

Rockbrook Park School

Policy on additional educational needs

Context

Rockbrook Park School was founded in 1975 by a group of parents who were inspired by the work of St Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei. The trustee body is FamEd CLG.

The school emphasises the importance of character development and academic excellence as twin pillars of education. The school's mentoring system, working in co-operation with parents and teachers, is central to the fulfilment of Rockbrook's aims.

Students come to Rockbrook from the local and wider Dublin area extending from Bray to Naas. The school endeavours to foster a genuine respect for others and a desire for learning. School management is committed to supporting parents in their role as educators.

Values

At Rockbrook we acknowledge that value of every young person. In providing an environment which encourages academic excellence, Rockbrook aims, within its resources, to meet the needs of all those attending the school, no matter their ability, background or personal circumstances. The school seeks to provide every student with high quality teaching and learning opportunities both within and beyond the classroom. Within the resources available the school will seek to maximise academic progress and personal development for all students, responding to their individual needs and, where possible, removing barriers to their learning.

Policy development

The policy has been developed by the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) coordinator and teachers providing learning support within the school. During the 2016-17 academic year the principal will brief the board on the policy and seek its ratification. (Policy ratified June 2017)

Aims

Our long-term aims are:

- To maximise academic progress, character education and personal development for all students enrolled in the school
- To ensure that vulnerable or students experiencing disadvantage or students with identified particular educational needs are given the support they need to remove the barriers to their learning and personal development
- To help personal mentors to understand the individual learning needs of mentees so that they can make an additional further contribution to the personal development of those students
- To ensure that all our staff understand their role in relation to these aims and, in particular, understand that a teacher is a teacher of every student including those with AEN.

A student is considered to have additional educational needs (AEN) if he superior learning potential or if he has learning difficulties or disabilities (communication / social / behavioural / personal) that make it harder for him to learn or develop himself than for most other students of about the same age. AEN students include all those identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), thus having had (pre April 2017) additional resources allocated to them by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), or fitting that designation (post April 2017).

Many children will have additional educational needs of some kind during their education. At Rockbrook, most students can overcome the barriers their difficulties present quickly and easily, but others will need extra help for some or all of their time while in school.

Good quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first key step in responding to pupils who have or may have AEN. Additional intervention and support cannot fully compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

In most cases the process of identifying suitable support for pupils starts with the assumption that if normal classroom provision is of high quality it will meet the needs of most students including those who have been in receipt of SEN provision at earlier stages in their education. Where classroom provision appears not to meet the needs of some pupils, or where additional resource supports have been provided to students by NCSE, the AEN coordinator, working with the principal, will seek to provide for those needs.

Where young people need educational provision or personal development support, the aim is to have a graduated response. This acknowledges that a student may need specific support from the school or may need further tailored support which may include external experts. This approach is designed to focus on individual need and outcomes and raise the aspirations of and expectations for all students with AEN, bearing in mind at all times that many parents may not be in a position to bear an additional resource provision burden.

Objectives for AEN support in Rockbrook Park School

Teachers will:

1. Make regular assessments of progress for all pupils
2. Identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

That is, progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
 - is slower than the student's previous rate of progress
 - fails to close the attainment gap between the student and their peers
 - widens the attainment gap
3. Adapt their teaching to address the needs of students identified as making less than expected progress
 4. Apply school behaviour and reward systems to ensure students complete the work set for them to the best of their ability so as to make good progress
 5. Give regular feedback to students on their work and cultivate students' reflection and response to this feedback (drawing on Assessment for Learning techniques)
 6. Refer students to the AEN coordinator or to the principal where students in their class may require additional learning support (using the referral form available)
 7. Teachers who act as student mentors will also liaise with AEN co-ordinator with a view to enhancing, where possible, the effectiveness of any additional support being provided.

The principal and school management team will:

1. Work within the guidance provided by NCSE and DES, including new April 2017 guidelines
2. Provide resource support teaching hours and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) access in line with any specific NCSE allocation
3. Manage teaching resources and SNA access to best effect for all students requiring additional supports
4. Monitor the work of learning support
5. Develop a clear framework within which additional needs resources are seen as part of whole school provision for all students.

