Executive and any other relevant professionals in providing an integrated response to the needs of any particular student

It may be necessary to hold case meetings with relevant professionals with the permission and knowledge of the student's parents (and their attendance) in order to determine the best *approach and provision for the students in question. Notes from such meetings will be recorded and maintained in the student's file.*

Section 5: Legal and Policy Context of Additional Education Needs Policy

Our AEN policy aims to outline our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all our students. This commitment is underpinned by the ethos, aims, vision, values and culture of HFSS and is guided by relevant legislation including:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998, 2003 and 2018)
- The Freedom of Information Acts (1997 and 2003)
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- The Disability Act (2005)
- The Education Admission to Schools Act (2018)
- Children First Act, 2015
- DES Circular letters and specifically the Special Education Circulars 0014/2017, 0084/2024
- The guidelines published by the NCSE
- The guidelines on the Continuum of Support Post-Primary Schools (NEPS)
- The guidelines published by the Special Education Needs Support Service (SESS)
- Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools published by the DES
- HFSS Assessments Policy

This policy aligns with other AEN specific policies;

HFSS Accelerated Learner's Programme for Exceptionally Able Students

HFSS Irish Exemption protocols

HFSS Additional Needs Education School Policy on Modern Foreign Language at Junior Cycle

Section 6: Important terms and definitions

- **Working Definition of Additional Education Needs**

"Special education needs" means, in relation to a person, 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. While the definition in the act does not refer to students with emotional or behavioural difficulties, section 7 (4)(b) of the Equal Status Act 2000 does indicate a category of special needs in this case and the school will be mindful of such students also in providing for special needs.

- **National Council for Special Education (NCSE)**

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs.

- **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supports the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. The service is organised on a regional basis with psychologists being assigned to a group of schools. Psychologists work with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. Where an individual assessment is required, it will only be carried out with the written consent of the parents or guardians. Psychologists provide oral and written feedback to both parents/guardians and teachers.

- **Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)**

SENOs are appointed by the NCSE to provide a direct local service to the parents of children with special educational needs and to schools within geographical areas. This involves identifying the needs of children and deciding on the level of resources schools require to provide them with an appropriate education service.

- **The Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)**

The statutory and school support services of the Child and Family Agency's Educational Welfare Services work together collaboratively and cohesively with schools and other relevant services to secure better educational outcomes for children and young people. Schools are obliged by law under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 to submit reports on school attendance to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency

List of associated acronyms

BOM	Board of Management
DE	<i>Department of Education</i>
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
PPP	Personal Pupil Plan also known as IEP (Individual Education Plan)
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
RACE	Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organiser (NCSE)
AENCO	Additional Education Needs Co-ordinator (school)
SNA	Special Needs Assistant

Section 7: Models of Provision and the Continuum of Support

Principles to guide the implementation process per DES circular 0014/2017.

The model of assessment and intervention, as practised by HFSS, is underpinned by the recognition that additional education 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. HFSS has established and maintained a core team of teachers to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. Members of the team have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of students with special needs in HFSS. Students with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level

of support, and whenever possible, these students are supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support. The special education teaching supports is not used to reduce the student-teacher ratio for general subject teaching or to provide additional subject options for students who do not have special education needs.



Prior to Entering HFSS:

Parents have the opportunity to meet with members of the AEN team. All sixth-class students enrolling in HFSS are required to complete the Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) in First year in HFSS. This test identifies strengths and needs across four different areas. Students who achieve below a threshold percentile in any of these areas will be considered for AEN support.

Once a place in the school has been accepted, parents are asked to complete the Essential Information form indicating if their child has had educational / medical reports relevant to supporting them in school and/or if they previously attended AEN classes. Copies of IEPs/ student support files from the primary school are also requested from the parent by the AEN team for those students identified as having either an emergent need or a known one.

Students with AEN are also identified following consultation with the feeder primary schools. Principals and teachers from primary feeder schools, with parental consent, inform HFSS of areas of concern and forward relevant information in the AEN Transfer Form. This includes a description and category of needs, individual learning programmes as well as any educational, medical or psychological reports and/or multi-disciplinary team reports relevant to the education of the student.

Where they are available, Primary School Passports containing information such as the Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test and the Mary Immaculate Reading Attainment Test (Micra T) STEN scores and teacher observations/comments are reviewed by the AEN Department.

MFL/Irish Exemption

For MFL exemption, please see the policy 'Additional Needs Education School Policy on Modern Foreign Language at Junior Cycle'

School Based AEN Identification within the Continuum of Support:

HFSS has an Assessment Policy that should be read and interpreted in conjunction with this policy.

Students may need to be assessed in school by the AEN team for the purposes of determining how best to support their individual learning needs. These assessments will consist of both formal and informal assessments. Support provided to students with special educational needs should be

based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and students). Identification of educational needs is central to our policy. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to respond to needs in a flexible and appropriate way.

If parents/guardians have concerns regarding their child's educational progress, they should contact the school to discuss the matter with a member of the AEN team. A Subject/Class Teacher or Year Head can refer any student about whom they have concerns to the AEN Team. **The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with special educational needs.**

Once a referral is made, a process of formal and informal assessment is undertaken by the AEN team.

Means of Informal Assessment:

Informal assessment will include but will not be limited to:

- writing samples
- maths samples
- learning styles
- in class observations from mainstream teachers, AEN teachers and SNAs
- consultations with parents/guardian/primary school
- meetings with pupils.

Means of Formal Assessment:

Formal assessment may include, but not be limited to:

- CAT 4, Wiat-III-UK, JW and oral language assessment.
- Review of entrance assessment/CAT4 result/Primary School Passport
- Review of class tests and in-house exams and reports
- *Behavioural record if appropriate.*
- Consultation with Guidance Counsellors.

The senior leadership team or any member of the AEN team, having consulted with the parents and teachers involved, may propose a student for appropriate school based individualised assessment and/or consequent assessment through NEPS. The Principal and AEN co-ordinator, in consultation with the NEPS psychologist, will determine which student(s) are to undergo a NEPS assessment.

If a student transfers during the year into the school, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychologist report, School reports, attendance). Any relevant information is then passed on to the AEN Co-ordinator.

All assessment results are private and confidential to each HFSS student and their parents/guardians

Means of Standardised Testing:

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT 4) is administered to First Years and the results of these tests may indicate a need for additional support. The Differential Aptitude Test (DATs) is carried out in Transition Year to review progression and evaluate career options. First-year students may be screened for literacy difficulties using screening assessments, such as the Post-Primary Assessment and Diagnosis – English (PPAD-E). The Maths Competency Test (MCT) is also administered in first year and standardised.

Students with Emerging Needs:

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concerns may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems (CAT4), in class assessment(s), informal observation(s) and parental concern(s). Some students will need further diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs. Parents are contacted and consent is sought before tests are administered.

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 an AEN who have challenges coping with the breadth of the current curriculum and a reduction in the number of subjects taken is considered. This occurs after all avenues have been exhausted and there is consultation with Parent/Guardian, Year Head, class teacher and the guidance counsellor if necessary.
- MFL exemption
- Team Teaching/ Co teaching
- In class support
- Inclusion of SNA in specific classes
- Small group withdrawal
- Individual withdrawal
- Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP), a programme that is designed for specific students with general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.
- Resource enriched class – depending on the make-up of a year group and the level of need. A smaller resource enriched class may be created in a Junior Cycle Year group.
- Allocation of suitable resources as available for students who are particularly gifted.

The period of intervention for each student is dependent on the nature and extent of their individual need.

Section 8: Allocation of Support to Students

HFSS uses the Continuum of Support Framework to identify and support children with additional needs. A staged approach is used to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individual support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress. The Continuum of Support model, as recommended by the DES, is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students.

Once pupils' needs have been identified, AENTs are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy AEN Teachers in a variety of ways to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a

balance between in-class group, and individual support while ensuring that the needs of students with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflects the specific learning focus of individual students, as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the overriding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching, and small group teaching.

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

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

***1: School Support Plus (for a Few)
Individualised & Specialist Support***

- Additional needs identified as severe and/or persistent will require intensive support.
- Student Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process.

***2: School Support (for Some)
Response to Groups and Individuals***

- Class teacher involves the AEN Team in the problem-solving process when this is deemed necessary.
- Systematic gathering of information.
- Development and monitoring of the students' additional needs and if necessary, a Student Support Plan.

***3: Whole-School & Classroom Support (for All)
Preventative & Specialist Support***

- First response to emerging needs
- Begins when a teacher or parent has concerns about an individual student
- Strategies are considered by invested parties

Step 1: Identification of students with special education needs

Step 2: Setting learning targets

Step 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches

Step 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes

Step 5: Organising and deploying teaching resources

Step 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Categories of special educational needs

The various categories of special educational needs, 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 (DE) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and are as follows:

- Physical disability.
- Hearing impairment.
- Visual impairment.
- Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems.
- Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems.
- Mild general learning disability.
- Borderline general learning disability.
- Specific learning disability.
- Moderate general learning disability.
- Severe or profound general learning disability.
- Autism/autistic spectrum disorder.
- Students with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome.
- Specific speech and language disorder.
- Multiple disabilities.

AEN Student Support Teams:

The HFSS Additional Education Team led by the school's AENCO, work together to co-ordinate, facilitate, monitor and review students' progress.

