

Enrolment Policy for St. Paul's National School ASD Unit

Vision Statement:

In setting up the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit in St. Paul's National School the aim of the Board of Management and Staff is to develop an educational setting which is focused on the needs of all the children. The Board of Management is committed to providing the highest quality of education for the children concerned.

The Board of Management (BOM) of St. Paul's has developed this policy for the Autism Unit in conjunction with the overall policy for the school. The policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, 2000 (EPSEN 2000)

The aim of the Unit is to promote growth and learning in an atmosphere of inclusion and mutual respect by focusing on pupils' strengths, and to identify and provide for their special educational needs to allow them to reach their potential in life.

To achieve this we have many objectives, some of which are to:

- Enable each child to benefit from an integrated and inclusive education
- Work towards the age appropriate national curriculum targets.
- Enhance their communication, social and personal skills.
- Enhance the emotional development of each child

Class Size

St. Paul's ASD Unit will be made up of a Junior Class (Junior Infants to Second class) and a Senior class (Third Class to Sixth Class) and places will be allocated by the ASD Unit enrolment advisory board to a maximum of 6 children per class, on condition that the necessary resources are provided, and continue to be provided, by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health and Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

The ASD Unit at St. Paul's caters for children of primary school going age i.e. 4-13 years. No child can be older than 13 years during his or her last year in the school. Where the Unit is oversubscribed, places will be allocated on the basis of the enrolment policy for the mainstream school and the child's ability to mainstream.

A range of teaching methodologies will be used in the ASD Unit. The methodologies employed will aim to optimally address the needs of all of the children in the ASD Unit. This will accord with the eclectic approach recommended by the Department of Education and Skills.

The individual needs of each child are constantly reviewed to ensure that the ASD class is the appropriate setting to meet the needs of the child. A review of pupils' progress and their Individual Education Profiles will be carried out in consultation with the parents (and other professionals where necessary.)

Enrolment

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year.

In the event that the number of children seeking enrolment into the ASD classes exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list for that year in accordance with the school enrolment policy.

July provision will not be offered or met by the school.

A child may be phased in gradually to the ASD Unit.

ASD Unit Enrolment Advisory Board

Applications will be considered by the school's ASD Unit Enrolment Advisory Board. This board will consist of the school Principal, a member of the Board of Management, a teacher from the ASD Unit and a National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist. The ASD Unit Enrolment Advisory Board will advise the Board of Management on the placement of a child. The final decision as to the placement of a child in the ASD Unit lies with the Board of Management.

Assessment Criteria for Admission to our ASD Unit

This assessment will involve meeting the parents/guardians and child at the school.

A child will be offered a place in accordance with our enrolment policy when all of the following criteria have been met:

1. A fully completed application form for enrolment has been submitted to the school by the parents/guardian.
2. The child must have a multi-disciplinary report with a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV) and with a recommendation to attend an ASD unit attached to a mainstream school. This diagnosis must be made using a

professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.

3. A recent recommendation (within two years of the proposed admission date) must be provided by the above professional indicating that a placement in an ASD Unit in a mainstream school is warranted. A needs analysis/recommendation in respect of each child will also be required in order to provide the best education possible for the children.

4. The child has access to, and will continue to have access to, specified services as recommended; for example Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy.

5. The school have in place the resources to meet the special needs of the child, as per point 4.

Offer of Placement

A child will be offered a place in our ASD Unit if all of the assessment criteria described above are met and there is a place available. If, prior to enrolment, it transpires that the school cannot meet the required needs of the child for placement in our ASD Unit classes, the child will not be enrolled in the school for the following year and the following actions will take place:

1. The school will notify, in writing, the parents/guardians of the rationale for the decision.

2. The school will notify, in writing, Enable Ireland, The National Educational Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education and the Department of Education and Skills of the decision and the requirements necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child.

If, in the course of the year, it transpires that the school cannot meet the required needs of the child the child will not be re-enrolled in the school for the following year and the following actions will take place

1. The school will notify, in writing, the parents/guardians of the rationale for the decision.

2. The school will notify, in writing, Enable Ireland, The National Educational Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education and the Department of Education and Skills of the decision and the requirements necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child.

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student where either:-

1. The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an education in line with the assessments, recommendations and needs analysis received, and the Individual Educational Profile drawn up by the school.
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management the student poses a risk to the health and safety of the other students, to school Staff or to school property.

Any applicant who applies for and is not offered a place in St. Paul's has the right to appeal the decision, under Section 29, with the Department of Education and Skills.

Policy ratified at a Board of Management meeting on Wednesday 6th February 2013.