The Additional Educational Needs Coordinator and learning support team will:

1. Work within the guidance provided by NCSE, and gather inputs from parents, producing an IEP for all students with identified additional education needs and any other student who might benefit
2. Monitor **on a term basis** the academic performance, attendance and personal development (as recorded in school reports or other school information) of students receiving AEN support.
3. Assess promptly any students who are brought to their attention as possibly having additional educational and/or additional needs, and add them to the AEN register as appropriate
4. Seek to integrate students within the whole school ensuring that they make best use of the mainstream curriculum and extra-curricular provision
5. Accommodate the needs of the 'whole person'; recognising that a student's personal, social, spiritual and physical development are as important as their academic progress
6. Assist other teaching staff in meeting the needs of students

7. Liaise with the students' mentors and parents as required to ensure home and school work together effectively in addressing AEN.
8. Develop monitoring, support and intervention systems which seek to identify poor progress and the causes of poor progress, and address these, thus enabling students to succeed within mainstream provision
9. To regularly review progress of any students with AEN and to adapt intervention and provision as appropriate, identifying any additional needs.

Identifying Additional Educational Needs

Students will be considered for identification as having additional educational needs where they:

- a. Have academic achievement which is substantially below the class norm or who show significantly weak performances in standardised testing.
- b. Are identified by their previous school as having special educational needs (SEN)
- c. Are consistently making less progress than is expected for a student of their age in spite of provision in the normal school curriculum
- d. Are judged to be facing a particular difficulty which is affecting their learning (such as, but not limited to: dyslexia, physical disability or a mental health condition)

When identifying need, the four broad categories shown below can provide an overview of the range of needs which can be identified as additional educational needs:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, mental and emotional health
- Sensory and/or physical.

Ideally students should get externally assessed, particularly if that assessment can help in the resolution of some of their difficulties or can lead to additional resources being made available by NCSE or by the school. The purpose of identifying students with additional educational needs is to work out what action needs to be taken to remove barriers to learning and maximise a pupil's personal and academic development. Often (but not always) the identification of a source of difficulty can help a student respond better.

The following may also impact on progress and attainment but are not in themselves considered to be additional educational needs:

- Disability
- Poor attendance and punctuality
- Poor health or welfare
- Speaking English as a second or additional language
- Being in a cared-for circumstance

Students with the above characteristics will be considered for identification as having additional educational needs when it seems likely that extra provision which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's curriculum might help address any deficit in their personal or academic progress. In many of these cases the support of an identified appropriate personal mentor may be all that is required.

The school's SEN and AEN register

The SEN register records the names and needs of students who experience barriers to learning that the school seeks to address and who have been identified by the NCSE as requiring SEN support. That is, the SEN register includes only those students with specific resource hours designated by NCSE (i.e. low incidence resource hours). As from April 2017, due to changes in NCSE/DES approach, this register may not be maintained, with all these students being recorded only on the AEN register.

The AEN register includes students with identified learning difficulties whom the school deems to qualify for support under the NCSE high incidence allocation (e.g. students with dyslexia). As well as these, other students in the school who require provision which is additional to what is normally

provided by a school will also form part of the AEN register. There may also be students not on either register who will receive attention from the learning support team and/or resource support from time to time or on an ongoing basis (e.g. talented students, students with particular difficulties such as anxiety, difficult family circumstance, looked-after children). Students may also move off this register during the course of the year if their difficulties have been sufficiently addressed.

As a school we also wish to become increasingly structured in the way we administer, evaluate and apply additional provision and the maintenance of SEN and AEN registers will support this.

The SEN register and accompanying notes will be regularly updated by notes from the learning support team. Staff will be given access to some of this information in an appropriate form. Similar processes will apply to the AEN register. There is a clear challenge in providing easy access for all relevant staff to useful and detailed but confidential information about young people. The learning support team will work to develop increasingly efficient ways of communicating this information whilst safeguarding the privacy of the students whose information is shared. At this stage it is envisaged that this information will be available in paper format only and not electronically circulated.

