



ASHBOURNE **EDUCATE TOGETHER** NATIONAL SCHOOL

Enrolment Policy for ASD Class

Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998. The Board of Management trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. Furthermore, the Board of Management and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Ashbourne Educate Together N.S is a national school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. We are a mainstream co-educational national school which will open an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) specialised Junior Class in 2017. Educate Together schools are national schools that teach the national Primary Curriculum and are open to all, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background.

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

- **Equality Based** – All children are treated equally, children of all denominations and none are equally welcome into our schools.
- **Co-educational** – Educate Together schools are open to girls and boys and gender stereotyping is addressed and challenged.
- **Child-centred** - this applies not only to teaching and learning within the classroom but to all decisions at staff and management level, which must have the well-being of the children at heart.
- **Democratically-run** – parents are viewed as a positive resource for the school. Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged, where appropriate. The professional role of the teacher is validated at all times.

Context of Ashbourne ETNS

The decision to provide a special class for children with a definite diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Ashbourne Educate Together National School was taken by the Board of Management of the school in conjunction with the Principal and Staff in March 2017.

The decision was taken with a view to provide a 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 decision to provide ASD specialised classes in our school was taken primarily to cater for children resident in Ashbourne, County Meath (“the Catchment Area”). If places are not filled by pupils in “the catchment area”, places will be opened to children residing in the wider community.

The Board of Management notes that it is open to any primary school to set up such a class and therefore does not see itself as providing a service for the entire area.

Ashbourne ETNS will open one class in September 2017 this will be a Junior Class , Our Senior Class will not open until our school is fully developed and we have all mainstream classes in place , therefore ensuring the possibility for all children to integrate into the mainstream class where possible and appropriate.

Our Mission

We aim to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.

After a period of time observing, assessing and interacting with the child, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed in consultation with parents and relevant professionals. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will highlight priority-learning needs. These needs will be targeted through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our Aim

The ASD class will aim to offer an autism-specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

Criteria for Enrolment in A.S.D. Class

Subject to sufficient places being made available in the (ASD class), the criteria for enrolment incorporating the Dept. of Education and H.S.E. policies are as follows:

1. The child must be aged between 4-8 years of age on the 1st September of the academic year for which the application is made.

2. Children resident within the Catchment Area are given priority for places i.e. which is defined as being resident at a postal address within Ashbourne, Co Meath.
3. A Pre-enrolment Application Form provided by the school must be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child. (See Appendix 1)
4. This Pre-enrolment Application Form must be accompanied by an original birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation. (refer to page 6)
5. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a member of 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. (“Multi-Disciplinary Team”). ***Please note all reports in operation for a child should be provided to the school, for consideration by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.***
6. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.
7. If the child also presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. This diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and cannot be dated more than two years prior to the proposed admission date.
8. There must be 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.
9. Where possible, a letter of acceptance from the clinical support service(s) associated with the pupil’s learning challenges should be submitted with the application form, as the school has no responsibility for the provision of such professional services to pupils attending the specialised class.
10. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school’s Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.
11. When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form and an acknowledgement is sent indicating that the application has been received.

12. The Parents/Guardians and the applicant are invited to a meeting with the ASD specialised class coordinator and are encouraged to bring reports from the applicant's present educational setting to this meeting.
13. The application will then be considered by the ASD class Admissions Team, who will advise the BoM on the application.
14. The BoM will decide on the acceptance or otherwise of the application.
15. In the event that the number of applicants seeking enrolment into the specialised class exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list according to enrolment selection criteria.
16. If offered a place, an Acceptance Form as issued by the school must be returned to the school within ten school days that the place is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
17. If the applicant fulfils all of the enrolment criteria but is not offered a place, as there is no place available, the Parents/Guardians may opt to put the pupil's name on a waiting list. The waiting list will operate in accordance to the enrolment criteria and priority order as decided by Admission Team and Board of Management, in respect of those parents/guardians who opt to place the student's name on the waiting list.
18. The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the application was initially made.
19. Those who wish to apply for a place for the following school year must re-apply in accordance to the ASD Class enrolment policy for that school year.

Please note that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if sufficient places are not available and/or sufficient classroom space is not available.

Support by Outside Agencies

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

Admissions Team

Each application will be considered by the Admissions Team. The team will include the School Principal, the Deputy Principal, a member of the In-School Management Team/Support Teacher and a member of the Board of Management. A recommendation will 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.

Deciding Enrolment

In the first instance, the Board of Management prioritises children for enrolment purposes if the child is resident in the Catchment Area i.e. resident and having a postal address in Ashbourne. This allows children living locally to access the class which will negate unnecessary travelling and allow suitable children to attend school in their local area.

Current Capacity and Expansion for 2017/2018 School Year

The Junior Class will take a maximum of 6 children for the school year 2017/18. The school wants to make sure that we give all children the best possible start and as this is our first time to have an ASD class we will start with up to 4 children in the class in September and would envisage to have six children in the class by January of 2018.

- When the school is developed fully we will look at opening a second ASD class.
- Offers of places to the ASD class will be made in May.
- A child may be phased in gradually to the ASD class.
- July provision will not be offered or met by the school.

Requests for application forms and queries regarding supporting documentation should be made to:

*School Secretary,
Ashbourne Educate Together ETNS,
Killegland
Ashbourne
Co Meath
Telephone: (01) 8357493*

Receipt of acknowledgement of an enrolment application by the school 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 completed pre-enrolment application must be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation (“Supporting Documentation”) supplied by parents:

1. An original Birth Certificate (together with a photocopy)
2. **Two** of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area (these must be dated within three months of application):
 - a) ESB Bill
 - b) Gas Bill
 - c) Landline Telephone Bill
 - d) UPC/Sky Bill
3. **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 according to DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria and a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.**
4. Any other relevant reports – speech & language therapy/ occupational therapy and psychological reports

NB If the school does not receive this documentation with the Pre-enrolment Application form, the application will not be processed or considered by the school. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that all supporting documentation is correct and is received by the school.

Where the number of children who apply is greater than the number of places available in the ASD class.

In the event that the number of children that apply for a place is greater than the number of places (which is 6 places *for the 2017/2018* academic year) such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in the following order of priority:

A. *Current students of the school/students who have been offered a place in the mainstream school for the coming September/students with siblings currently enrolled in the school*

then

B. *Children living within the Catchment Area*

then

C. *Children living outside the Catchment Area*

- In the event of the number of children in category **A** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the oldest applicants suitable for the Junior Class (Age appropriate 2nd Class – Junior Infants)

Thereafter;

- In the event of the number of children in category **B** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the oldest applicants suitable for the Junior Class (Age appropriate 2nd Class – Junior Infants)

Thereafter;

- In the event of the number of children in category **C** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the oldest applicants suitable for the Junior Class (Age appropriate 2nd Class – Junior Infants)

All unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list for that academic year, if requested by the parents, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. Parents/guardians will be notified of same.

All unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 within 42 days from the date of the decision by the Board of Management.

Offer of Placement

A child will be offered a place in our ASD class if all of the assessment criteria are met and if 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 classes, the child will not be enrolled in the school 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 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 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 for the following school 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 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

Once a parent/guardian has made an application to the school for a place in the ASD class on behalf of a child, the parents of a child being offered a place in the class will be invited to visit the school to meet with the principal of the school. Any information requested by the parents will be provided at this meeting.

- The parents 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 placement in the class 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 N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychology Service) team.
- The S.E.N.O. (Special Education Needs Officer) will also be made aware of the plan.
- The plan will be updated on a regular basis 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.

Monitoring and Review

The school reserves the right to review the child's progress from time to time, during or after each year to determine whether this is indeed an appropriate school placement for the child.

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 & 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.

Refusal to Enrol and/or a Decision to Exclude

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/admission to any student where either –

1. The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
2. 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 students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made not to enrol the child and/or to exclude the child from the school.

Any applicant who applies for and is not offered a place in Ashbourne Educate Together National School has the right to appeal the decision under Section 29, with the Department of Education and Skills.

This policy is subject to annual review by the Board of Management. This Policy is valid for enrolments for 2017/2018 school year.

