

Scoil Réalta na Maidine

Class for Children with Multiple Disabilities Admission and Participation Policy

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Class for children with Multiple Disabilities (MD)

Scoil Réalta na Maidine is an all-boys primary school in Listowel, Co. Kerry. The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine agreed with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to provide a class for children with Multiple Disabilities (MD). The class was established in August 2017.

This enrolment policy (hereinafter called “the 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. The chairperson of the Board of Management and the principal teacher may be contacted to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

The MD class operates under the Rules for National Schools, The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circulars 02/05 and more recently 0013/2017. Reference was also made to the NCSE (2016) advice on “*Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes for Boards of Management and Principals of Primary and Post Primary Schools*”.

The class depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down by the Department. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

This policy document was formulated through a process of collaboration with The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and three other schools in Kerry with MD classes. It will be reviewed regularly.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

What are Multiple Disabilities (MD)?

Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities (MD) meet the criteria for **two or more low incidence disabilities, as outlined below.** In consultation with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), this is in line with Circular 02/05, until instructed otherwise. Further detail of each category is found in Appendix 1.

<i>Low incidence Disabilities</i>
<i>Physical Disability</i>
<i>Hearing Impairment</i>
<i>Visual Impairment</i>
<i>Emotional Disturbance</i>
<i>Severe Emotional Disturbance</i>
<i>Moderate General Learning Disability</i>
<i>Severe/Profound General Learning Disability</i>
<i>Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders</i>
<i>Specific Speech and Language Disorder</i>
<i>Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above low incidence disabilities</i>
<i>Multiple Disabilities</i>

What is a MD Class?

Special classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enable students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream class, even with support, for most or all of their school day. Students enrolled in special classes should be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible, in line with their abilities. In addition, there will be opportunities for reverse inclusion, whereby mainstream students participate in the MD class also.

What Happens in MD Class?

- Children learn different skills individually and in small groups in the MD class and they practise the skills in their mainstream respective classrooms.
- Children from mainstream classes work with the children from the MD class, through children in the MD class integrating into mainstream and through reverse inclusion.
- There is regular communication between the mainstream class and the MD class teachers/SNA's.
- In line with the Continuum of Support, there will be Individual Educational Planning for the children with the school and parents.
- Children in the MD class follow the primary school curriculum, differentiated, as appropriate, to their individual needs.

- Children are enabled to become independent learners and be able to ask for help when they need it.
- Children's self-confidence and self-esteem is developed.
- Children's emotional and behavioural self-regulation is nurtured.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced.
- Children's social skills especially interacting and communication with their peers is targeted.
- Listening skills and following instructions are enhanced.
- Children's awareness of their strengths and needs is promoted.
- Children's organisational and motor skills are developed.
- Children are taught coping skills for various situations in everyday life.

Sample Timetables can be found in Appendix 4.

SECTION 2: ENROLMENT

Criteria for Enrolment

1. The class is intended for pupils who have a diagnosis of two low incidence disabilities (see Appendix 1).
2. Relevant Professional Reports must clearly outline the categories of low incidence disabilities of the pupils in line with Circular 02/05.
3. There is a maximum allocation of six children to the class.

Procedures

1. The registration process begins with a telephone call or visit from the parents/guardians.
2. Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child in the MD Class in Scoil Réalta na Maidine are requested to complete an enrolment application form available from the school. This includes: the '*Application to Enrol Form*' of Scoil Réalta na Maidine and the NCSE Form 7 '*Notification to NCSE of Enrolment in Special School/Special Class*'. A recommendation from a relevant professional for placement in a Special Class setting is required also.
3. The fully completed forms are returned to the school along with copies of the relevant and comprehensive professional reports. Appendix 2 outlines the professional reports required.
4. Applications with relevant reports will then be submitted for review to the Advisory Board (AB). The AB meets to discuss all referrals and advise the Board of Management of the school as to the children who should be offered the available places in the MD Class.

The AB comprises of:

- The School Principal;
- The Special Class Teacher;
- The Special Education Needs Organiser (consulted as required).

At the request of the principal, the AB meet as needed.

5. A recommendation based on the available professional reports using a '*Priority Rating Scale*', while also recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, will be made by the Board of Management. (See Appendix 3 for details on the '*Priority Rating Scale*').
6. Parents/guardians are notified of a placement within 21 days from the receipt of the completed enrolment application form and required professional reports. Parents must respond within the timeframe specified by the principal, in line with NCSE closing dates for applications on any given year, if appropriate.
7. The MD Class may have unfilled spaces if:
 - a) There are fewer applicants than places, or
 - b) If applicants decline the offer of a place.