The learning support team’s role in additional educational provision

The learning support team will comprise the principal, the AEN co-ordinator and other members of staff as appropriate, including the guidance counsellor. It will work with all staff who are providing additional support by way of resource classes, team teaching etc. It will involve the guidance counsellor and SNAs in its deliberations as required. It takes responsibility for:

- Developing intervention programmes and other provision that meet the needs identified
- Monitoring the impact of this provision
- Recording the use of this provision for each student
- Managing access to the provision through the *Additional Educational Needs Referral Process*, so as to ensure that resources are distributed fairly and effectively and that students’ experience of the school’s curriculum is maintained while additional provision is made
- Working with the school’s exam secretary to ensure those on the SEN register receive appropriate exam supports from the State Examinations Commission.

Much of the additional provision will be provided by teachers in one-to-one classes, in small class provision, in team-teaching, in mentoring or via extra-curricular activity (e.g. club activity, sports).

Graduated response to AEN Support

A graduated approach is adopted in order to match provision to need. This approach is designed to ensure support is focused on individual need and personal outcomes. The AEN Register details areas of need of any students who fall into the following categories:

<p>Initial Support “Level 1 intervention”</p>	<p>The class teacher or form master recognises that a student has difficulties and provides differentiated learning activities or personal support, advice or guidance. This may include help with work outside lessons, use of study support, mentor support. It may include access to SNA support (e.g. in transitioning to second level)</p>	<p>At this point a student is not recorded on the AEN register; many students will receive support such as this.</p>
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School Support “Level 2 intervention”	A student has additional provision, designed to support their access to the school curriculum. This will normally be in the form of an intervention programme which takes place over a duration of a school term or a year. Consultation with parents and students will take place if it is envisaged that this intervention will be required for a longer period. External reports may be requested.	At this point the student’s needs are recorded and the student may be added to the AEN register. If the student has externally measured needs and specific resource support allocated under NCSE provision the student is recorded on the SEN register. Every such student will have a IEP drawn up which will be reviewed twice annually.
Moving on “Level 3 intervention”	For those with more complex needs, provision will be made, where possible, for public examination support and for ongoing consultation with parents and student around successfully engaging with their post-school environment.	

The AEN support process.

Stage 1: Assess

For students joining at the start of first year:

- o Prior to transfer to Rockbrook, primary schools may provide information for those students with SEN. These students are added to the AEN & SEN registers pending assessment of their need on arrival in the school. Parents are requested to provide any relevant educational assessments that may have been conducted. Where additional resources may be provided by NCSE, these are requested by school management based on the information available to it. In addition to the school’s induction programme for all new children and their parents, members of the learning support team will meet with all parents of incoming children with SEN during the first month. The SNA will also be available to help in settling the students during the first few months. Where required the Form-master will appoint class buddies. Due to the large number of feeder schools to Rockbrook the school does not commit to meeting with staff in these primary schools around SEN issues, unless there are special complex issues involved.
- o The school conducts entrance tests to make a general evaluation of any difficulties a student might encounter on coming to Rockbrook. The school operates a mixed ability class placement policy.
- o During September initial standardised testing is done on all 1st year students. From 2016 we will use the full range of post-primary tests provided by GL-Assessment (includes attitude to school, numeracy, literacy, CAT tests). All students whose attainment falls below an identified standard in English or Mathematics at entry will be assessed by the learning support team in partnership with the relevant subject teachers with a view to see what, if any, additional support should be provided. All students also receive study skills seminars before or at the beginning of the second term.

For students joining at other times:

Information about students' SEN is communicated to the school via the admissions process and passed on to the learning support team. Where appropriate, contact will be made with the school of origin for more information about the provision that has been made for the student in the past.

Ongoing monitoring of students:

Needs can become apparent at any stage in a student's development. Queries regarding possible AEN are followed up in response to concerns raised by mentors, parents or teaching staff and, where appropriate, students will be referred via the *Additional Provision Referral Process*.

Additional Provision Referral Process

The *Additional Provision Referral Process* is started at the point where a staff member believes a student may benefit from additional provision or intervention.

The process of referral is structured with a standard referral form (see Appendix 5), although the type of need being referred will vary widely. All relevant information about the student is considered and, where appropriate, additional assessments may be commissioned. Assessments that support referral may be as simple as a written assessment to measure handwriting speed or could involve observation of the student in lessons or assessment by an outside agent such as a Speech and Language Therapist, an Occupational Therapist or an Educational Psychologist. Any assessment outside any standard school assessments must first be agreed to by parents (a phone call may be sufficient). In most cases external assessment will require that parents pay for this privately (unless NEPS undertakes to conduct it) and they then may share that information with the school.

