
ASD Class Enrolment Policy

St. Martin de Porres NS
Roll Number: 19617W

Date: 24th February 2020



ASD Class Enrolment Policy

Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998. The Board of Management trusts that by doing so, 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.

St. Martin de Porres NS is a national school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church, Dublin Diocese. We are a mainstream, co-educational national school with one ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) class.

This class will be funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills with additional financial support from Board of Management resources. The maximum class size is **six pupils**. Each complete class is allocated one full-time Teacher and two Special Needs Assistants. If class size is less than six pupils, Special Needs Assistants are appointed on a pro-rata basis. Children are eligible to attend the ASD class between the ages of four and thirteen years only.

Taking into account the regulations and programmes of the Department of Education and Skills, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act, 1998, and the funding available, St. Martin de Porres N.S. supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.
- Respect for diversity of values and beliefs.
- Traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability (i.e. severity of ASD), Traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria. Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:

- Sufficient classroom space is not available.
- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available.

Taking all of the above into account the Board of Management reserves the right of admission. The Board of Management also 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 Aylesbury area.

Our Aim

St. Martin de Porres NS welcomes all students for whom we can provide an appropriate education. Our ASD class will aim to offer an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream school.

In this setting, we endeavour to nurture self esteem and promote growth and learning in an atmosphere of inclusion, mutual respect, predictability and calm. Through the provision of a broad curriculum, we will focus on the development of each pupil's individual strengths and identify and provide for their special educational needs to enable them to reach their full potential.

Registration of Interest to Apply for Enrolment

The registration process begins with a referral from the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) or a telephone call or a visit from the parents/guardians. Parents will be invited to complete an Expression of Interest Form (APPENDIX 1). The following information will be noted in the registration record:

- 1) Date of registration.
- 2) Name and date of birth of the child.
- 3) Address and telephone number of the parents/guardians.

Enrolment Criteria

Enrolment to this class will only be available to children with ASD between the ages of 4 and 8 years of age (on or before the closing date for applications) who, with the supports available in St. Martin de Porres N.S., will have the capacity to, at least, partially integrate into a mainstream class.

The maximum enrolment in the ASD class is six pupils. The Board of Management reserves the right to enrol less than this if it is deemed in the best interest of the class, the pupils and the school.

If the number of children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order, beginning with number one – subject to meeting all the criteria and completing all the procedures outlined in this policy.

Category 1: Children with an ASD diagnosis currently enrolled in the school.

If the number of applicants in category 1 exceeds the number of available places, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:

- 1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.
- 2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.

Category 2: Children with an ASD diagnosis, living within the catchment area as outlined in our general enrolment policy. (Two utility bills must be supplied as proof of address).

If the number of applicants in category 2 exceeds the number of available places, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:

- 1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.
- 2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.

Category 3: If spaces are still available, places will be allocated as to children with an ASD diagnosis from outside the catchment area.

If the number of applicants in category 3 exceeds the number of available places, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered:

- 1) Suitability for enrolment considering the needs/age/abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.
- 2) Length of time waiting for enrolment.

Subject to sufficient places being made available in the ASD class, the procedure for enrolment, incorporating the Department of Education and Skills and H.S.E. policies, are as follows:

- 1) An Expression of Interest Form, provided by the school, should be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child;
- 2) This Expression of Interest Form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation required as referred to in the section 'Procedure for Enrolment';
- 3) A recent (within 2 years of the proposed admission date) 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 and Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note that all reports in operation 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;
- 4) The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder **without significant intellectual impairment** made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria 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);

- 5) The diagnostic report must have a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child;
- 6) The child must have the potential (independence with SNA access for the full school day) to be included in a mainstream class with his/her age-based cohort before leaving Primary School;
- 7) The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy;
- 8) An Acceptance Form, as issued by the school, must be returned to the school within the required time period.

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

Procedure for Enrolment

Expression of Interest Forms including all relevant supporting documentation for the 2020/2021 school year will be accepted from 9th of March 2020. The closing date for the submission of Expression of Interest Forms is the 23rd of March 2020. All Expression of Interest Forms received on or before this date will be acknowledged within 1 calendar month of the closing date for the submission of applications.

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 the enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with our Enrolment Policy.

