



## **Policy for Enrolment to Autism Class**

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## Introduction

Convent Primary School, Killaloe is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Killaloe. We are a mainstream school with one special class. This policy was approved by the school patron in June 2024. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to anyone who requests it.

This policy has been developed for the Autism class in conjunction with the overall admissions policy for the school. The policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 and the Education Act 2022.

The class is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and maximum class size is 6. The class is allocated one full time teacher and up to two SNAs.

Convent Primary School supports the principles of :

- Inclusion – in particular with reference to the enrolment of children with autism and other special educational needs.
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for diversity of values and beliefs
- Traditions and languages

## Aims

We aim to offer a positive, meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop to their full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. Our special class offers an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream

school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion in mainstream education as part of the school community, as appropriate, with regard to the levels of general learning disability, resources and suitability for inclusion, we wish to provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities and strengths of each child while supporting their areas of need.

## Registration of interest to apply for enrolment

The registration process begins with a referral from the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) or a telephone call/visit from the parents.

## Enrolment Criteria

Subject to sufficient places being made available in the special class, the criteria for enrolment to the class are as follows:

1. An application to 'enrol to special class' must be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child
2. This application must be accompanied by an original birth certificate
3. A recent psychological assessment dated within 24 months of the closing date for applications to enrol
4. The child must have a primary diagnosis of autism made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 or equivalent by the psychologist or a member of the multidisciplinary team
5. The psychological report must have a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child
6. The parents/guardians of the child must accept and agree to the schools Code of Behaviour and the terms of the admissions policy

**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.**

## Procedure for Enrolment

Enrolment application forms for the forthcoming school year will be accepted during the period specified in the Schools Annual Admissions Notice for receiving applications. Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice.

All unsuccessful qualifying applicants will be placed on the placement list, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. All unsuccessful applicants have a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The placement list is valid for vacancies which occur in the current school year only.

## Oversubscription

In the event that the Special Class is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following criteria in the order listed below to those eligible applications (see above) that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

Priority is given to:

- Children already enrolled in the school
- Siblings including foster / step siblings of pupils currently enrolled
- Children resident in the parish of Killaloe
- All remaining applicants with priority to the oldest

In the event that the number of children in any category exceeds the number of places available, the school will offer places beginning with the eldest and proceeding in descending order of age until all remaining places have been allocated.

## Placement

- After placement in a special class, a relevant student support file will be provided for the child with a student support plan. This plan will have input from all parties involved in the education of the child.
- Each child in the special class will be assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class for integration and inclusion purposes, provided that this is in the best interest of the child, while having due regard to the educational benefit of all pupils enrolled in our school. Every opportunity will be used to promote inclusion in mainstream classes.
- An annual review takes place to assess whether the child's placement is appropriate. This review is carried out by school staff, parents / guardians and any other relevant personnel
- If, in the event that a placement is inappropriate, the school will liaise with the appropriate agencies in an effort to obtain a more suitable place

## Types of Inclusion

1. Whole class setting – child attends in mainstream class for specific subjects such as music, PE, art including any subject which the child has a particular interest in or aptitude for
2. Reverse Integration – interaction with a group of peers from the mainstream classroom which generally takes place in the Autism classroom. Areas worked on include play, social skills, specific subject areas etc

3. Paired work – children with similar needs can be paired when learning particular activities – eg, gross motor skills development, turn taking etc. . this generally takes place outside of the classroom
4. Play – children from the special class will have the opportunity to play and mix with their peers in the mainstream in the yard and at break times

## Behaviour

It is accepted that a minority of children with SEN may display challenging and/or violent behaviour. CPS Killaloe has a duty of care to all its pupils and staff. Our management of challenging and/or violent behaviour is consistent with each child's right to be treated with dignity and to be free of abuse. All efforts will be made by school staff to prevent, manage and reduce challenging behaviour through positive pupil/teacher/SNA relationships, the use of available therapeutic interventions and the implementation of a Behaviour Plan as part of the child's Support Plan.

## Discharge

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reach the age of 13. Pupils who reach the age of 13 on or after Sept 1<sup>st</sup> in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year. The onus will be on parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. CPS Killaloe will facilitate all transfer of records/reports as well as assist with any information required with regards to the pupils and CPS Killaloe will be deemed to have the authority to forward all relevant reports and assessments to the secondary school unless specifically instructed in writing not to do so.

Discharge may also be recommended after the 1st and /or any subsequent year if following psychological assessments and consultation with the parents / guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and serves the best interest of the child. The board of management has the right to overrule any decision made in this regard.

## Review

This policy should be reviewed and evaluated as the need arises but at least every second year. On-going review will take cognizance of changing information or guidelines, legislation and feedback from parents or guardians, students, school staff, and others.

This policy was ratified on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, BOM

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Principal, CPS Killaloe