The AEN co-ordinator will systematically review all referrals and make one of the following decisions:

1. Refer the student back to the teacher(s) involved with advice about how to manage his needs within the classroom context.
2. Seek additional evidence of need before referring back to the teacher or moving on to providing a plan for the student.

Stage 2: Plan

When a student has been referred for additional educational support, the learning support team will consider what provision might help to address the student's difficulties and when and how this can be provided.

The exact difficulty or learning gap which is to be addressed and the nature of the provision to be made are recorded on a written IEP for each student.

Where possible, clear success criteria are established and recorded.

The student and his parents/ guardians should be involved at some level in the planning of the intervention or additional provision.

Parental contact depends on the significance of the intervention in terms of how serious the need is. For students with identified resource hours provided by NCSE, their parents will be met each year. Where an intervention will require a change to a student's curriculum in the short term then parents/ carers should be informed and should normally be involved in the decision about what kind of provision will be most effective. Where a long term change is being made then all stakeholders should be properly informed and consulted before a decision is made.

Students with special talents are included in the AEN plan. Support for such students is usually by way of (a) encouraged involvement in school extra-curricular activity – e.g. clubs such as music, debating, coding (b) individual class teachers providing additional work in subjects.

Stage 3: Do

Where possible, a "pre" measurement of performance in the identified area (literacy / numeracy / cognition / handwriting/ personal development skills / communication skills / social skills etc.) is conducted before any intervention is made.

Then the intervention or additional provision is made, and progress against the agreed success criteria is reviewed. This review will require regular communication between the resource teacher

and the AEN coordinator. If success is achieved then the student can be removed from the provision as appropriate or moved on to other provision.

Where possible, a “post” measurement of performance or evaluation is conducted.

Stage 4: Review

Comparisons between the pre and post measurements, and student’s subjective assessments of the effectiveness of the intervention should be reviewed, leading to a reassessment of student needs and the evolution of the plan or the devising of a new plan.

The organisation of learning support in Rockbrook

The school operates a mixed model of learning support which is evolving in response to staff learning and student needs. Methods of support include

- **Individual withdrawal from a class:** this is generally avoided but can work with students who wish to get resource support during a time allocated to one of their low priority subjects e.g. during Great Books. It is also occasionally used to reduce the workload of a junior student, for example, by dropping a subject which is causing great difficulty and providing a resource class during that time.
- **Small group withdrawal:** works where students have a subject exemption (e.g. in a language), and they can get an additional resource class instead. Such support may also be provided to students who are not formally included on AEN list e.g. the provision of additional English classes to students for whom English is not their first language; provision of additional classes to a small group who could be described either as needing additional support or very advanced in a particular subject.
- **One-to-one support or small group support:** provided by a resource teacher in a key subject or personal development area, during a time when the student does not have a class (e.g. Irish exemption in junior years, free class period in senior years)
- **Timetable reduction:** students with additional needs who are experiencing work overload may require a reduced class timetable on site, with more time available during the school-day to do homework, and be supported in this task or to take time out (sport, extra-curricular). This support is usually provided by SNAs. Occasionally parents can become involved in providing this support.
- **Support within the classroom:** SNAs provide support to individual students in the classroom context. Occasionally this support can also be provided by a resource teacher via a team-teaching strategy.

Supporting students and their families

Contacting school

Students on the school’s AEN register and their families are supported by the learning support team. This provides an additional layer of pastoral support and route for communication in addition to that provided by the mentoring system or the school’s administrative and pastoral structure. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if for any reason they have a concern. All parents of students with SEN and many parents of children on the AEN register are consulted at the beginning of the school year with regard to their children’s needs.

Admissions

The admissions policy is based on criteria that are designed to involve parents as much as possible in the choice of school for their child. Parents of children with AEN are asked to discuss any educational needs at interview stage. They are asked to provide all supporting documentation at the enrolment stage.

Access arrangements for examinations (RACE)

A small number of students experience difficulties which could affect their ability to access examinations and assessments.

These students are identified through the AEN register. They are assessed as required by SEC / DES to provide evidence for eligibility for reasonable accommodation. The interpretation of evidence and the decisions based on it on this lies ultimately with the SEC.

