

How does Belmayne ETSS provide for young people with additional educational needs?

As an Educate Together school, a core value of Belmayne ETSS is child-centered learning. We aim to provide an inclusive environment with genuine learning opportunities and classroom practices that take account of the multiple ways all students learn. Belmayne ETSS school adheres to the EPSEN Act of 2004 and all subsequent relevant legislation.

Each student with an identified need will have an individual Student Support Plan for learning highlighting areas of support, individual targets and strategies to support their learning. Provision may include in-class support through our Team Teaching model; a differentiated curriculum and small group intervention sessions.

My child is starting in Belmayne ETSS and I feel they may need additional support.

The transition to secondary school is a difficult time for many students, particularly those with additional learning needs. To ensure Belmayne ETSS can prepare as best as possible for incoming students parents/guardians should ensure to forward any professional reports or details of any additional learning needs to the school with the completed enrolment form.

A guide to transition to secondary school for parents of students with additional educational needs is available [here](#).

How does Belmayne ETSS identify young people with additional educational needs?

As well as information provided by parents/guardians on the enrolment form, a member of the Belmayne ETSS team will meet with teachers from the relevant primary school before students begin at Belmayne ETSS. This allows us to get a sense of the students, and identify any areas of concern at an early stage. The primary school also forwards us an educational passport which we use to identify students who may need extra support.

Additionally, students complete a number of standardised tests at the start of first year which gives us an insight into their learning needs. Students are also monitored throughout their school career by teachers and our support staff.

Any concerns are flagged and dealt with as quickly as possible. If parents have any queries or concerns, they can contact the form tutor at any time.

How are classes in Belmayne catered to the young person's needs?

When possible in Belmayne ETSS, we follow a Team Teaching model. This is used to ensure students with additional needs are included in classes but maintain access to individualised, targeted support when needed in. Teachers differentiate the curriculum, and some students may work in smaller groups within the classroom focusing on specific areas as identified by the subject and support teacher.

Students may occasionally be withdrawn from class for individualised or small group instruction, such as in the case of a student with an Irish exemption. If this is the case, parents must provide the school with a copy of the exemption certificate. Please note that Irish exemptions are only granted in exceptional circumstances when a student reaches secondary school level. [Circular 0053/2019](#) outlines the process for applying for an Irish exemption at secondary level.

All Junior Cycle students will be required to study Spanish.

How will parents know how their children are doing and how to support their child's learning?

At Belmayne ETSS we work to develop close links with parents and guardians. There are a number of opportunities through the year for parents/guardians to communicate with staff. Reports are sent home after each of three whole school assessment points during the year, and there will be a Parent Teacher Meeting during the academic year.

Parents are also encouraged to log in to Vsware on a regular basis. This online platform will give parents access to their child's attendance records, any communication from the subject teachers and up-to-date subject results.

Parents and guardians are welcome to phone or email staff between 8am and 5pm on school days with concerns, questions or queries. Advice can be sought

from individual subjects teacher, form tutor and the Learning Support Teacher on how parents can support students at home.

Will my child be entitled to the use of assistive technology at secondary school?

Belmayne ETSS is an iPad school and all students will develop the skills to use this learning tool effectively. The use of the iPad can be beneficial to students with AEN as the accessibility features, such as the text-to-speech function, can be used to support their learning.

Students may be granted additional assistive technology by the NCSE but it is very unusual for a student to be granted the use of assistive technology at secondary school if this has not been their normal way of working at primary school level. Belmayne ETSS can make an application for the use of assistive technology to the NCSE if we are provided with a recent professional report stating it is essential for the child to use assistive technology at secondary school level. It is very important that both students and parents are aware that the granting of the use of assistive technology does not automatically allow for students to use this technology in state exams.

Will my child be entitled to avail of the Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE)?

Secondary school students with special needs may have special arrangements made for them while sitting State examinations such as the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate. Candidates with disabilities (for example, visual impairments, learning difficulties, motor and mobility impairments and so on) can **apply** through Belmayne ETSS for the Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE).

Reasonable accommodations are designed to remove, as far as possible, the impact of a disability on a candidate's performance and enable the candidate to access the state examinations on an equal basis with other students. It does not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates in the same examination.

What 'reasonable accommodations' are available?

Examples of reasonable accommodations include the following:

- You may get enlarged and/or Braille versions of questions, if you have a visual impairment
- You may be granted access to a voice-activated computer, a tape recorder or a scribe (another person to write for you), if you have a difficulty writing
- You may use assistive technology to access the examination paper, for example reading pens, magnifiers or screen readers
- You may do your examination in a hospital or in any other stand-alone centre
- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may be exempted from the aural part of the examination

Belmayne ETSS can only make an application for RACE in the academic year that the student is scheduled to sit their Junior Cycle or Leaving Certificate exam. Students must meet the strict criteria to be granted any reasonable accommodations in their state exams.