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# Caherline National School

## Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Class Enrolment Policy

Revision	Date	Description	Approved

*"Judge each day not by the harvest, but by the seeds you sow."*

## **Introduction**

The Board of Management of Caherline N.S has set out this enrolment policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000-2012, the Disabilities Act 2002 and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004. The Board of Management trusts that this policy will assist interested parties in understanding the admissions policy and the enrolment criteria.

Caherline National School is a mainstream co-educational primary school. The school has a catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop and diocese of Cashel and Emly.

The decision to provide a special class for children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Caherline National School was taken by the Board of Management of the school in conjunction with the principal and staff in 2017. The establishment of these special classes is to provide the highest standard of education in a mainstream setting for children who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who fulfil the enrolment criteria.

## **Our Aims**

Our aim is to offer and provide a meaningful inclusive educational experience which enables the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, structure, routine and predictability. This will enable each child to benefit from an integrated and inclusive education. The school aspires to enhance the child's communication, social and personal skills and to support the emotional development of each child. Each child will be encouraged and supported to work towards age appropriate National Curriculum targets.

## **Class Size**

Caherline N.S, ASD classes comprise of a Junior class and a Senior class. Places will be allocated by the admissions enrolment advisory board to a maximum of 6 children per class. On the condition that the necessary space, services, resources and funding are provided and continue to be provided, by the National Council for Special Education (NSCE), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Skill (DES). Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills the maximum capacity is 6 pupils per class. Access to speech therapy,

occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, psychiatry and behavioural therapy will be dependent on local Health Service Executive (HSE) services.

## **Special Needs Assistants**

Each class is allocated a number of Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A's) by the area Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO). The S.N.A's are allocated to the school and employed by the Department of Education and Skills. They are not assigned to any one child and there is scope in their job specification to move between classes when the need arises.

## **Enrolment**

The Board of Management reserves the right of admissions within the terms of this policy. The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom in accordance with the Dept. of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions. Other factors that may be considered are:

- Size and available space in classrooms
- Educational needs of children of a particular age
- Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs
- Health and Safety

The Board of Management will not, with due regard to the legislation mentioned above refuse a child on the basis of

1. Ethnicity
2. Disability
3. Traveller Status
4. Political Beliefs
5. Family and Social circumstances
6. Religious Beliefs

## **Application Procedure for Enrolment**

1. Registration process begins with a referral to the ASD class from the SENO and/or contact from the parents.

Enrolment Application Forms for the ASD Class will be accepted until the closing date for submissions of enrolment applications which is the 21<sup>st</sup> of March annually. All applications will be placed on a waiting list in order of the

date of receipt of completed Enrolment Application Form for the ASD Class. Applications received on or before this date will be acknowledged within one calendar month of the closing day for the submission of applications.

Requests for Enrolment Application Forms for the ASD class and queries regarding supporting documentation should be made to Principal, Caherline National School, Caherline, Caherconlish, Co Limerick. Telephone 061-351657

*Receipt of acknowledgement of an enrolment application does not constitute an offer of a place nor does it guarantee a place in the school. It is simply the recording of an application for admission to our school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with our enrolment policy.*

**The Enrolment Application must be accompanied by all of the following supporting documentation supplied by the parents:**

- The child must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV/V or ICD 10 by a professionally recognised clinical psychologist.
- Original birth certificate.
- Proof of address (Utility bills)
- A written psychological assessment/report (dated within 6months prior to the Application being submitted) from a multi-disciplinary team must be provided. A multi-disciplinary team such as Children's Disability Network team (CDNT) should include reports from a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. There must be a full cognitive assessment and an assessment of the child's adaptive functioning as part of this assessment.
- Please note all reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
- There must be a recommendation by the relevant professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
- The child has access to, and will continue to have access to, specified services as recommended; for example Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Psychology.

- In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, parents/guardians are required to provide written consent that the Admissions Team can contact outside disability and support services that their children are attending.
2. All applications received by the closing date will be considered by the Admissions Team. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The team will include the School Principal, Special Needs Co-ordinator and Special Class Teachers. The Admissions Team may seek the advice of the school's allocated NEPS Psychologist.