Insofar as possible, students likely to be granted reasonable accommodation in exams will also be accommodated in whole school exams in 3rd and 6th year, and if possible or essential, in other years. Where possible, the scribes/ readers for the state exams will provide that service during the mock examinations.

The guidance counsellor provides support for students with SEN seeking access to third-level colleges (e.g. with HEAR/DEAR applications).

Liaison with outside agencies

Specialists from within the school and from external agencies are asked for advice as and when necessary to further identify a student's needs. Some of this external support may be cost free (e.g. provision by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)). Any costs arising from contact with external agencies must be borne by the parents. In such cases the school may help in establishing the links and will then leave the family to deal directly with the specialists involved.

If the school is unable to meet the needs of a student within existing provision the AEN coordinator will seek advice about how the student's needs can best be met.

Supporting students at school with medical conditions

The school recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education.

The school may have SNA support who will then work alongside the student, parents/guardians and the learning support team to address a student's needs in relation to accessing a full curriculum.

The school will not normally involve itself in the administration of medicines to students. Any such support, should it be given, requires prior approval of school management.

Diagnosis

School staff never diagnose medical or mental health conditions. Where diagnosis of such conditions has been made by a suitably qualified professional we will make use of this information in guiding how we best accommodate a student's needs.

Monitoring and evaluation of additional educational needs support

Student and parental feedback is gathered via an annual questionnaire and informally on an ongoing basis.

Data Protection

All data related to AEN are kept in individual personal paper files maintained for that purpose. These files are normally accessible to the school management team and AEN coordinator. Class teachers or resource teachers may access these learning support files by verbal request to the AEN coordinator. Personal mentors may also have access to a mentee's file.

A summary of the content of these files is circulated to all staff before the end of September each year.

For many students the file will contain an IEP. All relevant staff are encouraged to view IEPs as required.

All examination results and standardised tests results are available to all staff in the staffroom. This AEN data may be stored for two years after the departure of a student. Data on potential entrants to the school who do not follow through is maintained for a maximum of eighteen months after the due date of entry.

Training and resources

Funding

Funding for students with SEN is provided by way of teaching resource hours allocated to the school by NCSE. The method of allocation has changed in 2017/18 and is now provided to the school on a whole-school rather than an individual student basis.

Due, among other things, to the additional administration work involved, a school often has to put more resources into provision for students with AEN than it receives. The school has a duty to provide value for money so efficiency and effectiveness are both important in deciding what provision should be made for students.

Training for those providing learning support

The professional development of those providing learning support makes a significant difference to their effectiveness with our students.

CPD is provided for all teachers providing learning support and time is made for this by withdrawing staff from their duties at times when it will least affect the students they support. This involves helping staff understand the specific needs of each student and directing them to appropriate resources.

- Where possible members of staff are encouraged to develop specialised skills which support them in their particular role; CPD is a professional responsibility of all staff
- The leadership provided by teachers in the classroom is also highly significant in maximising the effectiveness of teachers providing resource support. These teachers can also make effective use of SNA support through the provision of useful advice.
- Staff are encouraged to seek CPD, in particular where it can be of help to students with AEN.

Supporting classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with AEN

Teachers involved in learning support share strategies with each other in identifying and supporting vulnerable students. These teachers provide CPD for classroom teachers by contributing to staff meetings and staff days.

The additional needs coordinator together with the principal will deploy SNAs appropriately and will support them through regular meetings and through feedback received from classroom teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities

AEN Coordinator

The school's AEN coordinator is directly responsible to the school management. Together the AEN coordinator and the school principal form the backbone of the learning support team. The AEN coordinator's role is to ensure that the additional educational needs for students are identified and catered for within the allocated resources; to manage the transition of vulnerable students into the school, to work with the examinations secretary to ensure standardised test results are available and that reasonable accommodation is provided where possible in exams, to liaise with the school guidance counsellor around RACE, HEAR & DARE; to provide resource teachers with appropriate information on all students, to liaise regularly with resource teachers and SNA, to maintain AEN files, to coordinate the learning support team and to liaise with all staff and parents around the AEN of students.

