



Whole School Inclusion Policy



St Fergal's College

Adapted with consent from WWETB Whole School Inclusion Policy

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List of Abbreviations

ALN -Additional Learning Needs

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

BfL - Behaviour for Learning Teacher

DES - Department of Education and Skills

EAL - English as an Additional Language

EPSEN - Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs

ISA - Inclusion Support Assistant

NCSE - National Council for Special Education

NEPS - National Educational Psychological Service

PBST - Positive Behaviour Support Team

PP-COS - Post-Primary Continuum of Support

SEN - Special Educational Need

SENCO - Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SET - Special Educational Teacher

SNA - Special Needs Assistant

SST - Student Support Team

UDL - Universal Design for Learning

Section 1: Introduction, Vision, Mission, Overarching Aim.

1.1 Introduction:

St. Fergal's College is a co-educational, multid denominational post-primary school, which opened in 1937. The school is one of nine post-primary schools under the patronage of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB).

LOETB schools are state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a multid denominational school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

1.2 Our Vision

1. Sustainable school/increased student numbers.
2. Enhanced vocational, academic and extra-curricular student experiences.
3. 21st century teaching and learning with digital expertise.
4. Increasingly inclusive and environmentally active school community.
5. Strong staff morale based on professionally transformative culture and practices.
6. PLC. Professional learning community
7. Enhanced school infrastructure e.g school gym.

1.3 Our Mission Statement

St. Fergal's College is a co-educational school which aims to provide a quality education for all our students in a caring and respectful environment.

We enable students to develop fully a sense of their own unique worth by providing a broadly based curriculum which fosters intellectual, moral, emotional and physical growth.

We are committed to promoting good relationships between students, staff, parents and our community.

We aim to create a safe, healthy, learning environment that nurtures self-discipline and encourages our students to take responsibility for their own learning.

We aim to educate our students not only for now, but also for life.

1.4 Our Aims

Our aim in St Fergal's College is to provide an inclusive learning environment which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of all students and enable each to realise their individual potential. In line with our core values, provision for those with additional needs will reflect the diverse range of cultures and abilities of students in our school.

1.5 Our Ethos and Values

Our Board of Management upholds the ethos of the school, ensuring that it is:

- Promoting Excellence in Education;
- Caring;
- Equality based;
- Community focused and

- Grounded in Respect.

St Fergal's College welcomes students with Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs (SEN/ALN) and adheres to the following principles of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004):

- The education of learners with SEN shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs
- Learners with SEN shall have the right to avail of and benefit from appropriate education.
- Learners with SEN should leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives

Section 2: Inclusion – Definitions and Descriptions

2.1 Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs

In the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) the term “special educational needs” is defined as:

‘a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition’.

(Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2004/A3004.pdf>

2.2 Inclusion

Using NCSE and ETBI definitions, inclusion involves:

- Removing barriers to learning and participation
- Recognising the diversity of identities, cultures, beliefs and needs
- Ensuring equal access to high-quality education.
- Enabling meaningful participation in school life and society
- Addressing all dimensions of diversity, including EAL, socio-economic disadvantage, minority identity, disability and wellbeing needs.

Section 3: Scope, Rationale, Legislative Framework

3.1 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to **all** students, staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

3.2 Rationale

This policy adheres to the most recent Department of Education Special Education Teaching (SET) allocation model (2024), which updates and replaces the 2017 model and ensures resources are allocated based on current, data-informed identification of student need rather than diagnosis alone.

Effective provision for students with ALN/SEN in St Fergal's College is part an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for **all** students and meaningful collaboration between the school, parents/guardians, and students.

3.3 Legislative Framework:

This policy takes cognisance of the following legislation:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Equality Act (2004)
- The Disabilities Act (2005)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)
- The Data Protection Act (2018)
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), ratified by Ireland in 2018
 - Child Protection Procedures for Schools (2025)
- Recent DES circulars, including 0014/2017 and 0055/2022.
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3.4 Supporting Publications:

The following publications were consulted in writing this policy:

- Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (DES, 2017)
- Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007)

- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS)
- Exemptions from the Study of Irish 0055/2022
- Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2024, implementation from 2025/26)
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2023–2025 (Department of Education, 2023)
- NCSE Guidelines on Inclusive Practice (2023)

3.5 Other relevant policies:

Our whole-school approach to inclusion underpins the following policies:

- Admission Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Bi Cinealta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- RSE Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Homework Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Exclusion and Suspension Policy
- Irish Exemption Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- One to One Teaching Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Attendance Strategy

Section 4: Provision and Organisation of Supports

4.1 Categories of ALN/SEN:

In St Fergal's College, we welcome students with a wide variety of special educational needs and additional learning needs. As is reflected in the model of support, we utilise supports based on the presenting needs of the student, including those students who may not have a formal diagnosis of any SEN/ALN.

The EPSEN Act recognises that special educational needs may arise from four different areas of disability:

- physical
- sensory
- mental health
- learning disability

or from any other condition that results in the child learning differently from a child without that condition. We also understand that a child can have a disability but not have any special educational needs arising from that disability which require additional supports in school.

Allocation of hours to the school may also be utilised to support those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Additional supports may be offered to students who are in the category of exceptional ability.

All applications for enrolment in special classes will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy.

4.2 Guiding Principles and Aims:

- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of ***all*** students, including those with additional needs.
- Students with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support.
- We advocate a 'strengths-based' approach to supporting learning and behavioural needs.

- The school has a core team of teachers who coordinate the identification of needs, planning the support, and monitoring and reviewing needs of pupils with SEN.
- A collaborative, whole-school approach to support provision is reflected in our in-house teams and committees.
- Supports provided to students will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school. Supports on offer may vary from year-to-year, depending on resources available at that time.
- Support is delivered through a variety of approaches, including offering appropriate curricular options, team-teaching/co-teaching, small group support, and 1 to 1 support.* (A/Y 2020/2021 these may be different due to current COVID-19 restrictions).
- Supports provided to students will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with teachers, parents, and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- Staff members will be actively encouraged to access available Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support the diverse needs of students.
- Students and their parents/guardians are involved in decision making process and planning of support.

4.3 Provision in Action in St Fergal's College

Details of provision in more depth (including specific programmes) can be viewed on a Provision Map.

4.4 A Three-Step Process to Support SEN Students:

In St Fergal's College we follow the NEPS Continuum of Support framework to engage in a three-step process in identifying and responding to our students' needs. Roles and responsibilities of all staff at all stages of the Continuum are outlined in more detail in Section 5 of the policy.

This framework recognises that needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their individual needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support and that they are informed by careful

monitoring of progress. (DES Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with SEN in Mainstream Schools, p.6)

Better Services, Better Outcomes for Students with Special Educational Needs Self-Reflective Questionnaire (DES, 2017) will be used annually to review inclusive provisions and practices.

Our three-step process is as follows:

- 1) Identification of Needs
- 2) Meeting Needs
- 3) Reviewing and Recording and Monitoring Outcomes
- 4)

Step 1: Identification of Need

St Fergal's College operates a policy of early identification of the academic, social and emotional needs throughout a student's time in our school. We achieve this through following a reflective process as outlined in the PP-COS, Looking at Our Schools and the School-Self Evaluation Process.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Whole-School and Classroom (Support for All)	The Post-Primary Continuum of Support contains a range of ideas and resources to assist in identification, intervention and monitoring of outcomes. The subject teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all students in the class. Identification of those needing additional support can be informed by: • Intake screening • Collection of information from primary schools, including Student Passport • Teacher observation • Teacher assessment • Learning Environment Checklist • Student Support Team involvement • Standardised tests of literacy/numeracy • Student consultation • Parental consultation Where students continue to present with significant difficulties, despite whole-school interventions (such as differentiated teaching, a mentoring programme or social skills group), School Support (for Some) is initiated.

