



Admissions Policy for ASD Special Classes

Introduction

The Board of Management of Gowran NS has set out this policy in accordance with the provisions of

- the Education Act 1998
- the Education Welfare Act 2000
- the Equal Status Act 2000
- the Disabilities Act 2002
- the Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004

The BOM trusts that this policy will assist parents/guardians, Principal and BOM.

School Context

Gowran NS, is a mainstream co-educational primary school which caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th Class. We have a Catholic ethos and operate under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory.

In 2022 the decision to provide a special class for children with a diagnosis of Autism was made by the BOM in conjunction with the Principal and the Staff.

The decision was taken with a view to providing an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an ASD diagnosis and who fulfil the enrolment criteria. The maximum class size will be six pupils with one teacher and two special needs assistants. The second SNA will only be assigned to the class on the enrolment of a 4th student.

These classes will be funded and resourced by the Department and Education and Skills.

Aims

- Our autism class will offer an Autism specific learning environment within a mainstream setting
- We aim to offer a positive, meaningful educational experience in our autism class which allows pupils to develop to their full potential
- We will strive to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil
- We plan to provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities, strengths and needs of each pupil
- We will provide optimum inclusion in mainstream education as appropriate, with regard to levels of learning disability, resources and suitability for such inclusion
- We aim to prepare each pupil for life, putting emphasis on communication, daily living skills,

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socialisation and literacy skills

- We recognise and value the role of parents/guardians as the primary educator of their child

Enrolment Criteria

Enrolment in our Autism Class will be considered where it has been demonstrated that a pupil requires the support of an autism Class because they are unable to learn effectively in a mainstream class for most or all of the school day even with appropriate supports.

In order to access a place in our Autism Class a pupil must have a recent psychological report from a relevant professional or team of professionals stating :-

- ✚ **Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)**

AND

- ✚ **A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports**

AND

- ✚ **Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same**

AND

- ✚ **A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.**

The BOM reserves the right to refuse enrolment if they believe the school cannot meet the needs of a particular child or if they do not satisfy the above criteria.

Enrolment Procedure

- Applications for enrolment to our autism class will be taken **in line with our mainstream enrolment procedure. This policy must be read in conjunction with our mainstream Admissions Policy**
- The application must be accompanied by all relevant documentation
- Applications will be dated and numbered in order of receipt
- At closing date (approx. March) each application will be considered by the autism Admission Team (Principal, member of ISM team, SET Teacher) who may seek advice from our local SENO or other professionals.
- Accompanying reports will be examined to determine suitability of placement
- The Admissions team will then advise the BOM on the suitability of each application
- The BOM will then ratify the successful applicants.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing
- Parents/guardians will then have to sign and return an Acceptance Form which will be enclosed along with a return date

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- Unsuccessful candidates will be placed on a waiting list for 1 year only
- If the school receive late applications for the special class, these applicants should be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These late applicants, even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream classes of the school or are local children and young people, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the special class.

Scoil Mhuire NS is a co-education Roman Catholic primary school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to Scoil Mhuire NS provides an educational support exclusively for students with Autism.

Gowran NS, as a mainstream school with special classes for children with autism and in the spirit of inclusion, endeavours to integrate all children enrolled in our ASD special classes into their mainstream class environment as often as possible. This always takes place in consultation with parents and guardians of children.

If a child applies for a place in our special class for children with autism, they are also considered by the board of management as applying for a place in their corresponding appropriate mainstream class.

If there is a place available in the corresponding mainstream class for a child who is also applying for the ASD special class, then the parent/guardian will be offered a place.

The board of management will use the School Admissions Notice to communicate the number of places available in our mainstream classes.

NCSE guidelines allow a maximum of 6 pupils in each ASD special class.

The school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Right of Appeal

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a refusal by the Board to admit their child under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

The parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision, and will be supplied with the Appeals Application Form. (Circular 22/02). The appeal will be made to The General Secretary, Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Science, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, on the relevant form.

The school must be informed in writing of the decision to appeal.

Excess Applications

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of places available the following

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decision making process will apply.

The criteria for deciding on acceptance or refusal of applications, where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, is set down below in an open, transparent and fair manner.

1. Children with an ASD diagnosis currently enrolled in the school.
2. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled in the school.
3. Sons/Daughters of past pupils *, priority eldest; **(*see below)**
4. Children residing in the parish of Gowran, priority eldest.
5. Applicants from outside of parish, proximity to the school (using Eircode and Google Maps)
6. Applicants from outside of parish, priority eldest.
7. A random selection, independently verified.

**In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school’s annual admission notice).
The school will apply this criteria to a maximum of 1 place.**

Review

As learning needs may change over time, a pupil’s enrolment in an autism class will be kept under continual review by the school. A review will take place once a year and will include a careful examination of the pupils progress in achieving their learning targets.

This review will consider the views of parents/guardians, teachers and other relevant professionals. It will also examine the suitability of the special class placement and whether the pupil’s needs might be better addressed in a mainstream or more supported setting (special school). Following a decision that the autism Class is no longer the most appropriate place for a pupil they may move to a mainstream class in our school if that is recommended.

Discharge

The autism class will cater for pupils of primary school age (4-13 years). Pupils will be discharged from this class once they have reached the age of 12 (at the end of the academic year when they reach their 12th birthday).

Discharge may also be recommended after the first year if the Admissions Team feels the placement is not appropriate.

Discharge from the autism class may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.

This policy has been formulated in conjunction with the School Staff and the Board of

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Management.

It is compliant with the *Education Act 1998

 * Education Welfare Act 2000

It was ratified by the Board of Management

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