AEN support

The learning support team draws on the expertise of the school guidance counsellor especially with regard to exam provision and post-school advice for students. The team also draws on the expertise of mentors as appropriate, including one mentor who is an educational psychologist.

Resource teachers

Resource teachers provide additional teaching support for students with needs, for example, such as dyslexia or students on the autistic spectrum. This work may be done on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups or through team teaching. Occasionally it is carried out in an extra-curricular environment.

Special Needs Assistants

Special needs assistants are responsible for assisting students in their daily school needs. They can help students to think and explain their thinking. They are well positioned to help students to understand the feedback that teachers have given and help to ensure that students respond to it. They prompt students to listen to and follow teachers' instructions and are careful to avoid becoming an unwitting barrier to learning by dominating the student's attention or restricting the communication between teacher and student. SNAs always seek to maximise students' independence: they are doing their job most effectively when the student is moving rapidly towards needing less assistance.

Parents

Parent support for AEN is a vital component in good provision. Parents are required to provide all relevant information in a timely manner (e.g. any educational reports should be provided at application stage and certainly by enrolment stage. All parents should attend the Induction Day at the beginning of first year. Parents with children with identified SEN should meet with the AEN coordinator or the principal by appointment during the first month of the year to provide input into the IEP. Parents are usually expected to attend at least two relevant parent education sessions and two parent-teacher meetings each year. Parents are also requested to meet the student's mentor

at least twice per year. Parents of senior students with AEN are requested to meet the guidance counsellor to discuss issues around RACE and DARE. Parents of students with AEN are requested to complete a questionnaire at year end.

The designated teacher with specific child protection responsibility

This is the principal. In the absence of the principal, child safeguarding concerns should be communicated directly to the deputy principal.

Accessibility

The school seeks to provide physical access to all parts of school for all students, visitors and staff. All classrooms and other learning spaces are accessible to users of wheelchairs.

Dealing with Complaints

Parents/ carers, colleagues, students or other stakeholders with concerns or complaints should find that all members of staff listen to their concerns and respond reasonably. In the case of concerns relating to the school's AEN provision the best person to contact in the first instance will be the additional needs coordinator.

Bullying

Bullying is taken very seriously at Rockbrook Park School and the possibility of vulnerable students becoming victims of bullying is recognised. As part of their responsibilities all staff are vigilant to detect any possibility of students with additional educational needs becoming victims of bullying.

We seek to minimise the risk by

- Establishing and maintaining a culture in which everyone is of equal value and mutual respect is paramount
- Communicating (through the School Journal and Parents Handbook) and enforcing clear rules about behaviour that all are expected to follow
- The effective induction of new students
- The provision of a personal mentor, who, with students who are vulnerable or less confident, will advise them on social rules and human relationships
- Monitoring closely, via normal supervision arrangements as well as SNA involvement, students who are identified as being particularly at risk during unstructured parts of the school day, whilst not restricting their opportunities for social interaction

Students or their families or friends who believe that bullying is taking place can report it to the any form-master or the deputy principal.

Adopted by Board of Management Rockbrook Park School, July 2017

Reviewed February 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1

Procedures undertaken by AEN coordinator and those involved in learning support

August/September

Collating of data from primary schools (including education passport) & from application forms and from entrance exams
Updated requests to NCSE for supports; contact with NEPs if required
Revision of SEN & AEN registers
Staff induction & update them on AEN for year ahead
Decision on SNA timetables for first few months
Induction Day programme; design and deliver with form-masters – all new first year students and parents
Meeting with all parents of boys on SEN (includes with principal) in September
Conduct standardised testing on 1st years (literacy, numeracy, CAT) and 4th years (CAT)
Staff timetables review and initial allocation of resource support
Inform new teachers and PDGE teachers on AEN students
Commence process of drawing up IEP

October / November/December

Continue process of drawing up IEPs
Meet mentors and inform them on IEP work and SEN needs and how being met
Provide a folder of teacher resources and develop over time
Begin / continue application work around RACE
Consider how RACE will apply in internal exams (October/ January/June)
School testing in new Junior Cycle subjects and review of SEN support needed in that context
Parent –teacher meetings
Input into entrance tests & interviews for future students
Review of October tests and relevance to IEPs and type of resource support
Continue to use staff days (October) & staff meetings to update staff