These available places may be offered to:

- i) The next highest ranked applicant from the admissions process.
 - ii) Applicants deemed suitable and eligible for a MD Class placement by another AB in the area but fail to secure a place due to lack of available spaces in their local area.
 - iii) Children who are attending a MD Class in another school but who are moving to the Listowel area.
 - iv) Children who applied for MD Class placement after the closing date for application. These children's suitability and eligibility will need to be established. As it would not be feasible to reconvene an AB meeting, the members should be contacted and their opinion sought on the eligibility and suitability of the candidate.
 - v) In instances where there is spare capacity in a MD Class because of insufficient eligible children, the Board of Management may offer a place to a maximum of two pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria but who could benefit from enrolment in the class for one year on a concessionary basis. Such placements must be supported by the SENO. The question of the continued enrolment of these pupils can only be considered once all eligible pupils have been accommodated.
8. Parents/guardians accepting a place in the MD Class must forward a completed registration form and include a birth certificate to the school. The child will be registered under the name which appears on the birth certificate. The address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment. Where specific legal documents outline the family status/custody arrangements relating to the child, details of the arrangements should be provided. Subsequent legal changes to

the name or guardianship of the child should be communicated in writing to the school.

SECTION 3: APPEALS

In consultation with the AB, the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine in compliance with Sections 19(3) of the Educational Welfare Act 2000 will make a decision in writing in respect of an application for enrolment within 21 days of the receipt of complete enrolment applications. The AB will inform the parents/guardians in writing of that decision.

Parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to a refusal to enrol in the letter issued 21 days after the date for the receipt of applications. (Please note the address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment).

If the Board of Management refuses to enrol a child in the school, the parents/guardians of the child may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 days of the date of the refusal to enrol. It must be made in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, and clearly state the grounds for the appeal. The Board of Management will respond within 10 days of the receipt of such an appeal.

If following the conclusion of the appeal procedures at school level, the parents/guardians are dissatisfied with the decision made, those parents/guardians have a statutory entitlement under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007), to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. It should be noted that such an appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the school's refusal to enrol.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provision) Act, 2007), are available on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie.

SECTION 4: EXCEPTIONAL CASES

In consultation with the AB, the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine reserves the right to refuse enrolment or, to rescind an offer of enrolment to any child, in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

1. The child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the child with an appropriate education.
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the child poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

SECTION 5: PROGRESS REVIEW

An annual review meeting is held by the AB in the second term with respect to each child in the MD class. This timing is to facilitate potential NCSE deadlines. The purpose of the meeting is to review progress and to establish if the MD class remains the best placement for the child. Each child is discussed individually. The most up to date reports/information available on the child are presented to the AB. The child's current presentation and needs are then discussed by the team.

The AB is cognizant of the parents'/guardians' views at all times. Prior to the annual review meeting of the AB, a formal meeting between each child's parents/guardians and MD class staff takes place. The parents/guardians can then articulate their views on their child's progress and preference for their child's placement. Where possible, the voice of the child will also be included in this review.

Arising from the discussion a decision is reached as to whether or not the MD class remains the optimum placement for each child and is in the child's best interest.

In line with the NEPS/ DES (2010) Continuum of Support model, if it is no longer considered to be in the child's best interest or to be the placement of choice, then the child will be discharged and transition from the MD class. Discharge is made in line with the following criteria:

1. The AB in consultation with the MD class staff considers the pupil able to return to fulltime mainstream education.
2. The AB no longer considers the MD Class as the most suitable placement for the child's educational development.
3. The child's parents/guardians request transfer from the MD Class.
4. The AB deems that the child is no longer benefiting from the MD Class placement.
5. The child is no longer at the age appropriate level for primary school.

The AB advises the Board of Management of the school on its recommendations following the review meeting.

MD Class Transition

Following transition from the MD class, the AB will also make recommendations on each child's on-going unique educational needs and MD needs. The AB will finalise a "*MD Class Report*" which includes the above recommendations. This report is furnished to the new school of each child leaving the MD Class. The MD class staff will liaise with the new school/class for each child leaving the MD Class. Advice on school transition will be guided by the NCSE (2016) guidelines for schools on "*Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs to make Successful Transitions*".

SECTION 6: POLICY APPROVAL/RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine.

Signed:  Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 15/01/2019

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The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education office, acting on behalf of the Patron.

APPENDIX 1

CIRCULAR 02/05 CATEGORIES OF LOW-INCIDENCE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

SECTION A

This section sets out the various categories of low incidence disabilities and the level of resource teaching support available to schools in respect of each category.

Low Incidence Disabilities
Physical Disability
Hearing Impairment
Visual Impairment
Emotional Disturbance
Severe Emotional Disturbance
Moderate General Learning Disability
Severe / Profound General Learning Disability
Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Specific Speech and Language Disorder
Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above low incidence disabilities
Multiple Disabilities

This is an information note for professionals in relation to the various low incidence disability categories.

Physical disability

Such pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as congenital deformities, spina bifida, dyspraxia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brittle bones, or severe accidental injury. Because of the impairment of their physical function they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities. Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support. They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severe dyspraxia.

Hearing impairment

Such pupils have a hearing disability that is so serious to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech, thus preventing them from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction. The great majority of them have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher. *(This category is not intended to include pupils with mild hearing loss)*. Where a pupil with a hearing impairment also meets the criterion for another low-incidence disability category, provision is allocated as for multiple disabilities.

