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## Admission Policy for ASD Classes

**Admission Policy for our special classes that support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

**November 2024**

The Admission Policy for Autism Classes was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management of St. Brigid's B.N.S in November 2024. It is written in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000 and other relevant legislation and circulars. The aim of this special admission policy is to assist parents/guardians in relation to admission matters concerning our special classes that support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The special classes attached to St. Brigid's B.N.S. provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in these classes.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

### **Background**

Our first ASD class was established on 01/09/2020 and a second ASD class opened on 27/09/2021. 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, admission to these classes will only be available to children with ASD who, with the supports available in St. Brigid's B.N.S., will have the capacity to, at least, partially integrate into a mainstream class.**

### **Selection Criteria for ASD Class**

A report containing the following information

- The child has a confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The report must detail the classification of ASD by a psychiatrist or clinical/educational psychologist using DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria or multidisciplinary assessment of same by a professional team, (*including a clinical psychologist/ educational psychologist*).
- A recommendation for ASD specific education in a special class made by a clinical/ educational psychologist.

- This report must be from a recent multi-disciplinary assessment, which was completed within the last 2 years of the proposed enrolment date.

Where it has not been possible to get an updated psychological report, the school admissions team will accept a letter from the original psychologist/ service who wrote the student's most current report. This letter must confirm the student's diagnosis of autism and intellectual disability, and that the report's depiction of the student and recommendation for a special class is still current and accurate.

The maximum class size is 6 pupils. The Board of Management reserves the right to enrol less than this if it is deemed in the best interests of the class, the children and the school. If the number of children seeking enrolment in the class exceeds the number of places available prior to or during the school year the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

- 1) ***Boys with a diagnosis of ASD who are attending St. Brigid's B.N.S. mainstream classes and whose needs are not being met in this mainstream environment.***
- 2) ***Boys living in the Parish of Killester and brothers of pupils already in the school. (See Map of Killester Parish Boundary attached [here](#))***
- 3) ***Brothers of girls attending St. Brigid's G.N.S.***
- 4) ***Sons of current school staff***
- 5) ***Brothers/Sons of past pupils who do not live in the parish of Killester (Maximum of 25% of available places)***
- 6) ***Other boys living outside the parish.***

**Please Note:** - In the best interests of the child, Category 6 applicants will be limited to those living within a radius of 10km from the school, or a typical journey to school time of no longer than 20 minutes. This is reflective of our recognition of the importance of a child arriving to school in a regulated state.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangement will apply:

The Admissions Team will carefully review each case and create a shortlist of applicants based on individual suitability for the particular ASD Class, considering the specific needs of each applicant and ensuring a balanced approach with the current needs of pupils already in the class.

### **Application Process for ASD Class**

Application and decision dates for admission to the ASD Class will be set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

Advance notification of enrolment dates will be placed on the school website ([www.stbrigidsbns.ie](http://www.stbrigidsbns.ie)) and in the school newsletter.

Pupils for enrolment in the ASD class must be 4 years of age on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> April of the year in which they seek enrolment in the school. Any child who has not reached his fourth birthday cannot be enrolled.

There is a dedicated **Admissions Team** formed by the Principal and will include the Principal, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-ordinator and special class teachers.

The application for enrolment into an ASD class will undergo team assessment by the Admission Team to ensure that the application fulfils the admission criteria outlined in this policy.

- Review of application will consider the following:
  - Correct documentation as outlined above
  - Fulfilment of selection criteria as outlined above
  - Class suitability where child is going to be placed (e.g. age appropriate, balance of needs and resources)
  - Assess potential meaningful integration with age appropriate mainstream class

The Admissions team will make a recommendation to the Board of Management using the criteria outlined above, based on balanced judgement, guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interests of all children affected, or potentially affected by such decisions (both current population and new entrants).

The Board of Management also recognises that the decision to admit new entrants into the school must be made with the understanding of resources available within the school community to meet the unique needs of each child newly enrolled, and in particular, to continue meeting the needs and abilities of the children already enrolled in the ASD class.

- An **ASD Class Application Form** is available on request from the school by email and this should be fully completed by the parent/guardians on behalf of the child. Parents may contact the school prior to filling out this application form to enquire about the current enrolment status of the ASD classes in the school.
- The ASD Class Application Form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate (will be copied and returned).
- A recent original utility bill must also accompany the Application Form, as proof of address (this must be dated within 3 months of application).
- A recent psychological or psychiatric assessment is mandatory. A report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team should also 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 existence on 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. Applications will only be accepted on the basis of a psychological report with a primary diagnosis of Autism, provided by a qualified professional, **within the last two years**.
- A child must have a confirmed diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The report must detail the classification of ASD by a psychiatrist or clinical/educational psychologist using DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria or multidisciplinary assessment of same by a professional team, (*including a clinical psychologist/ educational psychologist*). A recommendation for **ASD specific education in a special class** made by a clinical/ educational psychologist must be included in the report. This report must be from a **recent** multi-disciplinary assessment, which was completed **within the last 2 years** of the proposed enrolment date. (A letter from the original psychologist/ service who wrote the student's most current report will also be accepted).

Completion of an Application Form for Admission to the ASD Class or the placement of a child's name on a waiting list does not confer a right to a place in the school.

## **Inclusion**

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the admission criteria. Fulfilling the admission criteria does not necessarily ensure admission if:

- Necessary resources pertaining to the admission are not available
- Sufficient classroom space is not available
- The Admission Team decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child

Taking all of the above into account, and based on the advice of the Admission Team for the ASD classes, the Board of Management reserves the right of admission.

## **Monitoring and Review**

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

## **Placement Review**

Occasionally, concerns regarding the suitability of a child's continued attendance at the school may arise. In such circumstances, a review of the school's ability to continue to meet the child's needs, safety, and the safety of others may be necessary. Any such review will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the Board of Management, in conjunction with the Principal and other relevant staff members. Parents/guardians will be kept informed of any concerns that might arise in relation to their child's continued attendance at the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/guardians will also be given an opportunity to engage in the discussion surrounding the placement and concerns that arise from the case itself. In the event that it is determined that the child is not suitably placed in the school, having regard for the realistic service options available at the time, the Board of Management may request a multi-disciplinary team assessment be carried out to determine the best options for the specific 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 School Support Plus Plan (SSPP). All pupils including pupils with additional needs are subject to the school's 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.

## **Accessing support from external agencies**

A child enrolled in an ASD class may have recommendations for/ be entitled to support from HSE services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy etc. This is dependant on local HSE services and is outside the remit of the school. The school does not have the resources to follow up on these services and so the onus is on the parents to ensure that all appropriate services are being availed of, and

that all reports and recommendations are provided to the ASD Class Teacher for planning and support purposes.

At times, the school may need to engage external agencies such as The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) or National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS) to offer specialised support and strategies for learners in the ASD class. It is expected that parents/guardians will give permission for these agencies to work with the relevant pupils and staff, and to liaise with these agencies if requested, in the interest of offering the best possible support to pupils in the ASD classes.

### **Discharge Policy**

Upon enrolment in St. Brigid's B.N.S., each pupil in an ASD class is assigned to an age-appropriate link class to facilitate integration with peers in a mainstream setting. It is school policy that pupils in the ASD class will graduate from St. Brigid's B.N.S. upon completing their primary education, aligning with the graduation of their designated link class.

The onus will be on parents/guardians, once their child has completed his primary education, to apply for and secure an appropriate post-primary school/subsequent placement.

Discharge may also be recommended if the admissions team, after consultation with the parents/guardians & SENO, feel that placement is not appropriate. Discharge from the ASD classes may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into a mainstream class.

### **Sharing of Data**

Should your child be placed on a waiting list for a place, their personal data may be shared with the National Council for Special Education for the purposes of planning for the provision of special education placements.

### **Evaluation**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy will be amended and updated as required.

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management of St. Brigid's B.N.S. on **27<sup>th</sup> November 2024**.

*Signed:*            Seán Moran  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

*Signed:*            Nuala Cullen  
(Principal)

*Date:*              27<sup>th</sup> November 2024