Step 2 – Meeting Needs

Having identified a student's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, the second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies. Students may be allocated support at different levels: Support for Some and Support for a Few.

School Support (for Some)	At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by: • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures / assessments • Parent/student interview • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties Support at this level can take many forms, for example: team-teaching, small group or individualised tuition, peer mentoring, inclusion in social skills groups, behaviour reward and consequence systems. A Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
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School Support Plus (for a Few)	At this level, subject teacher(s), parents and special education teachers, in collaboration with outside agencies, as required engage in a more detailed and systematic approach to information gathering and assessment. This involves using a broad range of formal and informal assessment and diagnostic tools, including teacher observation, student interview, measures of cognitive ability and social, emotional, behavioural and adaptive functioning, as appropriate. Data generated from this process are used to plan an appropriate intervention and serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A Support Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed, individualised, and to involve longer term planning and consultation.
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Step 3 – Monitor and Recording Outcomes

Our school leaders oversee a whole-school approach to the monitoring and recording of progress. Students' progress is regularly and carefully monitored.

- This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation and reports from subject teachers, form tutors and year heads) that allow students to demonstrate their progress.
- This leads to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe.
- In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, we review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review may include measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for students.

Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities at all stages of the Continuum of Support

5.1 General

We are following all relevant guidelines and are no longer using the terms 'Learning Support' and 'Resource' teacher/hours in our policies and plans.

We now use the terms Special Education Teacher/Coordinator and support hours/supports/interventions.

Supporting inclusive practice in our school are:

- ALN Coordinator and ALN Team
- Student Support Team
- Critical Incident Team
- ASD Coordinator
- Wellbeing Team
- Ethos Coordinator

5.2 The role of the subject teacher

Meeting Needs through effective teaching and learning

Subject teachers in St Fergal's College have first-line responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. They adapt their teaching approaches for some students whose ability, application, motivation, communication, behaviour, or interaction with peers are causes of concern.

All subject teachers implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of all students. These include *

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Co-teaching/Team teaching
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding of Digital Technologies (DT) in teaching, learning and assessment
- Collaborate with SEN team and contribute to planning
- Guiding work of the SNA in the classroom specific to their subject needs and the care needs of the student.

To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, subject teachers use a variety of methodologies and approaches to suit the learning styles/needs of all students in their class, by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs.
- Using an inclusive, differentiated, and flexible approach to student output, such as homework, assignments, projects, and tests.
- Adapting lessons for students' interests.
- Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs.
- Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology.
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly
- Providing scaffolded instruction.
- Ensuring that their classroom is adapted appropriately.

In St Fergal's College we aim to ensure that every student is taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. In matching programmes to students' needs, we examine the range of curriculum options available, including Leaving Cert Vocational Programme, Junior Certificate Level 2 Learning Programmes and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

5.3 Additional Learning Needs Team

St Fergal's College has a core team of teachers whose role includes developing, implementing and monitoring a whole-school approach to the education of students.

In St Fergal's College, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is the person(s) who has overall responsibility for the coordination of supports for those with additional needs.

The Special Education Teacher (SET) is a teacher who has been allocated a significant amount of support hours as part of their timetable.

Our special education needs team takes a collaborative approach to ensure that those students with the greatest level of need have access to support from teachers with the necessary experience and expertise.

This involves developing whole-school procedures for the identification of students for supplementary teaching, assisting in the implementation of whole-school strategies to enhance teaching and learning, and providing guidance to colleagues on the implementation of students' support plans.

