



Autism Class Enrolment Policy

Salesian Secondary College

Pallaskenry

Roll Number: 641800

School Patron/s: Salesians

2021/2022

Enrolment Policy, Salesian Secondary College

(for Autistic Spectrum Disorder Special Class.)

Mission Statement

Salesian Secondary College is a voluntary, catholic, secondary school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Our school dedicates itself to educational excellence taking into account the uniqueness and complexity of each individual pupil. We strive to create an atmosphere where pupils are happy and thrive in an environment imbued with St. John Bosco's three educational principles of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.

Rationale.

The Department of Education and Skills recognises the challenges posed by students diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Thus, Salesian Secondary College has two special support classes within its school to cater for students on the Autistic Spectrum who can participate with support in a mainstream school. For the purpose of clarity, the term Autism Class will be used in this document. However, in practice, these classes are called Den1 & Den2 in our school, according to the wishes of the students.

Each class will have the capacity to cater for a maximum of six students who:

- Are secondary aged pupils (as per Department of Education and Science Guidelines) & have completed primary school education or equivalent
- Have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V/ICD10) and supporting original documentation in order to be considered for enrolment in our ASD Den classes. This documentation being in-date (in the previous 3 years) can be a determining factor in the allocation of places
- Students must have a reasonable expectation of being able to follow school rules to be considered for enrolment in the ASD Programme.
- Salesian Secondary College provides a support class that is an open, inclusive and unrestricted environment and setting. This class is not a high dependent unit.
- Students who apply must have the potential to access the mainstream curriculum or part of the mainstream curriculum with the aid of the support class.
- Students who are enrolled in this class will follow a Junior and Senior Programme (6 years). In addition, students with ASD can access high-quality support for learning and Junior Certificate Level 2 Learning Programmes, if appropriate. Students will be registered with their relevant year/class group.

- As per DES Guidelines, the school will not exceed the maximum number of six students per Autism Class. At present, the school has two classes. To ensure that we provide a mainstream education to all students, there is a maximum of two students with an ASD diagnosis per class group.
- Priority will be given to those students who are, in the judgement of the Board of Management, most able to meaningfully participate in mainstream classes and education but would be unable to do so without the support provided by the ASD programme.
- All applications, offers of enrolment and continuing enrolment are subject to signing of, adherence to and ability to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The Board of Management respect the rights of the existing school community and students already enrolled. This will be taken into account when assessing entry into the ASD programme.

Aims of the Special Class.

- To meet the educational needs of the students.
- To provide academic support in the areas of literacy and numeracy skills.
- To support the participation of students in mainstream activities, as appropriate.
- To enhance the social and communication skills of the students in Salesian Secondary College.
- To develop organisational skills and strategies to enable the students to cope with everyday life.

The Autism Class will facilitate a transfer programme for new students. The model of inclusion will underpin the work of the Autism class.

Enrolment

Integration of students into mainstream education is the aim of Den. Although students have their own base room they will, when appropriate to the student's learning, attend mainstream classes both with and without SNA support. In order to enroll in the classes, students must be capable of integrating into mainstream education. Evidence must be provided that the student is capable of integration and a multidisciplinary team must support this evidence. Each applicant should be supported by a report from the primary school outlining the student's academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs and outlining the current extent of social inclusion.

This social inclusion operates on the understanding that the intellectual ability of students enrolled in either of our Autism classes would be similar to the profile of the population of students attending the mainstream section of the school and the student

would have the ability to integrate into mainstream classes according to individual need.

Enrolment is a dual enrolment process and is reserved for students who have successfully enrolled in Salesian Secondary College through the Common Application System (CAS) in the first instance. Once enrolled through the CAS the Special class Admissions Team will review enrolment to the Autism class.

The Board of Management has delegated the principal to decide on applications for enrolment to the Autism class. Applicants then have the right to appeal that decision in writing to the Board of Management.

2. Admissions Team

A specially appointed admissions team will review applications and apply the admissions criteria. The admissions team will consist of the Principal of Salesian Secondary College, the Co-ordinator of the ASD class and Deputy Principal. The role of the admissions team is:

- To consider each individual application in the context of the entry criteria, as outlined in this policy.
- To determine if the individual application meets the entry criteria.
- To ensure a fair and consistent procedure is used when deciding on individual applications to the special class at Salesian Secondary College. The following criteria will apply: places will be allocated to (a) siblings of existing students, (b) students with a parent working in the school (c) Students from Primary schools in our catchment area, (d) Students who live within the catchment area, (e) Students from feeder schools outside our catchment area, (f) Students from St. Nessen's N.S. Mungret, (g) Students from St. Pauls N.S. Dooradoyle. Students not in the above categories will be considered in order of receipt of an initial letter of application, as per mailing list.
- To assess the applicant's needs and the capacity of the support class to meet these needs.

3. Criteria

A child may be eligible for admission into Autism class when all of the following entry criteria have been met:

1. The applicant has been registered in 1st Year through the Common Application System.

2. There is a place available in the one of our ASD classes. Each year the school in consultation with the SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) will determine the number of spaces available in Den1/Den2. Under Department of Education and Skills guidelines the maximum number of students enrolled in an ASD Class is 6 students.
3. Students must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/ ICD10) and supporting documentation.
4. In order to be considered for enrolment to the Autism class applicants must have a diagnosis from a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure within the previous three years and this report must recommend placement in an ASD special class in a main stream post primary setting.
5. The applicant must also be currently engaged with the appropriate external agencies who offer the appropriate professional support to the applicant and the school.
6. Students who apply must, in the judgement of the Special Class Admissions Team, have an ability to meaningfully participate in mainstream classes and abide by the school's Code of Behaviour in order to be considered.
7. Where the number of students applying and meeting entry criteria, exceeds the number of places available, two lists will be created.

List A – those students who meet the Autism class enrolment criteria as well as all of the mainstream enrolment criteria

- (i) Brother of existing student
- (ii) Student from feeder school

List B - All other applications will be placed on list "B". Students placed on list "B" will only be considered for enrolment and visited by the Special Class Admissions Team if the available places are not taken up by those students on list "A".

Parents will be informed in as soon as is practicable which list their son is on.

Parents/Guardians are required to meet with a member of the Special Class Admission Team to discuss their son/daughter application for enrolment into the ASD programme.

In making a decision, the Principal will have regard for relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to special class size and staffing provisions and/or any other relevant requirements concerning the provision of necessary documentation and the provision of accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of existing and prospective students.

Parents/guardians of applicant students will be informed of the decision relating to their own child's admission to The Autism class as soon as is practicable. Parents/guardians of students offered a place will inform Salesian Secondary College of their decision to accept or turn down a place in the programme within ten working days of the offer letter being posted.

Once a student has been offered a place they will be invited to participate in a transition programme. Salesian Secondary College regard students' participation in the transition programme to be essential in ensuring their smooth transition to their new environment, as well as in facilitating the SEN Team in making any necessary academic/other reasonable accommodations for the student in a pre-emptive and responsible manner.

It is a policy of the school not to accept transfers into either Autism class after the commencement of the school year.

Documentation Pertaining to Enrolment in The Den

Salesian Secondary College requires that all applications are accompanied by documentary evidence that proves conclusively that the applicant has been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder by an approved specialist/team of specialists in the fields of educational psychology / clinical, psychology / child, psychiatry / paediatrics. We require that parents/guardians of the applicant student provide the school with a full, written original diagnostic history. Psychological reports/Occupational Therapy reports/Speech and Language Therapy reports, or any other reports, which refer to the original diagnosis, will not be accepted in lieu of the original written diagnosis.

In order to best support students and without affecting their eligibility for a place in the Autism class and as a student in Salesian Secondary College we require that we are made aware of:

Any medications that the applicant student may be in receipt of either at home or in the course of the school day. (This applies to all students attending Salesian Secondary College, regardless of their association with The Den)

Any additional medical conditions and/or dietary restrictions/requirements that the individual may have. (This applies to all students attending Salesian Secondary College, regardless of their association with The Den)

In order to determine our suitability for a student we strongly recommend that applicant students have School Transition Reports completed by a psychologist in conjunction with the feeder school and parents/guardians.

The School Transition Report and most recent psychological/cognitive/multi-disciplinary etc. assessment must recommend placement in an ASD special class in a mainstream post-primary setting. The applications of students without such a recommendation or with a joint recommendation may be affected by their absence.

Where a School Transition Report is not available applications should have a “Statement of Need” from the relevant HSE service. In this instance the student’s current school will also be asked to complete a School Transition Report. Applications without a “Statement of Need” or school completed School Transition Report where needed may be affected by their absence.

As soon as is practicable the SEN Team will contact both the parents/guardians of the applicant student and subsequently their school to arrange a school visit. Parents/guardians will be made fully aware of the date, time and nature of this visit.

Referrals to Board of Management regarding the Autism class enrolment

Applications to the Autism class will be referred to the Board of Management for decision in the following instances:

- Appeal against the Principal’s decision not to offer a place in the Autism class.

Exceptional Cases in relation to Enrolment to the Autism Class

Having due regard and respect for the statutory and constitutional rights of parents and their children, the Board of Management reserve the right to refuse any application for enrolment in particular circumstances, which might include, but are not confined to, the following:

1. An established prior record of poor behaviour, in particular, any propensity towards violence and/or aggressive, threatening or disrespectful behaviour towards other students, members of staff and/or school property. This may extend to such

behaviours outside of school, as well as in relation to school.

2. An established prior record of bullying, cyber-bullying and/or sexual harassment of other students and/or members of staff. This may extend to such behaviours outside of school, as well as in relation to school.
3. An established prior record of use, possession or distribution of weapons, illegal substances and/or mood altering substances (including, but not confined to, alcohol & other substances classed as 'legal highs'). This may extend to such behaviours outside of school, as well as in relation to school.
4. Insufficient educational attainment/coverage of course content to effectively participate in a particular course/subject. ie. Insufficient subject course content covered in previous school(s) to make sufficient progress viable.
5. Lack of adequate resources to ensure school can cater for particular needs.

Communication with the Education Partners.

This policy was written with the collaboration of students, staff, parents / guardians, the Board of Management.

A copy of this Policy is sent to all staff and parents / guardians and is available from the school on request and through our official social media.

Review of this Statement.

This Policy will be developed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and ratified by the Board of Management.

School Management will accept feedback from staff, students and Parents / Guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels i.e. staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by Management.

This policy will be reviewed again in 5 years. This policy was reviewed in May 2020.

This policy is incorporated into the body of School Policy from the date of review.

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signature –Chairperson, Board of Management:

Signature – Secretary, Board of Management:

