.St. Patrick’s N.S.

Drumshanbo,

Co. Leitrim.

Roll No: 19423J

**Admissions Policy – Autism Class**

**Reviewed:**  May 2023

**Ratified:** June 2023

**Full review:** 2027

**St. Patrick’s National School**

**Admissions Policy 2023 Autism Class**

This policy is being set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and follows on from the publication of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act in October 2018.

The Board trusts that by publishing this policy, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters as they pertain to the Autism classes in our school. Furthermore, the Chairperson of our Board of Management, (Martin McGowan, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim) and the Principal Teacher (Ruth McLoughlin, St. Patrick’s N.S., Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim) will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the most current Admissions Policy (2023) which is the general enrolment policy for the school and is available on the school website. (stpatricksnsdrumshanbo.ie)

**Aim**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a fair and consistent procedure is used when deciding on individual applications to the ASD classes and to support parents in enrolling children in the classes.

The Autism Classes are set up for students whose needs cannot be met with the resources available at primary mainstream level. However, it would be our intention that pupils in the class would be capable of being included with their appropriate mainstream class for some elements of the curriculum.

**Procedures and criteria for enrolment in the Autism Class:**

* Each child must have a full current psychological and cognitive assessment, which must specify autism/autistic spectrum disorder with recommendation for placement in an Autism Class.
* Parents/Guardians must fill in and return the standard school enrolment form (details as per school’s enrolment policy).
* Parents/Guardians of prospective candidates for enrolment in an Autism Class must meet the principal, the class teacher and any other relevant parties before the child starts school.
* The Autism classes cater for children of primary school age only – four years to thirteen years.
* The Board of Management reserves the right provisionally to enrol a child for a period of time in order to fully assess the child’s needs prior to enrolment. The Board then reserves the right to defer or refuse enrolment if it believes the child’s needs cannot be properly met in this school.
* All relevant reports and assessments must be given to the school prior to the child enrolling. These should include diagnosis by a psychologist or psychiatrist of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
* The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if they believe the school cannot meet the needs of a particular child. They also reserve the right to refuse enrolment if the behaviours of the child impact negatively on the safety and right to learn of others. This decision is open to appeal by Parents/Guardians under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.
* If a child presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range or above, (this diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.)
* All placements are subject to review at the request of the Parents and/or the school. The review will include input from the Parents/Guardians, relevant professionals and the school. Following review, a recommendation may be made that the child be enrolled in a school that can meet his/her needs.
* When a pupil has been offered a placement in the school, this will be referred to the local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for approval.
* The school will accommodate two classes for children with autism – maximum 12 pupils as directed by the DES.
* Where a child is already attending another school, the Board of Management will require an assessment by a relevant professional which recommends that such a transfer would be of benefit to the child and would be in the child’s long term best interests.
* When an enrolment is accepted for the Autism Class, the Principal will make an application on behalf of this pupil for school transport to the local SENO, provided that this is required by and agreed with Parents.
* As with all other parents, parents of pupils in the Autism Classes will be asked to sign up to the School Code of Behaviour.
* In line with the school’s Code of Behaviour, the Board may decide to suspend or expel a child. This decision is open to appeal by Parents/Guardians under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
* Under the Education Act 1998, the school’s Admissions policy is subject to any directions which may be issued from time to time by the Minister for Education.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in the Autism class exceeding the number of places available, the following criteria stated in the school’s Autism Admission Policy will apply.

* Children already attending mainstream in our school who later receive a diagnosis of Autism, with a recommendation of a place in an Autism Class, will supersede any waiting list currently in operation for the Autism Class, should their parents accept the offer.
* Children living within the catchment area – priority to oldest.
* Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled – priority to oldest.
* Children of staff
* Any specific provisions for children of ethnic minorities, including travelers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.
* All other children – priority to oldest.

(See also Admission Policy 2023)

In the event that the Autism Classes are oversubscribed, a waiting list will be opened and children will be placed on that list in order of date of receipt of applications. Until 31st January 2025 children on our waiting list will be offered places if and when they become available, in order of the waiting list, as per agreed.

However, the Board of Management have a responsibility to the children in its care. The waiting list will be superseded by any children who receive a diagnosis of ASD while in our mainstream classes.

As per Section 62/11 b of the Admissions to School’s Act 2018 all existing waiting lists become obsolete after 31st January 2025. After that date, new waiting lists will be created for each academic school year which parents will have to reapply for annually, until a space becomes available to offer to their child. After 31st January 2025, as per our policy offers will be made to children based on the criteria stated in this policy.

**Behaviour**

It is accepted that some children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All reasonable efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child’s support 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 found for their child.

Where a child is transitioning into the school prior to enrolment at the beginning of the school year, and we have concerns about behaviours that may impact negatively on the other children, we reserve the right to recommend a more suitable setting for the child.

**Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management at a meeting in February 2023. If ratified, it will become school policy and will be provided to any parent seeking to enroll a child in the Autism Class. It is due for review in 2027. However, changes to the unit, changes in legislation or in procedures of enrolment may precipitate an earlier review.

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**Martin McGowan 27th June 2023**

**Chairperson Date**

**Ruth McLoughlin 27th June 2023**

**Principal Date**