January/February

In-house exams support and subsequent exam result review
Mock exam support
Half-year review of first years from the point of view of AEN support
Begin to build a register of materials/strategies for parents to use

March / April/May

NCSE applications
July provision application
Entrance tests & necessary primary school visits
Promotion of summer camps among potential entrants to school
Review RACE application process
Review of year – questionnaire to parents; effectiveness of provision; review of IEP with decisions/determinations with regard to following year

Support for in-house exams & support for state examinations

Appendix 2 Regular Meetings plan around AEN

For management (Principal and deputy principal)

- Discuss SEN & AEN in weekly meeting

For AEN coordinator and principal (meetings minuted)

- Weekly meetings (2 periods) of principal & AEN coordinator regarding plan
- Meetings with all parents in September (outcomes recorded for student file)
- Regular meetings daily until IEPs finalised
- Weekly meetings on AEN throughout year
- Discuss internal review practises and put these in place as part of SSE (use NCSE evaluations for guidance)

For principal

- Weekly meeting with SNAs together and individually (up to 3 meetings weekly)

For Deputy principal (and AEN coordinator where possible)

- Monthly meeting with all resource teachers around targets, strategies and learning outcomes for individual students

For AEN coordinator

- Regular liaison with all staff regarding AEN support provided in classroom, and in internal or class exams

For all staff

- Fortnightly staff meetings addressing classroom issues spend some time focussed on AEN of students in those classes
- Meetings around reviews of SIP to include AEN awareness
- AEN item on agenda of all staff days

Appendix 3

Current AEN and SEN register

SEN register

AEN additional names

Additional students who may need support from time to time

Appendix 4

Assessment for learning techniques as a means of supporting students with AEN

(copy of this page to be given to all staff each year)

Some useful assessment for learning techniques help solve a number of problems faced by students with a range of additional educational needs.

These include

Make the learning intention clear at the beginning of the class. Refer back to it occasionally during the lesson; evaluate if it has been achieved by the end of the lesson

Give students time to copy the teacher's work on class whiteboard. Different colours and the use of diagrams and mind maps can help. Allow a student to photograph the board at the end of the lesson.

Put the homework on the whiteboard at the beginning of the class: helps fix the mind of the student on the topic; helps a student get the homework written into his journal in good time. Also writing instructions on the board helps all students be aware of them.

Get student to evaluate his own learning: e.g. correct his own essay using a template for marking, see exemplars of 'A' grade material; correct own spelling in class when teacher is surveying copybooks.

Vary the learning techniques used in the classroom: e.g. review orally what was covered in previous classes – thus building in revision into all classes; allowing pair work; getting students to assess each other, vary the questioning technique (higher and lower order questions) so that everyone is included; give extension exercises to students who are 'A' candidates; giving differentiated exercises to students who are challenged.

Using a variety of activities to teach core skills and concepts. Provide a **variety of opportunities** and means for a student to show his strengths. Use **expressive and receptive communication** to get across to all in the classroom.

Team teaching: have a teacher of a student with AEN work with that student (and/or others) during your class. **Work with the SNA** so that appropriate support can be given to student beyond the classroom.

Visual and organisational supports through use of noticeboards: key words, questions, mind-maps. **Samples of good quality student work on display.**

Achieve a good balance between **work in groups** and producing individual work; use of pair work.

Appendix 5

Additional provision – the referral process

The following completed form should be passed on to the AEN coordinator

Student Name

Year

Teacher making this referral

Date of referral

Typical type of Observations

Eg. In making regular assessments of progress for all pupils I observe

This student is making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

That is, progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- is slower than the student's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the student and their peers
- widens the attainment gap

Or

Unexplained poor attendance and punctuality

Or identifiable poor health or welfare (sleeping in class, missing days, coughing, eye contact)

Or

Specific learning issue which makes the person stand out

E.g. over anxious in class, excessively loud or excessively quiet, very poor handwriting, unable to focus, unable to read the board, very poor homework performance

OBSERVATIONS /REASON FOR REFERRAL TO AEN CO-ORDINATOR

Appendix 6

Content of IEP

1. Basic info: name, date of birth, exemptions, summary of points from reports on file, relevant assessment results, contact with parents, parent input into IEP, name of mentor.

