



## **Enrolment Policy for Special Classes for Children with Autism**

In Sept 2014, the staff of SN Cholmcille Naofa (Castlegar NS) drafted this policy in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Disabilities Act 2002. It is envisaged that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment.

### **General Information:**

**Name of School:** SN Cholmcille Naofa (Castlegar NS)

**School Address:** School Rd., Castlegar, Galway

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### **Rationale:**

The decision to provide a special class for Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Castlegar NS was taken by the Board of Management of the school in conjunction with the Principal and Staff in 2013. The decision was taken with a view to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children resident in the parish of Castlegar who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who fulfil the enrolment criteria.

- **Criteria for Enrolment in A.S.D. Class. The criteria for enrolment to the class incorporating the Dept. of Education and H.S.E. policies is as follows:**

1. An Pre-Enrolment Form provided by the school should be filled out by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child.
2. This form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate.
3. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a multi-disciplinary team should be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note all reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
4. The child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team. The overall I.Q. score /

level of ability as measured in the psychological assessment must fall within the Average to Mild General Learning Disability Range.

5. There must be a recommendation by the medical professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.

6. Children entering Junior Infant level will be granted places based on age. Oldest children being considered first.

- Children with Autism must comply with criteria and acquire sanction from the admissions committee before enrolment.
- Based on the information provided at the initial meeting and reading of the report it will be decided if the school will be able to provide the most appropriate educational placement for the child through its ability to cater for the child's needs. Due regard will also be given to the education of Pupils already enrolled in the class.
- Existing school, psychological, medical, speech/language, occupational therapy and other reports will be considered.
- The Principal may also consult with the professionals who prepared reports on the child and the professionals with whom the school has an existing relationship before making a recommendation to parents regarding the perceived suitability, or otherwise, of enrolling the child in the special class.
- Where parents choose to proceed with the special class option, the Principal shall make a report to the school's Board of Management, with whom the final decision on enrolment rests. (The Principal may also recommend that the decision be deferred, pending the receipt of further information on the child.)
- The special class will have a maximum of six places. It will be staffed by a registered teacher and by Special Needs Assistants (SNAs.) (Minimum of 2 SNAs per 6 children.) The teacher and SNAs will have experience of, or an interest in, working with children with Autism. The Teacher will receive ongoing specialist training through the Special Education Support Service (SESS,) as necessary. (Training is also available through Middletown Centre for Autism.)

An eclectic approach will be used within the special class, that is, a range of teaching approaches (including those used in the school's mainstream classes) will be employed, based on the individual needs of the children. (Some commonly used approaches in classes supported by the SESS include: the TEACCH programme, Hanen, Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), Lámh (manual signing system), Social Stories, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Intensive Interaction and Floortime.)

### **Academic Ability**

As we are catering for children in a mainstream setting the overall I.Q. score / level of ability as measured in the psychological assessment must fall within the Average to Mild General Learning Disability Range. Children who fall into the moderate range of disability or below

will not be deemed suitable for the class.

### **Support by Outside Agencies**

Parents please note that a guarantee of support by outside agencies such as H.S.E. cannot be provided. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will for the moment be dependent on the local H.S.E. services or Mater Child Guidance Clinic

### **Admissions Team**

Each application will be considered by the Admissions Team. The team will include the School Principal : Ms Aoife Winston; Deputy Principal Helena Gaughan and Post Holder for Special Needs Eithne McBrien; A recommendation will be made in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. The B.O.M. has the right to endorse or overrule any decision made by the Admissions Team.

### **Allocation of Places**

The class has places for 6 children and will be supported by a teacher and 2 S.N.A.'s. Places in the class will be allocated as follows.

Children who meet the enrolment criteria and who are:

1. Newly diagnosed and already enrolled in the school.
2. Children whose siblings are already enrolled in the school.
3. Children resident in the parish of Castlegar.
4. Children resident outside of the parish of Castlegar.

### **Procedure for Enrolment**

Once a parent / guardian has made an application to the school for a place in the A.S.D. class on behalf of a child, the Principal will undertake to communicate to the parent / guardian the decision of the Admissions Team and Board of Management within two calendar months of the application. This is to facilitate the consideration of the application by the Board of Management which meets once a month. The communication should be by letter.

1. The parents of a child being offered a place in the class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Ed. Team and the Principal.. Any information requested by the parents will be provided at this meeting
2. The parents may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's pre-school setting to observe the child.
3. 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.
4. After placement in the class a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the

child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child and will be supported by a psychologist from the N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychology Service) team.

5. The S.E.N.O. will also be made aware of the plan.

6. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.

7. 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. Parents are expected to co-operate in this. 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 found for their child.

Parents/Guardians whose child(ren) have been refused enrolment may appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, by accessing the website of the Department of Education and Science. The Enrolment Policy will be reviewed annually

Ratified by the BOM on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2014

Signed: Fr Michael Reilly Acting Chairperson

Review : June 2015