The core team will work closely with subject teachers, parents and with other support structures within the school, and the SENCO is also part of the Pastoral Care Team

5.4 The role of the Coordinators within the ALN Team (including those in Mainstream and in the ASD classes)

Below is a broad outline of duties that may be the responsibility of a coordinator. It must be noted that these duties are dependent on the school context in any given year. As there is no formally defined SENCO role, responsibilities and duties are decided in consultation with the Principal. The ALN Coordinator role may include the following:

- The ALN/ASD Coordinator may be responsible for the overall co-ordination of special educational needs support within the school, including the identification of students for whom additional teaching supports are to be provided and timetabling and organising the provision of those supports.
- Assisting with arrangements for the successful transfer of students from their primary school and gathering information about students, including those with special educational needs, before, during and after this transfer
- Assisting in programme planning for individual students with special educational needs and, as appropriate, providing advice to teacher colleagues on curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, textbooks and other teaching and learning resources.
- The selection and maintenance of teaching and learning resources
- Liaising with parents/guardians of SEN/ASD students and prospective students
- Liaising with support personnel and external professionals and agencies, including the coordination of applications to the Department of Education and Skills, NCSE, SENO, NEPS, SESS, HSE and other education and health agencies, as appropriate, for resources and support services for students with special educational needs
- Maintenance, storage of and access to reports and records on students in receipt of supports.
- Communicating with relevant staff regarding the gathering and dissemination of essential information.
- Assisting with the arrangement of professional assessments, as appropriate, of students who have may have special educational needs.
- Assessing students and preparation of applications for Reasonable Accommodations at State Examinations and Disability Access Route to Education for third level colleges with the guidance counsellor
- Facilitates and chairs ALN/ASD department meetings
- Is a member (where feasible) of a LOETB Inclusion/SENCO Community of Practice of Special Needs Coordinators.

- Liaises with the SENO in relation to all SEN/ASD matters including; assessment reports, support provision, SNA access and applications to the NCSE for Assistive Technology
- Maintains and updates Student Support Files* as well as the yearly database of those in receipt of supports
- Compiles an overall Provision Map of Supports and list of programmes and interventions per academic year.
- Administers and maintains records of assessment tests carried out throughout the school year in collaboration with the guidance counsellor
- Developing a climate of confidentiality regarding sensitive information.
- Disseminates information about students in line with GDPR guidelines.

5.5 Role of the Special Education Teacher

The SET works closely with the SENCO. They share responsibility for setting targets and recording and monitoring outcomes for the students they work with regularly. Responsibility for the creation of Student Support Files will be dispersed based on the needs of the students in any given year.

5.6 Role of the Principal

The Principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the additional learning needs of students are met.

The Principal will take general responsibility for establishing and promoting school-wide policies and procedures which support the learning of **all** students.

The Principal will oversee a school-wide approach to assessment and identification of needs and ensure that opportunities are provided to all staff to support the process of monitoring and reviewing progress. The Principal will guide and support the ALN team/ coordinators in their duties.

5.8 Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) / Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA)

(In line with evolving terminology within the ETB sector, the role may also be referred to as Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA). Both terms are used interchangeably in this policy).

Role of the SNA

The duties of the SNA are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with circular 30/14 (See Appendix 2)

The work of the SNA should be supervised either by the Principal or in the absence of the Principal by an SEN co-ordinator.

Those duties involve **tasks of a non-teaching nature and are based on the primary care needs of the student.**

Section 6 Allocation, Timetabling and Target Setting

6.1 Allocation of Resources

Specialist staff must be deployed in a way that will best address the needs of students who require additional support. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. Thus, St Fergal's College has greater autonomy and flexibility in how we allocate special education teaching resources. We endeavour to deploy members of the additional learning team in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet students' needs (for example, in-class support, group withdrawal).

- In St Fergal's College, we place the student at the centre of planning and provision and value their voice in the decision-making process. They are invited to contribute their views on their individual support needs, prioritising their targets and monitoring their own progress.
- At the whole-school level, students have opportunities to share their views on issues that affect them in school and so contribute to reviews of relevant policies and practices in schools.
- Effective communication and engagement with parents are critically important in moving towards a needs-based approach to the allocation of additional teaching resources. Parents are consulted in relation to their child's needs and are involved in regular reviews of progress.
- When allocating teaching resources, we are mindful of the benefits of early intervention programmes and allocate teaching resources as required, based on identified needs and school context.

- We also aim to provide additional targeted support to students within the context of a mainstream subject lesson through team-teaching, through group or individual withdrawal or, through a combination of these modes of intervention.
- Importantly, the level and type of support, including medical needs, should reflect the specific targets of individual students as set out in their support plans and be 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. Accordingly, the groupings timetabled for withdrawal may change over time.
- When deploying teaching resources, we aim to maintain time for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective and optimal use of supports. Additionally, flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year.
- The Principal gives due consideration to the professional development and acquired expertise of teachers when allocating teaching roles and supports.
- A core team of teachers will be allocated timetables dedicated to additional learning duties.

6.2 Timetabling

St Fergal's College adopts a flexible approach to timetabling to ensure that extra capacity is available to address changing needs during the year. Accordingly, some members of the additional learning team may be allocated flexible timetables with inbuilt capacity to respond to additional needs. In deciding our approach to timetabling, we consider the following:

- The overall school timetable is designed carefully to make appropriate provision for students with additional needs.
- A core special education team which is being developed and maintained in order to provide greater stability and continuity of support.
- Members of the Additional Learning Team are consulted when the timetable is being developed.

- Provision is made for the special education teachers to support subject teachers through team-teaching/in-class/co-operative teaching and joint planning.
- Provision is made for the withdrawal of students for focused individual and/or group intervention where warranted. Targeted small-group interventions, using evidence-informed programmes for students with similar needs, is an effective way to use resources.
- The impact of withdrawal on students' access to the curriculum with their year groups is considered.
- Timetables should be flexible wherever possible to cater for the specific or emerging needs of students.
- A continuity of support to address the needs of students in Senior Cycle is provided where possible.
- A collaborative approach to timetabling supports with other departments within the schools and outside agencies.

6.3 Student Support Plans*

When students are identified through the process outlined above, a Student Support File may be created (if required) for each of those students in response to their individual needs. Student Support Files will be created through a collaborative process which may include some or all of the following: the ALN Team, Student Support Team, Year Head/Tutor, Behaviour for Learning Teacher, Subject Teachers, parents, SNAs, the student and sometimes external professionals.

The Student Support File will allow the relevant staff to document progress over time and it will assist us in providing an appropriate level of support to students in line with their level of need.