The Admissions Team

The Admission Team will:

- Ascertain how many places are to be filled in the ASD Class. The maximum number of pupils in the class will be six.
- Review all expressions of interest and all documentation relevant to a child applying for a place in the ASD Class.
- Verify the class's suitability in meeting the needs of the child.
- Verify that there is a recommendation from a psychologist for placement in a special class in a mainstream school.

- Verify the suitability of the child for potential, meaningful integration in an age appropriate mainstream class.
- Verify if the child is four years old on or before April 30th on the year of enrolment.
- Verify that the child has an intelligence score in the Average or Low Average range (a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient score of 75 or greater) when compared to other children of a similar age.
- Identify qualifying applicants with reference to these criteria.
- Prioritise each qualifying applicant with reference to selection criteria.
- Make a recommendation based on these findings to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management is responsible for and must respect the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled. The Board of Management has the right to endorse or overrule any decision made by the Admissions Team. In particular, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if they believe the school cannot meet the needs of a particular child.

All unsuccessful qualifying applicants will be placed on the Placement List, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 within 42 days from the date of the decision by the Board of Management. **The Placement List is valid for vacancies which occur in the current school year only.** All expressions of interest will be reviewed with reference to the selection criteria in April each year.

Offer and Acceptance of a Place

A letter of offer for a place in the ASD Class will be sent within 2 calendar months of the final closing date for expressions of interest. The letter of offer includes an Acceptance Form which must be returned within two weeks of the letter of offer being issued by the school. The acceptance form **must** also be accompanied by a signed acceptance of St. Martin de Porres National School's Code of Behaviour 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 Placement List for that school year.

Late Applications

Applications for places in the ASD class made after 23rd March 2020 will not be considered.

Placement

1. After placement in the ASD Class, a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the child. The plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child. The ASD Class teacher is only obliged to produce one IEP per school year. It is up to the professional opinion of the teacher involved if the IEP needs to be updated more frequently.
2. The S.E.N.O. (Special Education Needs Organiser) will also be made aware of the plan.
3. Each child in the ASD Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes, provided that this is in the best interest of the child, while having due regard to the educational benefit of all pupils enrolled in our school. Every opportunity will be used to promote inclusion in mainstream classes provided the child is ready for this step and has the necessary supports in place in the ASD class.
4. School books do not need to be purchased until discussion with the class teacher in September.
5. A review will take place at the end of the child's first year to assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.
 - The review will be carried out by school staff with parental involvement.
 - The outcome of the review will be examined by the Board of Management.
 - If in the event that a placement is inappropriate, the school will liaise with appropriate agencies in an effort to obtain a more suitable place.

Behaviour

It is acknowledged by St. Martin de Porres N.S. that a minority of pupils with special educational needs may display challenging and/or violent behaviour. St. Martin de Porres N.S. has a duty of care to all its pupils and staff. Our management of challenging and/or violent behaviour is consistent with each child's right to be treated with dignity and to be free of abuse.

All efforts will be made by school staff to prevent, manage and reduce challenging behaviour and/or violent behaviours through positive pupil/teacher/SNA relationships, the use of available therapeutic interventions and the implementation of behaviour plans as part of the pupil's IEP. All pupils are subject to the St. Martin de Porres Nationals School's Code of Behaviour and Safeguarding Statement.

Where a pupil's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other pupils in the special class or on pupils in the integration (mainstream) class to the extent that those pupils' right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the Board of Management, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

Discharge

It is the school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reached the age of thirteen. It will be deemed compulsory that the year the student turns thirteen will be their last year. Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after September 30th in any year will be permitted to complete the academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year.

The onus will be on the parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. St. Martin de Porres N.S. will facilitate all transfer of records/reports as well as assist with any information required with regard to the student and St. Martin de Porres N.S. will, with written consent, forward all relevant reports and assessments to the secondary school.

Discharge may also be recommended after the first and/or any subsequent year if, following psychological assessments and consultation with the parents/guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and serves the best interest of the child. The Board of Management has the right to overrule any decisions made in this regard.

Support by Outside Agencies

Parents should 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.

Review

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

This policy is valid for enrolments for 2020/2021 school year.

Signed

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date

Signed

Principal/Secretary, Board of Management

Date