2. Details on issues that need addressing including:
 - Communication and interaction (include social skills, esteem, interaction home, peers, staff)
 - Cognition and learning (includes concentration, memory, learning styles, special interests that may help with learning)
 - Social, mental and emotional health (impact on social & personal, impact on learning)
 - Sensory and/or physical (specific needs – eg noise, background noise, sources of stress, need for structure, seating arrangement, auditory issues, reading the board, need for quiet space at times)

3. A list of strengths, difficulties, recommendations & plan of action around these

4. Outline of work to be carried out in resource or additional support
 - Long term focus on learning needs – what does success look like?
 - Short term focus: immediate targets/strategies/ support planned/learning outcomes
 - Progress reports over the year.

The following information will be available to all teachers:

- Basic outline of student need for each student and strategies which will be of help to him

Appendix 7

Questionnaire to parents at year end regarding AEN

(On file)

Appendix 8

Files & resources managed by AEN coordinator

1. Teacher resource folder content: Proposed items

Register of SEN and AEN students sorted on a class by class basis

Strengths, difficulties recommendations: provided with a view to helping differentiation within the classroom

Topical information leaflets including Signposts book

Information and advice leaflets for parents

Summary of IEP information regarding individual student needs & strategies which will be of help to him.

2. IEP folder and background folder on each student – & storage plan

3. Minutes of meetings of AEN team

4. Record of parental contacts

5. Student copies & display of student work on walls

6. Books, programmes, ICT to assist in Learning Support task

SEN library for staff

On file and includes:

- copy of **Signposts (SESS)**
- NEWB booklet on Transition to Secondary school
- copy of Rockbrook's Attendance policy

Appendix 9

Transition needs of first years

The following course is of value and details of the course are available on the SESS website www.sess.ie.

SESS Course - *'Transition from Primary to Post-primary for Students with Special Educational Needs: Challenges for the Student and Strategies for the Teacher'*

In association with the course above, SESS produced the booklet *'Transition from Primary to Post-Primary for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Challenges for the Pupil and Strategies for the Teacher'*.

This contains booklet many strategies which will be helpful for primary and post-primary schools and can be downloaded from the SESS website.

To minimise potential difficulties that may accompany the move to post-primary, transition planning should at the very least begin early in sixth class. The transition process can be facilitated by activities carried out by the post-primary school prior to the student's induction and through on-going support after induction.

Tips for Transition for Post-Primary Schools

- Organise meetings and open days for parents, students and the staff of the feeder schools. These may not necessarily be on the same day
- Ensure that parents know how to best relay information about the child to the school – e.g. the individual whom they should talk to – and assure them that such communication is welcome
- Liaise with feeder primary schools and gather as much relevant, up-to-date information from the appropriate partners to facilitate the application for suitable resources as early as possible. Resources do not automatically transfer and it important to note that parental consent is required to access and use professional reports that may be needed for such applications. The need for this kind of communication and consultation is noted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in its Guidelines for the Teaching of Students with General Learning Disabilities.
- Provide information packs which give details on subject curricula, extra-curricular activities, resources, school procedures, etc. Consider having a simplified version for students and another version for parents
- Explain the various professional roles to the primary school staff, parents and students, along with any relevant procedures – for example, the roles of the year head, class tutor, SEN coordinator, special needs assistant, etc.
- Have specific induction activities during the first week after enrolment
- Consider having a mentoring system whereby for example older students take some responsibility for first years within the induction week

- Consider how entrance assessments may have to be modified to take into account specific student needs. For example, find out if the student is used to the assistance of an SNA to complete tasks
- Name badges for teachers can be very useful for first year students in the first few weeks
- Provide opportunities for subject teachers to learn about specific needs and establish a formalised system for the dissemination of appropriate information to teachers
- Don't make assumptions about a student's understanding of the school and clearly explain both school and class organisation (e.g. Explain how to read timetables; Explain and model how to record homework in a journal; Explain about lockers, canteen and other such day-to-day organisational issues).
- Colour coding of timetables and books will assist organisational skills
- Have a 'Beginning Ceremony' which focuses on the positives of being in the new school
- Be watchful for new diagnoses
- Ensure there is a clear and effective anti-bullying policy in place and that students understand the process
- Consider a range of 'taster' subjects to be offered during first year