The function of the Admissions Team is to:

- Ascertain how many places are to be filled in the ASD class. The maximum number of pupils in the class will be 6 pupils.
- Review all applications and all documentation relevant to a child applying for a place in the ASD class.
- Verify the class's suitability in meeting the needs of the child.
- Verify that there is a recommendation from a psychologist for a placement in a special class in a mainstream school.
- Verify the suitability of the child for potential meaningful integration in an age appropriate mainstream class.
- Verify that the child is 4 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> on the year of enrolment.
- Parents/guardians will be requested by the school to consent to a visit by members of the Admissions Team to the child's pre-school/school/home setting to observe the child.
- Parents/guardians will be invited on another occasion to come with their child to the school to meet staff and to see the classroom.
- The child will have the ability to access the National Primary Curriculum and integrate where appropriate into the mainstream class.
- Identify qualifying applicants with reference to these criteria.
- Prioritise each qualifying applicant with reference to selection criteria (point 3 below)
- To make a recommendation based on these findings to the Board of Management.

3. In the event that the number of children that apply for a place is greater than the number of places, such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in the following order of priority:
  - A. Pupils enrolled and attending the school and seeking to transfer to the ASD class.
  - B. Siblings of current pupils of the school.
  - C. Children of current school staff.
  - D. Children living in Caherline parish.
  - E. Children living outside of the parish.

In the event that the number of children in any category exceeds the numbers of places available, qualifying applicants will be offered a place in accordance with a 'first come, first served' basis as per the waiting list.

4. All unsuccessful qualifying applicants will be placed on the Placement List, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. All unsuccessful applicants have a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 within 42 days from the date of the decision by the Board of Management. The Placement List is valid for vacancies which occur in the current school year only. All applications will be reviewed with reference to the selection criteria in March/April each year.

### **Pupils Transferring**

Pupils may transfer to the ASD class during the school year subject to availability of places. Pupils transferring must enter the same class level that they are leaving, and have the necessary diagnosis and recommendations as outlined above.

### **Placement**

1. Parents who are offered a place must complete and return our regular Enrolment Registration Form within two weeks of the letter of offer to accept a placement. If the school does not receive the Registration Form within the two week period, the place will be offered to the next child on the Placement List for that school year.
2. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the terms of the school's Code of Behaviour policy and other relevant policies.
3. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, parents/guardians are required to provide written consent that the Admissions

Team can contact outside disability and support services that their children are attending.

4. Parents of children in the ASD classes will be required to liaise with the HSE for essential services based on their needs, for example Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Psychology.
5. The child will be phased in gradually to the ASD class through the mutually agreed process between the school's Admissions Team and the parents of the child. It is imperative that every child gets the best possible start in the class. To achieve this, the duration of the child's day or school starting date may vary depending on the needs of the child.
6. The school acknowledges and values the role of the parent as the primary educator of their children. Communication between parents/guardians and the class teacher is imperative and a fundamental part of daily life in the school. Parents are required to complete a daily entry into their child's communication book.
7. After placement in the ASD class, a relevant Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will be provided for the child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child. The ASD class teacher is only obliged to produce one IEP per school year. It is up to the professional opinion of the teacher involved if the IEP needs to be updated more frequently.
8. Each child in the ASD class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes provided that this is in the best interest of the child, while having due regard to the educational benefit of all pupils enrolled in our school. Every opportunity will be used to promote inclusion in mainstream classes provided that the child is ready for this step and has the necessary supports in place.
9. A review will take place at the end of every year to assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.
  - The review will be carried out by the Admissions Team with parental involvement. The Admissions Team may seek the advice of the NEPS psychologist.
  - The outcome of the review will be examined by the Admissions Team and the Board of Management.
  - If in the event that a placement is inappropriate, the school will liaise with appropriate agencies in an effort to obtain a more suitable placement.

## **Behaviour**

It is accepted that children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Individual Educational Plan. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be sought for their child.

## **Discharge**

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reached the age of thirteen. It will be deemed compulsory that the year that the child turns 13 years of age will be their last year, enrolled in Caherline N.S. Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after the 30<sup>th</sup> of September in any year will be permitted to complete the academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year. The onus will be on the parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. Caherline National School will facilitate all transfer of records/reports as well as assist with any information required with regards to the pupil. Caherline National School will be deemed to have authority to forward all relevant reports and assessments to the Secondary school unless specifically instructed in writing not to do so.

**Discharge may also be recommended after the first and/or any subsequent year if following psychological assessments and consultation with the parents/guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and doesn't serve the best interest of the child. The Board of Management has the right to overrule any decision made in this regard.**

## **Evaluation**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This Policy will be amended and updated as required.

## **Policy Ratification**

Compiled in consultation with teachers, SNAs, pupils (Student Council) parents/guardians (email).