



St. Anne's National School,
Shankill,
Co. Dublin.
Telephone: 2825565

ADMISSION POLICY FOR THE SPECIAL CLASS FOR AUTISTIC STUDENTS

Section 1: Special Class for Autistic Students

St. Anne's N.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established a special class to provide an education exclusively for autistic students. Only those students who have been specifically referred for placement in a Special Class for Autism may be enrolled in this class. The school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Section 2: Our Aims

Our Special Class for Autistic Students offers a specific learning environment within our mainstream co-educational national school where we aim to:

- offer a positive, meaningful, educational experience, which allows the student to develop their full learning potential in a predictable and calm environment;
- provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities and strengths of each student while supporting their areas of need;
- facilitate optimum inclusion in mainstream education as part of the school community as appropriate.

Section 3: Terminology - Language

There are differing and changing views on the terminology to use when describing Autism. We will endeavour to use the most appropriate language. As a school we will acknowledge individual preferences by asking parents / guardians and students (where appropriate) their preferred term or terms.

Section 4: Admissions Procedure for the Special Class for Autistic Students

The school will indicate the number of places being made available in the Special Class for Autistic Students each year in the Annual Admission Notice (available on the school website) in addition to indicating the dates the school will both commence and cease accepting applications for admission.

The following procedure should be read in conjunction with the General Admission Policy for St. Anne's N.S.

The following criteria must be met before making an application for the Special Class for Autistic Students:

- Each student must have a full current Psychological & Cognitive Assessment, which must specify a diagnosis of Autism using the DSMV or ICD10.
- The report from the relevant professionals must state and outline that the student has complex learning needs that require the support of a special class setting for autistic students. The report must state that placement in a special class in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the student.
- All relevant reports and assessments must be provided to the school.
- In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act a parent/guardian must confirm compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Steps in the Application Process

Step 1

When completing the online admission process (via the school website), **two proofs of residency are required to be uploaded (Item 1 or 2 and Item 3 from the list below)**; in addition to a **birth certificate** and supporting documents outlining eligibility for entry to the Special Class for Autistic Students.

1. Current proof of residency is required (e.g. legal document showing ownership of house, Revenue communication re: Local Property Tax or rental agreement / lease agreement of house / apartment).
2. A current official correspondence from the Revenue Commissioners e.g. a Tax Certificate for the current year or correspondence from Child Benefit, Department of Social Protection
3. A current utility bill – gas or electric is required.

Confirmation of successful completion of Step 1 above, will be acknowledged by the school and a unique reference number will be supplied.

Once items of proof have been verified and the admission application process has been completed, items of proof provided will be destroyed. The sole and only purpose of requesting the above items is for verification of residential address.

The residential address of applicants will be strictly checked. Please note that addresses of relatives are not acceptable.

Step 2

Please email the following supporting documents to this dedicated email address and include your child's full name in the 'Subject Line':

documents@stannesshankill.org

- A full current Psychological & Cognitive Assessment, which must specify a diagnosis of Autism using the DSMV or ICD10.

- The report must state that placement in a special class in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the student.
- The report must state and outline that the student has complex learning needs that require the support of a special class setting for autistic students.

Step 3

Any offer of a place, is subject to the approval of the Special Education Needs Organiser within the National Council for Special Education.

Applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application (in line with the Annual Admissions Notice).

Step 4

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of applicants that have received confirmation of a place, will be invited to the school for a meeting with the principal and / or the special class teacher and any other relevant parties. Staff from our school may visit the successful applicants in their existing placements. We encourage all successful applicants to visit our school and our special class, prior to school commencement, along with their parent(s) / guardian(s).

Section 5: Oversubscription of the Special Class for Autistic Students

The Department of Education states that the ratio for the special class for autistic students is a maximum of six pupils to one teacher and two Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). There must be more than three students to access the second SNA.

In the event that the Special Class for Autistic Students is oversubscribed and that those that have applied have met the criteria in Section 4 (see above), the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection categories in the order listed:

Category 1	Students currently enrolled in St. Anne's N.S. that meet the criteria in Section 4 above.
Category 2	Siblings (including step-siblings) of students already enrolled in St. Anne's N.S. that meet the criteria in Section 4 above.
Category 3	Students living within the defined catchment area of St. Anne's N.S. that meet the criteria in Section 4 above (see defined 'catchment area map' on our school website).
Category 4	Students living outside the defined catchment area but within the Parish of St. Anne's that meet the criteria of Section 4 above.
Category 5	Students living outside the Parish of St. Anne's (in order of closest proximity to the school) that meet the criteria in Section 4 above.

Where categories 1-4 are oversubscribed, priority will be given to the eldest student(s)

within that category. In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place, a lottery will apply.

With regards to Category 5, if oversubscribed, priority will be given to the student(s) living in closest proximity to the school – distance from the school will be determined solely by the Board of Management. Within Category 5, in the event that two or more students live equal distance from the school (as determined by the Board of Management), priority will be given to the eldest student. In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place at this point, a lottery will apply.

Students who do not receive a place, due to over-subscription, will be placed on the 'Main Waiting List'.

Please note, for each subsequent academic year, a new application will be required for every student that remains on the previous year's 'Main Waiting List' – as the waiting list will become null and void when the new application process opens as per the relevant Annual Admission Notice).

Section 6: Late Applications and Student Transfers

Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's Admission Policies, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under the Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application.

Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available, after all students from Categories 1-5 that applied during the annual notice period have been offered places. In the event that there is no space available, the name of the applicant will be added to the 'Late Applications Waiting List' for the Special Class for Autistic Students (the name of the applicant will be added to the relevant category – where more than one student remains on this waiting list from the same category, the date of application will indicate priority).

The last date for a late application to be made each year will be the 31st of August. After this date, no new applications may be made, until the new admission process reopens as per the dates outlined in the Annual Admission Notice.

Therefore, for each subsequent academic year, a new application will be required for every student that remains on the previous year's 'Late Applications' waiting list – as the waiting list will become null and void when the new applications process opens as per the relevant Annual Admission Notice).

Student Transfers

Students may transfer to the Special Class for Autistic Students during the school year, subject to availability of places and to adherence of the criteria (Section 4 above) and categories (Section 5 above).

Section 7: Placement

After placement in the Special Class for Autistic Students, a Student Support Plan (SSP) will be developed for the student. This plan will have input from all parties involved in the student's education.

Each student in the special class for autistic students will be assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class for integration and inclusion purposes provided that this is in the best interests of the student, while having due regard to the educational benefit of all students enrolled in our school. Integration (and reverse integration) and inclusion will be determined based on the individual needs of the students, and through discussion with the parents/guardians and the relevant class teacher.

All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents/guardians and/or the school. The review will include input from all agencies involved (through a multi-disciplinary team meeting), the parents/guardians and the school. Following the review, a recommendation may be made that the student be enrolled in a school that can better meet his/her needs.

Section 8: Outside Agencies

Access to speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy etc. will be dependent on (local) HSE services. Input by professionals will be facilitated and welcomed in the school if required or requested.

Section 9: Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The students will access a curriculum based on the Primary School Curriculum that is matched to their needs and capabilities, through carefully targeted Student Support Plans and through the use of differentiation strategies.

As per Circular 0054/2022 on Exemptions from the Study of Irish, Section 2.2.4, it is the policy of the Department of Education to provide for the inclusive education of students with special educational needs. In the case of students in a Special Class for Autistic Students; and in recognising the authority devolved to the management authorities in decision making concerning the Irish language learning needs of the students concerned, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required. Students in the Special Class for Autistic Students will therefore be exempt from Irish without holding a Certificate of Exemption. We endeavour to provide all students, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs.

Section 10: Discharge

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of students from the Special Class for Autistic Students once they have reached the age of thirteen. It will be deemed compulsory that the year that the student turns 13 will be their last year in primary school. Students who reach the age of thirteen after September 30th 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 the parents / guardians to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. St. Anne's N.S. will support and facilitate all transfer of records and reports as well as assist with any information required with regards to the student. St. Anne's N.S. will be deemed to have authority to forward all relevant reports and assessments to the Secondary school unless specifically instructed in writing not to do so.

Discharge for the purposes of full integration into the mainstream class may also be recommended at the end of any given school year, following consultation with the parents/guardians and relevant professionals if it is felt that the placement in the Special Class for Autistic Students is no longer appropriate or serves the best interest of the student. The Board of Management has the right to overrule any decision made in this regard.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 25th of April 2024. This policy was approved by the Archdiocese of Dublin Education Secretariat on the 1st of May 2024.

Signed: *Justin Kilcullen*

Mr. Justin Kilcullen

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *John Fingleton*

Mr. John Fingleton

Principal