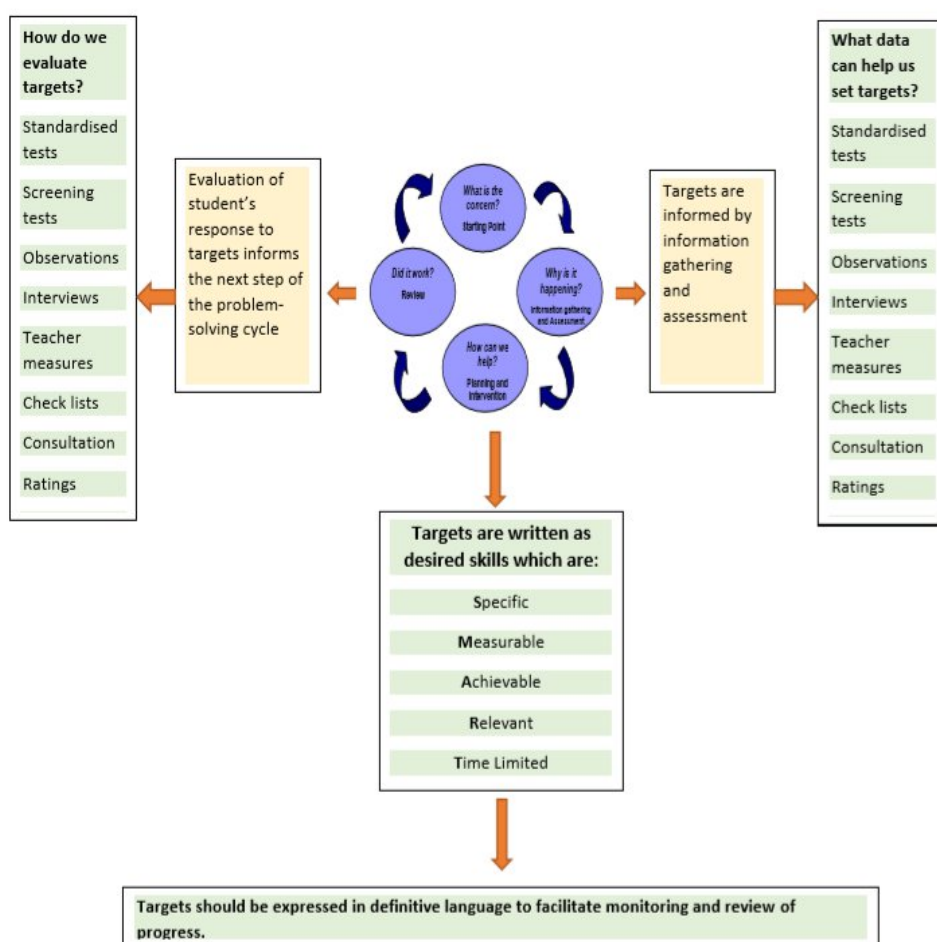
The school team, in consultation with subject teachers, plan their interventions carefully to address students' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets

identified in the relevant Student Support Plan. Short-term planning reflects the support plan targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each student's specific needs.

Recommendations from Student Support Files for each student will be made available to all teachers through appropriate procedures and in line with GDPR guidelines.

6.4 Target Setting

We adopt a problem-solving approach to target setting which reflects the presenting needs of our students:



Section 7 Compliance with recently updated legislation and guidelines

7.1 Data Protection

In St Fergal's College we are compliant with GDPR Guidelines as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. In order to comply with our legislative responsibilities under EPSEN (2004), we take the following approach to the sharing of data:

- In order to fulfil our responsibility to **all students**, every teacher needs to be aware of their **current presenting needs** in the classroom.
- All teachers need to know the diagnosis/category of Special Educational Need/emerging need/concerns about a student in order to ensure that their classroom practice is as inclusive as possible.
- It is appropriate to share professional **recommendations** from reports pertaining to learning/behavioral/medical needs that are relevant to classroom practice.
- Professional reports in their entirety should only be seen by Principal/Deputy Principal, members of the SEN team or other members of the Student Support Team who are working directly with the student

7.2 Irish Exemptions

Circular 0055/2022 outlines the revised procedures and criteria for processing exemptions. Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal teacher, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student where he/she is the applicant, the class teacher, special education teachers, and the student.

Section 8 Priority areas for Development

8.1 Reflective Practice

In St Fergal's College we regularly review provision and practice through the School Self-Evaluation Process. Looking at our School: A Quality Framework (2022) supports us as we engage in this process. Areas for development are then prioritised in our School Improvement Plan and/or DEIS Plan.

Appendix 1 and 2 of this policy contain both our overall SEN Provision Map and a detailed breakdown of all supports and provisions. These documents are updated every academic year and reflect the presenting needs of our students at the time.

8.2 Continuous Professional Development

In St Fergal's College, we use Looking at our School (2022) as a framework to identify areas for training or upskilling of staff.

8.3 Areas for Improvement

To further develop our whole school approach to inclusive practice, we have identified the following areas for improvement for the academic year.

- The redevelopment of an existing building to accommodate the ASD hubs will begin in 2026.
- Continue to embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles across all subject departments to ensure consistent inclusive practices and barrier-free access to teaching, learning and assessment.