Visual impairment

Such pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams, and the written word. Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from such conditions, such as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa. Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher. *(This category is not intended to include those pupils whose visual difficulties are satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses)*. Where a pupil with a visual impairment also meets the criterion for another low-incidence disability category, provision is allocated as for multiple disabilities.

Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems

Such pupils *are* being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorders that are significantly impairing their socialisation and/or learning in school. *(This category is not intended to include pupils whose conduct or behavioural difficulties can be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures on discipline)*.

Moderate general learning disability

Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability.

Severe or profound general learning disability

Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability. In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities. The pupil's full-scale IQ score will have been assessed as being below 35.

Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

A psychiatrist or psychologist will have assessed and classified such pupils as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria. In the interest of the pupil with an ASD and in order that the needs of the pupil are adequately addressed, it is important, where feasible, that for a definitive assessment

of ASD, a multi-disciplinary assessment team should be involved. The need for a multi-disciplinary assessment is also in keeping with the policy of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome

The level of additional support to be provided for pupils who present with a particular syndrome e.g. Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome will be determined following consideration of psychological or other specialist reports which describes the nature and degree of the pupils special educational needs. Where a pupil with an assessed syndrome has a general learning disability, resource teaching support will be allocated to schools in line with hours allocated to pupils assessed as being within the same IQ band (moderate/severe/profound GLD). Where a pupil with an assessed syndrome has any of the other low-incidence disabilities, resource teaching support will be allocated on that basis.

Specific speech and language disorder

Such pupils should meet *each* of the following criteria:

- The pupil has been assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence that places non-verbal or performance ability within the average range or above.
- The pupil has been assessed by a speech therapist on a standardised test of language development that places performance in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level.
- The pupil's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db.
- Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.
- Pupils with speech and language delays and difficulties are not to be considered under this category.
- In the case of specific speech and language disorder it is a pupil's **non-verbal or performance ability** that must be within the average range or above. (i.e. non-verbal or performance IQ of 90, or above).
- The pupil must also have been assessed by a speech and language therapist and found to be at two or more standard deviations (SD) below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level (i.e. - 2 SD or below, at or below a standard score of 70) in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development.
- **Two** assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case.

Multiple disabilities

Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the disabilities described above. A maximum allocation of five hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil assessed as having multiple disabilities.

APPENDIX 2

MD CLASS ENROLMENT FORMS



Notification to NCSE of Enrolment in Special School/Special Class

Note 1:

This form should be used to confirm enrolment of a student in a special school/special class. Please ensure that all sections of the form are completed in full prior to submitting to the SENO and that the relevant professional reports are attached.

A. STUDENT DETAILS

Name of student		M	F
Home Address		Gender	
PPSN		Date of Birth	
Date enrolled in school		Category of assessed disability	

B. SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of School			
Address of School			
School roll number		Phone Number	
Email address		Name of Principal	
Designation of special school, as applicable			
Designation of special class, as applicable			

C. DETAILS OF PROFESSIONAL REPORT(S)

Professional	Please tick ✓	Author of report	Date of Report
Psychologist			
Visiting Teacher			

Occupational Therapist			
Psychiatrist			
Speech and Language Therapist			
Other, please specify			

D. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT and DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

Note 2:

1. The school should consult with parent(s)/ guardian(s) prior to notifying the NCSE of this enrolment.
2. The NCSE is provided with this information to facilitate the allocation of additional resources to schools for students with special educational needs.
3. The NCSE is required to keep and maintain these records for the purposes of identifying persons accessing additional resources and planning the provision of special educational and support services.
4. The Declaration at end of this form must be signed by the Principal of the school.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I/We, the undersigned, being the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the above named student confirm:

- That this enrolment has been discussed with me.
- That I am aware that all information relating to this notification of enrolment will be kept on file, and made available to the SENO/NCSE and may be used for planning and research purposes with a view to improving the delivery of special education services.
- That placement in the school/class is subject to review.

Signed		Name		Date	
Signed		Name		Date	

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPAL

I hereby confirm:

- that this enrolment is supported by the Chairperson of the school's Board of Management.
- that in making enrolment full consideration has been given to any support services already in the school.
- that the staged approach to assessment as outlined in DES circular 02/05 has been followed, (where appropriate).

Signed		Date	
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APPENDIX 3

PRIORITY RATING SCALE

Section	Area	Rating	
		High	3
		Medium	2
		Low	1
1	Number of disabilities and reports from professionals, e.g. NEPS, KIDS, CAMHS, HSE. These reports are in line with the specifications of Circular 02/05 and a professional has recommended the placement.		
2	Report from class teachers and the school's SEN team clearly indicating interventions adopted and how the child's needs are not being met in the mainstream school setting solely.		
3	Age appropriate for profile of class – e.g. appropriateness of integrating a 5-year old with MD with predominantly 8-10 year olds in the same class setting?		
4	Previous attendance in an alternative or specialised placement.		
5	School catchment area.		
6	Appropriateness of specific child's application to the overall enrolment policy of the school.		
Total	Overall Rating		
To Follow Up on:			
Decision			