



# Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

## (St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

Roundwood, Co. Wicklow. Tel/Fax: 01 281 8399 | Email: roundwoodns@gmail.com | Web: roundwoodns.ie

### Admissions Policy for special classes that support children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

#### Introduction

This policy is set out 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 and other relevant legislation and circulars. The aim of this special enrolment policy is to assist parents/guardians in relation to enrolment matters concerning our special classes that support children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

#### Background

The Board of Management made the decision to provide specialised education within a mainstream setting for children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, who fulfil the enrolment criteria and for whom a place may be made available. The purpose of these classes is to support children with ASD, who are experiencing, or would experience, difficulty in a mainstream class setting, to access the curriculum and maximise their potential for learning and personal development. These classes also serve to prepare children with ASD to re-integrate into the mainstream school setting. **Therefore, enrolment to these classes will only be available to children with ASD who, with the supports available in St Laurence O'Toole's National School, will have the capacity to, at least, partially integrate into a mainstream class.**

#### Admissions Procedures

Dates for the receipt of applications is set out in our Annual Admissions Notice which is available from the school secretary and posted on our school website [roundwoodns@gmail.com](mailto:roundwoodns@gmail.com).

A completed application form must be accompanied by all of the following supporting documentation:

- Completed Enrolment Form – including parental check-list agreement form
- Birth Certificate/Adoption Certificate (a copy will suffice)
- Baptismal Certificate – where applicable (a copy will suffice)

### **Evidence of residence within the Roundwood Parish**

- An original Gas or Electricity Bill in the name of either or both parents/guardians, dated within three months of the acceptance date, (where bills are received electronically, parents/guardians must sign the printed copy of the e-bill when submitting) and
- any one of the following, in the name of either or both parents/guardians, dated within three months of the acceptance date:
  - an original bank statement
  - an original Tenancy Agreement
  - an original document issued by a Government Department eg Revenue, Social Welfare
  - an original valid TV Licence
- A diagnosis from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder meeting DSM IV/V or diagnostic criteria. Cognitive ability will not be taken into consideration when these criteria are met.
- A recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
- Any other relevant reports – speech and language/occupational therapy and psychological report

### **Criteria for Admission**

Admission to these classes will only be available to children with ASD who, with the supports available in St Laurence O’Toole’s, will have the capacity to, at least, partially integrate into a mainstream class.

The maximum class size in our current special class is three pupils. If the number of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order, beginning with number one – subject to meeting all the criteria and completing all the procedures outlined in this policy

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>1</b>	Children with an ASD diagnosis currently enrolled in the school.  <i>If the number of applicants in category 1 exceeds the number of available places, the Board reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:</i>  <i>1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.</i>  <i>2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.</i>
<b>2</b>	Children with an ASD diagnosis living within the catchment area as outlined in our general enrolment policy.

	<p><i>If the number of applicants in category 2 exceeds the number of available places, the Board reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:</i></p> <p><i>1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.</i></p> <p><i>2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.</i></p>
<b>3</b>	<p>If spaces are still available, places will be allocated as to children with an ASD diagnosis from outside the catchment area.</p> <p><i>If the number of applicants in category 3 exceeds the number of available places, the Board reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:</i></p> <p><i>1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.</i></p> <p><i>2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.</i></p>

### **Decisions on Applications**

The application will undergo team assessment by the Admission Team. The admission team is made up of the Principal, the Deputy Principal and a member of the Special Education Team, as selected by the principal, to ensure that the application fulfils the enrolment criteria outlined in this policy. A recommendation of be made by the Admissions Team in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management and the decision is final.

All decisions on applications for admission will be based on the following:

- Our Admissions Policy
- Our Annual Admission Notice
- Information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- a) A student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service
- b) The payment of fees or contributions to the school
- c) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude
- d) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents
- e) A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend and interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission

- f) A student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school
- g) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school (subject to being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the (Annual Admission Notice)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school Admissions Policy will not be used to decide on an application for a place in our school.

### **Offer of Placement**

When a place becomes available the parents and principal will complete the "Notification to NCSE of enrolment in a special class". This is Form 7 available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

The parents/guardians of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

If prior to enrolment it transpires that the school cannot meet the required needs of the child for placement in our ASD classes, the child will not be enrolled in the school and the following actions will take place:

- The school will notify in writing, the parents/guardians of the rationale for the decision
- The school will notify the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and the requirements necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child,

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

- The school will notify in writing, the parents/guardians of the rationale for the decision
- The school will notify the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and the requirements necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child.

### **Post Acceptance**

- The parents/guardians of a child being offered a place in the class may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's pre-school/school/home setting to observe the child
- The parents/guardians will be invited on another occasion to come with their child to the class to meet with staff and see the classroom.
- After an initial phase of observation, a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the child. This plan will have input from all parties involved with the

education of the child and will be supported by a psychologist from the National Education Psychology Service (NEPS) team.

- The Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) will also be made aware of the plan.
- The plan will be regularly reviewed and updated by staff.
- A child may be phased in gradually to the ASD class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents of the child. It is important that every child gets the best possible start in the class. In order to achieve this, the duration of the child's day may vary depending on his/her needs.
- Each child in the ASD class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes.

## **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 Education Plan. All pupils including pupils with special needs and pupils without special needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the ASD class or another mainstream 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 found for their child.

The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it is an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of other student, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made not to enrol the child and/or exclude the child from the school.

## **Support by Outside Agencies**

Parents/guardians, please note that a guarantee of support by outside agencies such as the HSE cannot be provided. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will be dependent on the local HSE services or Enable Ireland Services. 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 availed of.

## **Discharge Policy for children in Special Classes**

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the special classes for children with ASD once they have reached the age of twelve. Pupils who reach the age of twelve after September 30<sup>th</sup> in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year. Discharge may also be recommended after the first year

if the admissions team, after consultation with the parents/guardian, feel that placement is not appropriate. Discharge from the special classes may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.

### **Review of decisions by the Board of Management**

Parents/guardians may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998. The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board of Management will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

#### **Note:**

- Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **Right of Appeal**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the pupil may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed. An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B

of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Evaluation and review**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and review and review the policy as required, with emphasis placed upon:

- Effective management placed on application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process

### **Monitoring Procedures**

This policy will be monitored by the Board of Management regularly. The Board of Management will prepare and publish an Annual Admission Notice for the coming school year. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to her by the Board of Management in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

### **Review Procedure**

The policy will be reviewed as appropriate to meet the needs of the school community.

**Signed:**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Fitzmaurice', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Jamie Fitzmaurice (Chairperson of the BOM)**