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## Admissions Policy for ASD Class 2024/2025

### 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.

St Brigid's J.N.S is a national school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church, Dublin Dioceses. We are a mainstream co-educational national school with one ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) class.

### Context of St Brigid's J.N.S. and our ASD Class

The decision to provide a special class for children with a definite diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder was taken in March 2020.

The decision was taken with a view to providing an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, who fulfil the enrolment criteria and for whom a place may be made available.

The decision to provide an ASD class in our school was taken primarily to cater for children resident in the Parish of Brookfield, Tallaght. Students in the ASD class will be integrated with mainstream school activities in our school where appropriate.

**The class has a maximum of six children. Places will be allocated by the ASD Admissions Team to a maximum of 6 children per class, on condition that the necessary resources are provided, and continue to be provided, by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health and Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES).**

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year. July provision will not be offered or met by the school.

### Our Mission

The role of St Brigid's school is to provide a safe, caring environment where students can develop a sense of independence, responsibility and confidence to enable them to achieve their fullest potential. It is a place where students are valued and inspired to become lifelong learners.

Over the years the Principal, the Board of Management, the whole school staff, pupils and parents/guardians have worked together to create a positive and caring ethos. This caring ethos

permeates all teaching and learning situations as well as all staff relations. It contributes to the formation of strong and healthy relations throughout the whole school community.

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

### **Our Aim**

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

1. An Application Form provided by the school should be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child;
2. This Application Form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation as referred to in the section "Procedure for Enrolment";
3. A recent psychological assessment (dated within **24 months** of the closing date for applications to enrol) which may include 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 & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note all reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
4. Report from the child's current educational setting.
5. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic 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, completed by a psychologist registered with a relevant Irish governing body and include a cognitive assessment.
6. The psychological report must have a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child;
7. All children must be 5yrs of age on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> December of the incoming school year and eight or turning nine during their last academic year (2<sup>nd</sup> class). It will be deemed compulsory that the year the student turns nine (2<sup>nd</sup> class) will be the last year in St Brigid's

J.N.S. ASD class. The onus will be on the parents and the NCSE to find an appropriate setting after that. St Brigid's J.N.S. will facilitate this process by transferring all records and reports.

8. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.
9. An observation appointment of the child in his/her preschool setting must be organised with the school before the closing date for applications. If the child is not attending preschool he/she may be observed in the home setting or brought to the school if this is not possible.
10. An Acceptance Form as issued by the school must be returned to the school within the required time period.

**The withholding of reports and pertinent information from the school Admissions Team will invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.**

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

### **Support by Outside Agencies**

Parents please note: support by outside agencies such as the H.S.E. will not be provided.

Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will be dependent on the local H.S.E. services *Chamber House Services Tallaght*. 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 SEN co-ordinator and the special class teacher. A recommendation will be made by the Admissions Team in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

### **Deciding Enrolment**

### **Application Procedure for Enrolment**

**Enrolment Applications for the 2024/2025 school year will be accepted from 12th October 2023. The closing date for the submission of enrolment applications is the 28th February 2024.**

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

*Maeve Cloke,  
St Brigid's J.N.S.  
Brookfield*

**Receipt of acknowledgement of an application to enrol 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 Admissions Team in accordance with our enrolment policy and approved by the Board of Management.**

The Enrolment Application must be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation supplied by parents:

1. An original Birth Certificate (together with a photocopy)
2. **Two** of the following original documents, as proof of address
  1. ESB Bill
  2. Gas Bill
  3. Telephone Bill
3. **A Diagnosis from a psychiatrist or psychologist registered with a relevant Irish governing body, 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. Psychologist's report must be dated within the 24 month period from the time the application is made and should include a cognitive assessment.**

**NB** If the school does not receive this documentation with the 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 meeting the criteria exceeds the number of places available priority will be given as follows:

- A) Applicants already enrolled in the school.**
- B) Applicants who have siblings enrolled in St Brigid's J.N.S. or St Aidan's S.N.S. including step siblings or foster siblings resident at the same address**
- C) Catchment – All children who live within St Aidan's parish boundaries**
- D) All children who apply to the school and are not residents within the parish boundaries but are living in adjoining parishes to St Aidan's parish are entitled to a place in the class if there are vacancies in the class after the group at A-C have been allocated places**
- E) All children who apply and are not residents within the parish boundaries are entitled to a place if there are vacancies after the group at A-D have been allocated places**

***F) The above categories A-E will be worked through in sequence. If the number of applications for places within these categories exceeds the number of places available, places will be assigned by age - the oldest child first.***

All unsuccessful applicants complying with the stated criteria for entry into the ASD class as outlined in this policy will be placed on a waiting list for the duration of the school year finishing June 2024 in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. These applications are not valid for the year 2024/2025. Parents/Guardians must reapply for the following year if they were unsuccessful after the waiting list is dissolved.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing or by email 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 two weeks of the final closing date for applications. Parents or Guardians must return the acceptance letter within two weeks of offer. Parents/Guardians must come to the school following an appointment phone call or email to fill out an enrolment form and NCSE notifications. All enrolment forms must be accompanied by a signed acceptance of the School 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 a 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 28th February 2024 will be dated as received and children complying with criteria will be placed on a waiting list once all available places have been filled.

### **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 as soon as possible or within two weeks after the closing date for applications. The decision should 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 will fill in the relevant enrolment forms for the ASD class- this place is then subject to Confirmation from the S.E.N.O to the school that the child meets the criteria for placement in a special class within a mainstream school.
3. The parents may be requested by the school to consent to a further visit by the staff to a child's pre-school/ school/home setting to observe the child.
4. 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.

5. 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. The S.E.N.O. (Special Education Needs Officer) will also be made aware of the plan.
6. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
7. A child may be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents 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.
8. Each child in the ASD class may be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes according to what is practicable and in the child's best interest.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The school will review the child's progress regularly throughout the 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 through the implementation of the child's Individual Education Plan. All pupils including those with special needs are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health & 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. The Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a child if they contravene the Code of Behaviour.

All decisions regarding enrolment, refusal to enrol, application of sanctions up to possible exclusion remain the preserve of the Board of Management. Parents have the right to appeal decisions of the Board in the first instance to the Board of Management and secondly through the provisions of Section 29 as provided in the Education Act 1998 and amendments.

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

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5/10/2020

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson