



Queen of the Universe N.S.

Long Range
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Application Procedure for Enrolment to Special Class (ASD Unit)

Rational

The decision to provide a special class for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.) in Queen of the Universe N.S., was taken by the Board of Management (B.O.M.) of the school in conjunction with the Principal, Staff and Special Needs Organiser in 2011. The decision was taken with a view to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who fulfil the enrolment criteria. A second class was established in 2012.

Our Mission

We aim to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop his/her full learning potential leading to integration into mainstream class.

After a period of observation, assessment and interaction with the child, an Individual Education Plan will be developed for each child 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.

We offer an eclectic model of autism-specific approaches, appropriate to the needs of the child.

Our Aim

Our Special Class for children on the Autism Spectrum aims to offer an autism specific learning environment with the objective of integration into a mainstream class. The mainstream school caters for boys and girls up to and including 1st class and girls only thereafter. The Special Class for children with autism caters for boys and girls up to 6th class. Boys who attend the Special Class may be integrated into 2nd to 6th mainstream classes, as appropriate.

Criteria for Enrolment in our Special Class (A.S.D.)

The criteria for enrolment in the class are as follows:

1. An Enrolment Form provided by the school must be filled out by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child at time of Enrolment which is usually in Feb./March prior to the expected start date,
2. this form must be accompanied by an original birth certificate,
3. a recent multi-disciplinary assessment is required. This assessment should have input from a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker, Psychiatrist and a Physiotherapist. Please note all reports currently pertaining to the child must be provided to the school,
4. the child must have a psychological diagnosis of Aspergers/Autism Spectrum Disorder made by a psychologist. The overall I.Q. score/level of ability measured in the psychological assessment must fall within the Mild General Learning Disability/Average Ability/Above Average Range,
5. there must be a recommendation by the professionals in the psychological report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child,
6. children must be at least 4 years of age on the 1st Sept. in the year in which the child intends to start school, and
7. admission to the Special Class is subject to a determination by the Admissions team that the placement is appropriate in all the circumstances.

Admissions Team

Each application will be considered by the Admissions Team. The team will comprise of the school Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Needs Team and Special Class Teachers. A recommendation will be made in relation to each application to the Board of Management (B.O.M.) of the school. The B.O.M. may accept or reject any recommendation made by the admissions team.

Allocation of Places

Each special class (A.S.D.) has places for 6 children and will be supported by a teacher and a minimum of two Special Needs Assistants depending on the care needs of the pupils. Places in the class will be allocated in the following order.

Children who meet the enrolment criteria and who are:

1. Newly diagnosed and already enrolled in the school, subject to availability of places.
2. Children who have siblings already enrolled in the school.
3. Children resident in the parish of Bagenalstown.
4. Children attending the ASD Pre-school in St Brigid's N.S. Bagenalstown.
5. Children resident outside the Parish of Bagenalstown who do not have access to a Special Class (A.S.D.) in their area.
6. Children of Catholic faith.

If, following criteria 1-6 above, the number of applicants still exceeds the number of places available in the ASD class the places will be allocated to the children who live closest to the school. This will be determined by using the Google maps website. (<https://maps.google.ie/>)

Taking into account the Department Education & Science regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs and
- Traditions, languages and ways of life in society

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

- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
- Sufficient classroom space is not available
- The Admissions 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 enrolment team of the Unit for Children with Autism, the Board of Management reserves the right of admission.

Procedure for Enrolment

Enrolment for Queen of the Universe N.S. will usually take place in Feb./March of the calendar year in which the child intends to start school. Once a parent/guardian has made an application to the school for a place in the Special class on behalf of the child, the Principal will undertake to communicate to the parent/guardian the decision of the Board of Management within three calendar months of the application. This to facilitate the consideration of the application by the Board of Management. The communication will normally be by letter.

1. The parents of a child being offered a place in the class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the principal of the school. Any information requested by the parents will normally be provided at this meeting.
2. The parents may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to the child's pre-school setting to observe the child.
3. 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.

Procedure following Admission

1. 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 and will be supported by a psychologist from the N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychology Service) team.
2. The Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.) may also be made aware of the plan.
3. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
4. Each child in the Special Class may be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes.

Review

The child's placement in the class shall be reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure the placement continues to be appropriate, typically at the conclusion of the academic year. The Board of Management may conclude, following a recommendation by the admissions team, that the placement is no longer appropriate on the following grounds:

- Sufficient progress has been made that the child can transfer into his/her full-time mainstream class
- That the child's progress warrants a more specialised setting
- That the child's behaviour cannot be effectively managed, having exhausted all available supports in the Special Class and school.
- That the child's continued placement in the Special Class is not, in all the circumstances, appropriate

If this is the case a meeting with parents/guardians will be held and further steps discussed including the transfer of the child to a more appropriate educational setting.

Right to Appeal

Parent/Guardians whose child(ren) have been refused enrolment may appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, by accessing the website of the Department of Education & Skills.

The Enrolment Policy will be reviewed annually.

Ratified by the Board of Management Queen of the Universe N.S 28th January 2014.

Signed: _____
Mary Murphy, Chairperson B.O.M.