**Enrolment Policy for ASD Class, Sacred Heart School**

**ENROLMENT POLICY FOR ASD CLASS 2019**

**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.

Sacred Heart School is a national school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church, Dublin Dioceses. We are a mainstream co-educational national school with two ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) classes.

**Context of Sacred Heart School and our ASD Class**

The decision to provide a special unit for children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder was taken by the Board of Management of the school in conjunction with the Principal and Staff in January 2017.

This decision was taken with a view to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, who fulfil the enrolment criteria and for whom a place may become available.

The decision to provide an ASD class in our school was taken primarily to cater for children resident in the Parish of Sruleen (“the Catchment Area”). Students in the ASD class will be included/integrated with mainstream school activities in our school where appropriate.

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 of Clondalkin/West Dublin.

**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 and individual targets. These needs will be targeted through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

**Our Aim**

Our ASD unit aims to offer an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion and integration 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 unit, the criteria for enrolment to the ASD unit, incorporating the Dept. of Education and Skills and the H.S.E.’s policies are as follows:

1. An Enrolment Application Form provided by the school should be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child;

1. This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation as referred to in the upcoming section “Procedure for Enrolment”;
2. A recent psychological assessment (which may include a report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team) should be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may include for example Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. (“Multi-Disciplinary Team”). Please note all reports pertaining to a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.
3. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum **Disorder without significant intellectual impairment** made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 or equivalent by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. **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.)
4. The psychological report must have a recommendation that a placement in an Autism Unit in a mainstream school is appropriate for the child;
5. The child must be aged between 4-12 years of age. All children must be 4yrs of age on or before the 31st August of the incoming school year.
6. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school’s Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy;
7. An Acceptance Form as issued by the school must be returned to the school within the required time period;
8. Children must be resident within the Catchment Area i.e. which is defined as being resident at a postal address within Sruleen Parish, Clondalkin, Co Dublin.

**Please note that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if places are 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*.* 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 Senior Management Team and/or the Unit Teacher. The Admissions Team may consult the NEPS psychologist for advice. A recommendation will be made by the Admissions Team in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. Final 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 Sruleen Parish. 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.

**Application Procedure for Enrolment**

 Enrolment Applications for school year will be accepted from the 1st February of the previous academic year. The closing date for the submission of enrolment applications is the 30th April of the previous academic year. All applications received on or before this date will be acknowledged within 2 calendar months of the closing day for the submission of applications.

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

*School Secretary,*

*Sacred Heart School,*

*St. John’s Drive*

*Sruleen,*

*Clondalkin,*

*Dublin 22*

*Eircode D22 H224*

***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 Enrolment Application must be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation (“Supporting Documentation”) supplied by parents:

1. An original Birth Certificate
2. **Two** of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area (these must be dated within two months of application):
   1. ESB Bill
   2. Gas Bill
   3. Telephone Bill
3. **A Diagnosis from a psychiatrist, psychologist, that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria or equivalent and a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.**

**NB** If the school does not receive this documentation with the 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 who meet the criteria, 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:** *Current students of the school / students who have been offered a place in the mainstream school (as per our enrolment policy for mainstream classes) for the coming September*

**then**

**B** :   *Children living within the Catchment Area*

**then**

**C:***– Children living outside the Catchment Area*

* In the event that the number of children in category **A**exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to the date of their application.

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 the date of their application. 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 the date of their application.

All unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list until the **30thSeptember 2017**, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing by post of their place on the waiting list.  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.

**Return of Forms of Acceptance**

Letters of offer for places in the ASD class will be sent within 2 calendar months of the final closing date for applications. The letters of offer include Acceptance Forms which must be returned within two weeks of the letter of offer being issued by the school.  All acceptance forms must be accompanied by a signed acceptance of the School Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies in accordance with Section 24(4) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. If the school does not receive the acceptance form within the two week period, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list for that school year.

**Late Applications**

Applications for places in the ASD class made after 30th April of any given year, will not be considered for the upcoming September.

**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 Principal will undertake to communicate to the parent/guardian the decision of the Board of Management within two calendar months of the application.  The decision will be communicated to the parents in writing.

1. The parents of a child being offered a place in the ASD class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Ed. Team and the Principal of the School.
2. 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.
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.
5. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
6. A child may be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents/guardians 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 their needs.
7. Each child in the ASD class may be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes. This will occur according to readiness for such a length of time of the school day as is deemed meaningful.

**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 in conjunction with the child’s **I**ndividual **E**ducation **P**lan. All pupils are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health & Safety Statement.  Where a child’s behaviour impacts in a negative way on other children (in the ASD class or mainstream classes) 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 educational 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 does not meet the criteria as listed above.
2. The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the HSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
3. 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.

***This policy is subject to annual review by the Board of Management***