The HFSS Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Teams meet regularly to review and implement whole school support strategies for the HFSS student body.

Access to Psychological Reports

Student support files will be kept on each student with identified AEN. Information in the files includes psychological reports, results from entrance assessments, correspondence between the school, parents and other relevant agencies, and applications for support and concessions. Files are maintained by the AENCO and access is afforded to the following personnel; the Senior Management Team, members of the AEN department, the Year Heads and the Guidance Counsellor(s) and teaching staff on request.

Beyond these individuals, information regarding special needs is communicated to teachers on a need-to-know basis. In accordance with section 14 (1.d) of the E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004, the school *'shall ensure that all relevant teachers and other relevant employees of the schools are aware of the A.E.N. of students'*.

Information is provided to teachers at staff meetings. Other newly identified students are notified to the teachers as the year progresses. This is the responsibility of the school's AENCO (Additional Educational Needs Coordinator)

Student Support Plans / Individual Education Plan contain the following information:

A Student Support File or Individual Education Plan is devised for students with AEN who attend an AEN Teacher for additional support. All first-year students with an AEN Teacher for additional support will have a Student Support Plan (SSP) / Student Support File (SSF). These will correlate with the guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

These include:

- Personal/ background details.
- Educational details, assessment, and formal testing results.
- Categorisation of the need based on assessment reports.
- A general profile based on formal/informal assessment.
- The AEN provision for the student.
- A highlighting of priority needs.
- Learning focus set for the student's priority learning needs by the AEN Teacher, in consultation with the student.
- Strategies to enhance learning and the resources required.
- The date for review.

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. All students are tested using WIAT-III-UK in Second Year. 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 Cert, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need.

Where it is deemed appropriate and resources permit, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodation at mock exams and other in-house assessments.

Exemption from Irish:

Certificates of exemption from the study of Irish must be submitted with the enrolment application. Every effort is made to arrange withdrawal for additional support for students with AEN, who do not study Irish, during the timetabled Irish classes. This is not guaranteed as it may be limited by staff availability and timetabling restrictions and is completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

New applications for Irish exemptions are made in writing to the School Leadership Team. The guidelines set down by the DES will be strictly adhered to (Circular 0054/2022). *Note: Parents / guardians must provide certificates for the exemption from the study of Irish. Requests for exemption in Post Primary schools will be processed as per circular 0054/2022.*

Section 9: Communication

HFSS recognises that effective communication between teachers, parents, and students is essential to addressing the needs of students with AEN.

AEN Team:

The AEN Coordinator and AEN core team meet formally once a week. Informal meetings occur daily. Members of the AEN team can meet mainstream teachers formally or informally. The AEN Team aims to communicate with each other as much as possible through school email, Teams, while adhering to GDPR guidelines. Ongoing one-to-one contact with other AENTs, subject teachers, SNAs and Guidance Counsellors throughout the school year. At the end of each year AENT makes recommendations on the student's IEP/ SSP (SSF) to use as a reference, should a change of AENT happen.

Mainstream Teachers:

At the beginning of each school year, the AEN Coordinator updates a register of information focusing on the incoming First Year students with AEN. This information is shared on VS Ware and all teachers are made aware of its existence at the start of year staff meeting and encouraged to consult it regularly.

All first-year students with a diagnosis from an outside professional, have a Student Support File as set out above, which includes suggested strategies made by the AEN team. Relevant portions of these are included in their VSWare personal file, under the SEN section. These students are identifiable by the use of capital letters in their first names. Information is also communicated via the Year Head and student support structures such as the Pastoral Care Team.

Communication with Parents:

VSWare, School App and the school journal are used for straight-forward communications with parents. Parent-teacher meetings are held once a year for face-to-face communication and the AEN team are available to meet with the parents of the students who engage with them. Regular communication is encouraged with the AENCO. In all cases, where a student is withdrawn for assessment or additional teaching support, parents are consulted, and their permission sought. Parents are actively encouraged to contact the school should they have concerns regarding their child's progress or otherwise.

The AEN department can be contacted by email via reception@holyfamily.ie or via the school app. Where there is more than one AEN teacher working with a student, a designated AEN teacher will be aligned to that student. This teacher will be responsible for filling out reports, communicating to parents and gathering targets from other teachers. 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.

Other methods of communication may include, but are not limited to:

- School Open Night.
- Contact with parents.
- Inclusion of parents (where appropriate) in meetings involving external agencies.
- Meetings with relevant school staff, as required.

Record Keeping:

A full record of psychological reports, outside agency reports, and records of meetings are kept in individual student's files in the AEN Coordinator's classroom/ office in a locked cabinet. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information Acts, and Data Protection Acts. Student records are destroyed after five years.