

Scoil Réalta na Maidine

Class for Pupils with Autism

Admission Policy

Address: Church Street, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Roll No: 198460

School Patron: Bishop Ray Browne

Class for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Scoil Réalta na Maidine is an all-boys mainstream primary school. The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine agreed with the Department of Education and Skills to provide a class for children with a diagnosis of Autism. The class was established in September 2009.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The A.S.D. 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.

SECTION 2: ENROLMENT

Criteria for Enrolment

1. There must be a definitive diagnosis of Autism. Scoil Réalta na Maidine requests the relevant professional's report establishing the child's original ASD diagnosis.
2. Scoil Réalta na Maidine will require an up to date psychological assessment report from a registered Psychologist.
3. There is a maximum allocation of six children to the class.

Please note that an “up-to-date psychological assessment” is defined as:

- A psychological assessment report that clearly specifies whether the child meets the DSM-1V or ICD -10 criteria for a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- A reference to the child's current cognitive functioning as well as current behaviour analysis as ascertained by valid and reliable psychometric tests and clinical impressions. However, in view of the fact that it may be difficult to assess the cognitive function of a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) using conventional intelligence testing cognisance will be taken of the recommendation of a psychologist with regard to a child's placement in the class.
- A report completed within approximately 24 months prior to the child's application, should be furnished
- The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine in consultation with the assessment agencies will facilitate children whose overall learning needs can be met within a mainstream setting
- The age profile of children in the A.S.D. class must correspond with the age profile of the other children in Scoil Réalta na Maidine. (i.e. those in mainstream classes from Junior Infants to 6th class)

Enrolment Procedures

1. Registration process begins with written application, a telephone call or a visit from the parents.
2. Parents seeking to enrol their children in the A.S.D. 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/Class*'. A recommendation from a relevant professional for placement in a Special Class setting is required also.
3. The fully completed enrolment application form is returned to the school along with copies of the relevant and comprehensive professional reports.

Applications with relevant reports will then be submitted for review to the Advisory Board (AB). The AB meets to discuss all applications and advise the Board of Management of the school as to the children who should be offered the available places in the ASD class.

The AB comprises of:

- The School Principal
- The Special Class Teacher
- The Special Education Needs Organiser (consulted as required)
- NEPS Psychologist (consulted as required)

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

4. A recommendation based on the available professional reports, while also recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, will be made to the Board of Management. The Board of Management is responsible for and must respect the rights of the existing community and in particular the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgement which will be guided by the principles of natural justice and the best interest of all children.

5. Parents are notified of a placement, within 21 days from the receipt of the enrolment application form and required psychological reports. Parents must respond within 14 days of the date of the placement offer.

6. Parents accepting a place in the ASD class must forward a completed registration form, a birth certificate and baptismal certificate (in the case of Catholic children) 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(ren) details of the arrangements should be provided. Subsequent legal changes to the name(s) or guardianship of the child(ren) should be communicated in writing to the school.

SECTION 3: APPEALS

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine in compliance with Section 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 closing date for the receipt of enrolment applications and 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 closing 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 student in the school, the parent/guardian of the student 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, a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision made that parent/guardian has 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

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 student with an appropriate education; or
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student 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 ASD class. This timing is to facilitate potential NCSE deadlines. The purpose of the meeting is to review progress and to establish if the ASD 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' views at all times. Prior to the annual review meeting of the AB, a formal meeting between each child's parents and ASD class staff take place. The parents 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 the review.

In line with the DES/NEPS(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 transitioned from the ASD class. Discharge is in line with the following criteria.

1. The AB in consultation with the ASD class staff considers the pupil able to return to fulltime mainstream education
2. The AB no longer considers the ASD class the most suitable class for the child's educational development
3. The child's parents/guardians request transfer from the ASD class

- 4. The AB deems that the child is no longer benefiting from the ASD 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.

SECTION 6: DISCHARGE POLICY

The age profile of the children in the A.S.D. class must correspond with the age profile of the other children in Scoil Réalta na Maidine (.those in mainstream classes from Junior Infants to 6th class).

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reached the age of thirteen.

Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after September 30th in any year may be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge the following year. A transition programme will be put in place to ease the transition for the child.

Discharge may also be recommended if following the AB meeting and consultation with the parents/guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and serves the best interest of the child.

SECTION 7: POLICY APPROVAL/RATIFICATION

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

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

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