

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

Vision Statement:

In setting up the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Classes 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 Classes 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 Class 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 inclusive education
- Work towards national curriculum targets as far as possible
- Enhance their communication, social and personal skills and to promote independence.
- Enhance the emotional development of each child.

Class Size

St. Paul's ASD classes will be made up of a Junior Class and a Senior Class and places will be allocated 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 classes at St. Paul's cater 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 classes are oversubscribed, places will be allocated on the basis of the enrolment policy for the mainstream school. A range of teaching methodologies will be used in the ASD classes. The methodologies employed will aim to optimally address the needs of all of the children in the ASD classes. 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 continues to be the most 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).

Inclusion into Mainstream classes:

The concept of inclusion promotes the active participation of the learner as the primary aim rather than simple placement or accommodation. The goal therefore is inclusion, not integration. Essentially, the difference is between 'being there' and 'taking part' with integration prioritising the placement of pupils in particular settings and inclusion promoting actual participation and accommodation.

We shall therefore use the language of 'inclusion' in St. Paul's when we refer to the participation of children in mainstream class activities and settings.

As previously stated, the aim of the special class 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.

Where possible the children will be included in an age/ability appropriate mainstream class for part or all of the day. This can be for social or academic inclusion. Inclusion is only considered when the inclusion of the child, with or without an SNA, will not impact negatively on the education of the other children or on the health and safety of the pupils or staff of the school.

Where the child has been included, the success of the inclusion will be monitored closely by the special class teacher, the mainstream class teacher and the principal. The inclusion will be discussed at each IEP meeting and at other intervals considered necessary by the parents or school staff. Where inclusion is proving successful the involvement of the children, and the duration of their stay, in the mainstream class will be extended.

While all children will benefit from an inclusive environment, some children may be

included either fully or partially in the mainstream class. Where it is agreed that the child's best interests are served by spending the entire school day in the mainstream class; they will subsequently be enrolled in a mainstream class. To this end the involvement of the child and the duration of their stay in the mainstream class will continue to be extended until they are deemed ready for full time inclusion and capable of reaching their full potential, socially and academically, within the mainstream class. Prior to this change being made, the decision will be discussed with parents and the principal will consult NEPS for advice and a revised recommendation. Having received the revised recommendation, an application will be made to the SENO for support for the child within the mainstream class.

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.

Offers of places to the ASD classes will be made in June.

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

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

ASD Class Enrolment

Applications will be considered by the school's ASD Class Enrolment Advisory Board. This board will consist of the school Principal, a member of the Board of Management, a teacher from the ASD class and a National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist, if possible. The ASD Class 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 class lies with the Board of Management.

Assessment Criteria for Admission to our ASD classes

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 and all available reports have 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 or V) and with a recommendation to attend an ASD class 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 class 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 school has in place the resources as per DES guidelines to meet the special needs of the child.

Support by Outside Agencies

Parents please note that a guarantee of support by outside agencies such as the HSE or enable Ireland cannot be provided by the school. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy etc will be dependent on local services, public or private. The school does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is up to the parents/guardians to ensure that all possible services are being accessed and being availed of and that all reports and recommendations are provided to the class teacher for inclusion in the child's IEP, where possible.

Offer of Placement

A child will be offered a place in our ASD class 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 class, 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, the SENO (the National Council for Special Education) 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, the SENO (the National Council for Special Education) 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 and 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 the 12th of December 2017.