Ratified

Reviewed by staff:	Date:
Reviewed by students:	Date:
Approved by BOM Chairperson:	Date:

Appendix 1: Overview of Provision – St. Fergal’s College

St. Fergal’s College follows the NEPS Continuum of Support framework, providing supports for all students, some students, and a few students with the greatest need. Provision is reviewed annually through SSE and updated to reflect student needs and available resources.

Support for All (Whole-School & Classroom Support)

Universal supports provided for every student:

- Inclusive teaching and differentiated learning strategies in all subjects
- SPHE, CSPE, and Wellbeing programmes (Junior Cycle)
- Pastoral Care and Year Head systems
- Student Council and student voice initiatives
- Anti-Bullying (Bí Cineálta) policy and wellbeing initiatives
- Literacy and Numeracy strategies across the curriculum
- ICT integration and assistive technologies (where appropriate)
- Transition supports for incoming 1st Years (induction, taster programmes, student passports)
- Student mentoring and leadership opportunities (Prefects, Gaisce, Peer Support)
- Whole-school positive behaviour strategies

Support for Some (School Support)

Targeted supports for students with emerging or identified additional needs:

- Small group withdrawal for literacy, numeracy, or social/emotional learning
- EAL support and targeted language interventions
- Co-teaching / team teaching in core subjects
- Social skills programmes and study skills interventions
- Student Support Plans (SSPs) developed collaboratively with teachers, parents, and students
- In-school counselling and guidance supports
- Restorative practice interventions
- Collaboration with NEPS and NCSE on specific student needs

Support for a Few (School Support Plus)

Intensive, individualised supports for students with significant or enduring needs:

- Individualised teaching and learning programmes
- Student Support Plus Plans / Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs)
- Individual counselling or therapeutic supports (internal or external)
- Reduced subject load / tailored timetabling where appropriate
- Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE) applications
- Support from external agencies: NEPS, CAMHS, HSE, NCSE, SLT, OT
- Allocation of Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA/SNA) for primary care needs
- Access to assistive technology (e.g., laptops, specialised software, TTRS)
- Planning for transition to further education/training/employment

Note: Provision is flexible and responsive to student needs. Supports are reviewed regularly, with student and parent/guardian input, and adapted based on resources available and professional recommendations.

Appendix 2: Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) / Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA)

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), also referred to as Inclusion Support Assistants (ISAs), are allocated to schools to support the care needs of students with significant additional needs. Their role is non-teaching in nature and is designed to ensure that students can access education in an inclusive, safe and supportive environment.

Core Functions of the SNA/ISA

- Support the care needs of students as identified in professional reports and sanctioned by the NCSE.
- Assist students in areas such as personal care, mobility, safety, communication, and accessing the school environment.
- Promote the independence and participation of students in all aspects of school life.
- Work under the direction of the Principal and SEN/ASD Co-ordinator to support inclusive practice.
- Maintain appropriate records related to student care needs in line with GDPR and school policies.

Examples of Duties

- Assisting students with mobility and orientation within the school building and grounds.
- Supporting students with personal care needs (e.g., feeding, toileting, clothing).
- Assisting with the use of assistive technology, specialist equipment, or adapted materials.
- Providing support during class activities, ensuring students can engage meaningfully in lessons.
- Supervising and supporting students during arrival, transition, breaks, lunchtimes, and school trips.
- Supporting students to regulate behaviour, attention, or emotions in line with care needs and in collaboration with the SEN Team.
- Supporting teachers in implementing Student Support Plans (SSPs) and Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs).
- Promoting student confidence, self-care skills, and independence wherever possible.

Important Notes

- The SNA/ISA role is a care role, not a teaching role. Responsibility for teaching and learning remains with the class/subject teacher.
- SNAs/ISAs work under the supervision of school management and in close collaboration with the SEN/ASD Coordinator.
- Duties may vary depending on the needs of individual students and the resources allocated to the school in a given year.

Appendix 3: Provision Map for Academic Year 2025/2026