



St. Joseph's College, Borrisoleigh, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

ASD Special Class

Admissions Policy

The ASD Special Class at St. Joseph's College.

The aim of this class is to provide a holistic learning and caring environment which facilitates students with ASD to reach their full educational potential within a mainstream post primary setting. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

The ASD Special Class is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The Board of Management of St. Joseph's College has the responsibility for the ongoing management of the ASD special Class, having regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

Application Process

The process generally begins with a referral from an external agency or a telephone call or a visit in person to St. Joseph's College by a Parent/Guardian.

Applications to enrol a student in the ASD class will only be considered in the Autumn before the student is due to start in St. Joseph's College.

Once the school has been contacted the Parent/Guardian will be sent out a copy of the Admissions Policy and an application form.

Parents/Guardians will be made aware of two important dates: the closing date for the receipt of completed application for admission and the date when parents will be informed by letter if their son/daughter has a place in the ASD Class for the following academic year.

Once the completed application has been received it will be closely reviewed by an Admissions Panel who will make recommendations to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management will make the decision on enrolment of students.

The Principal will be instructed to inform Parents/Guardians of their decision.

If successful in securing a place a signed acceptance from Parents/Guardians will be requested by a specified date.

Following the enrolment process, the Principal and/or Co-ordinator of the ASD Special Class will liaise with the Parents/Guardians of students who have been accepted in the ASD class via a visit their Transition Plan.

Criteria for Admission to the ASD Special Class.

Completed applications have to be received by the school by the date specified to Parents/Guardians by the school.

Parents/Guardians have to send in completed forms and documentation listed below:

1. St. Joseph's College Enrolment Form which will incorporate a section where Parents/Guardians give permission to St. Joseph's College Principal and/or ASD Special Class co-ordinator to access any relevant reports from previous schools attended;
2. An educational/clinical psychologist or psychiatrist report that clearly specifies a diagnosis of ASD and recommends the student as suitable for placement in an ASD Class;
3. Reports to date from all previous schools attended;
4. An original birth certificate and PPSN number for the student;
5. Any other medical/occupational reports (including private reports) relevant to the applicant's diagnosis;

The following criteria will apply in allocating places in the ASD Special Class

There is available space. The current provision is a maximum of six places.

The needs of the student as identified can be addressed within the ASD special class;

The recommendation of the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area based on the needs of the applicants;

The ASD Special Class is able to accept students on the Autistic Spectrum who have mild general learning difficulties of moderate learning difficulties but is unable to accept students with severe or profound learning difficulties.

In the event of the number of suitable applicants exceeding the number of available places, preference will be given as follows;

- Siblings of current previous enrolled students;
- Students living in the catchment area;

- Students attending primary schools in our catchment area;
- A student who is attending a placement in a special class in primary school and is recommended to have a placement within an ASD Special class;
- The recommendation of the Special Education Needs Organiser for the area based on the needs of the applicant.

The Admission Panel.

All completed Application forms will be reviewed by the Admissions Panel. This will consist of the Principal or Deputy Principal and the Co-ordinator of the ASD Special Class. Their work is to:

1. Review all completed applications and all documentation;
2. Confirm the student meets the criteria of Admission to the ASD Special Class;
3. Confirm that the ASD Special Class can meet the needs of the prospective student;
4. Make recommendations based on their findings to the Board of Management.

The Role of the Board of Management is to:

- Appoint the members of the Admissions Panel and or make seek external advice if necessary;
- Discuss the recommendations of the admissions Panel and make the decision on enrolment applications;
- Instruct the Principal to convey to Parents/Guardians by letter, their decisions on student enrolment;
- Review this policy as the need arises within the school.

Refusal to admit

The Board of Management may refuse the admission of a student if:

- There is no room in the ASD Class;
- The student does not have a diagnosis of Autism confirmed in a report by an educational/clinical psychologist or psychiatrist;
- The school is unable to meet the needs of the applicant of the grounds that they are deemed a risk to themselves or others and admission of the candidate would make impossible or have a serious detrimental effect on the provision by an educational establishment of its services to others;
- The student has severe or profound learning difficulties;
- The student has special needs that even with additional resources from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate educational placement.

Right to appeal

Parents/Guardians (or a student who is 18 years old) may appeal any decision to refuse enrolment to the Board of Management of St. Joseph's College. All appeals must be in writing and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

In the event that such an appeal is unsuccessful a Parent/Guardian/Student who is 18 years old may appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Review of Existing Placements

Students in the ASD Special Classes have an academic year of 167 days.

The placement of each student may be subject to review by the Principal and School Staff and where relevant professionals external to the school.

A decision may be made as to whether the student will:

- Forfeit their right to a place in the ASD Special Class due to unexplained and prolonged absences;
- Continue in the ASD Class;
- Integrate fully in the mainstream school;
- Seek an internal placement.

Behaviour

Children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. Any challenging behaviours or co-occurring needs must be disclosed to the school in the Enrolment Form.

All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the students School Support File.

All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's College.

Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the ASD Special Class or the students in a mainstream class, to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's College, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents/Guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child.

As indicated above the Parents/Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to St. Joseph's College Code of Behaviour. There is a section in the school diary for students and parents to sign.

Communication and Review of this Policy.

Any Parent who contacts the school and is interested in making an application of behalf of their child to the ASD Special Class will be posted this policy on request. It will be listed on our website as one of the available policies Parents/Guardians may consult on request to the school.

The Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Management or sooner if the need arises.