



Pelletstown Educate Together National School

Admissions Policy - ASD Class

April 2021

Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998. The Board of Management trusts that by so doing, parent(s)/carer(s) will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. Furthermore, the Board of Management and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Pelletstown Educate Together N.S is a national school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. We are a mainstream co-educational national school which opened in September 2015. We intend opening an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) specialised class in the school year 2020/2021, and this policy sets out the admissions procedure in respect of that class.

Pelletstown Educate Together 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), The Disabilities Act (2002), and all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education Skills (DES) Circulars.

Educate Together schools are national schools that teach the national Primary Curriculum and are open to all, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background.

School Ethos

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

1. **Equality-based**: All children are treated equally, children of all denominations and none are equally welcome into our schools.
2. **Co-educational**: Educate Together schools are open to girls and boys and gender stereotyping is addressed and challenged.
3. **Child-centred**: This applies not only to teaching and learning within the classroom but to all decisions at staff and management level, which must have the well-being of the children at heart.
4. **Democratically-run**: Parents are viewed as a positive resource for the school. Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged, where appropriate. The professional role of the teacher is validated at all times.

Context of Pelletstown ETNS

Pelletstown Educate Together National School was due to open an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Class upon completion of the school's permanent building. However, the earlier opening of an ASD Class was proposed by our Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) and approved by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for the school year 2021-2022, following staff consultation and in conjunction with the Board of Management in March 2021.

The decision was taken with a view to providing a specialised education, within a mainstream setting, for children who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, who fulfil the enrolment criteria and for whom a place is available.

The establishment of this class was contingent on approval for additional accommodation being granted by the Department of Education's Major project Design and Build section, and also on the necessary funding and resources being furnished to Pelletstown Educate Together by the Department of Education and Skills. This School Policy has regard to and is contingent on the funding, resources, services and space available to our school in the future.

As Pelletstown ETNS is a developing school in temporary accommodation with limited space, we will open one ASD class in September 2021, which will be a Junior Class (i.e. will cater for pupils in Junior Infants – Second Class). Our Senior Class will not open until our school is fully developed with all mainstream classes, therefore ensuring the possibility for all children to integrate into the mainstream class where possible and appropriate, and is in a permanent building, ensuring adequate accommodation for this class.

Our Mission

In opening this ASD class, our mission is to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and interacting with the child, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed in consultation with parents and relevant professionals/external agencies. 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.

Our Aim

The ASD class will aim to offer an autism-specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

Criteria for enrolment in ASD Class

Subject to sufficient places being available in the ASD class, the criteria for enrolment incorporating the Department of Education and H.S.E. policies are as follows:

- A child enrolled for Junior Infants class should be 4 on or before June 1st prior to starting. A child transferring to all other class levels must have completed the previous class levels.
- Current students of the school who meet the criteria for enrolment to the ASD class and who will benefit from a more appropriate setting in the ASD class will be prioritised for enrolment.
- An Application Form provided by the school must be fully completed by the parent(s)/carer(s) on behalf of the child.
- This Application Form must be accompanied by a copy of the birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation in the section 'Procedure for Enrolment'.

- A recent psychological assessment or a report from a member of a multidisciplinary team should be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note all reports in operation for a child should be provided to the school, for consideration by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.

- The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.

- If the child also presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. This diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and cannot be dated more than two years prior to the proposed admission date.

- There must be a recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.

- Where possible, a letter of acceptance from the clinical support service(s) associated with the pupil's learning challenges should be submitted with the application form, as the school has no responsibility for the provision of such professional services to pupils attending the specialised class.

- The parent(s)/carer(s) of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

- When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form and an acknowledgement is sent by email indicating that the application has been received.

- An Acceptance Form as issued by the school must be returned to the school within fourteen working school days of the date of issue. If this confirmation is not received within that timeframe, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.

- In the event that the number of applicants seeking enrolment into the class exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list according to enrolment selection criteria.

- If the applicant fulfils all the enrolment criteria but is not offered a place, as there is no place available, the parent(s)/carer(s) may opt to put the pupil's name on a waiting list. The waiting list will operate in accordance with the enrolment criteria and priority order as set out in the enrolment selection criteria section of this policy, in respect of those parent(s)/carers) who opt to place the student's name on the waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the application was initially made. Those who wish to apply for a place for the following school year must re-apply in accordance to the ASD Class admissions policy for that school year.

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.

Support by Outside Agencies

A guarantee of support by outside agencies such as the H.S.E. cannot be provided by the school. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will be dependent on local public or private services. The school does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is up to the parents/carers to ensure that all possible services are being availed of.

Admissions Team

Each application received will be considered by the Admissions Team. The team may include the School Principal, Deputy Principal, a member of the In-School Management Team, the SENCO and/or the ASD Class Teacher. The Admissions Team may liaise with the school's NEPS psychologist. A recommendation will be made by the Admissions Team in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

Current Capacity

This refers to the 2021/2022 school year. The ASD Class can take a maximum of 6 children. Places in the ASD class will be offered following the May Board of Management meeting. A child may be phased in gradually to the ASD class.

Application Process 2021/2022

Requests for application forms and queries regarding supporting documentation should be made to:

School Secretary,
Pelletstown Educate Together National School,
River Vale,
Ashtown,
Dublin 15 D15X63X

Telephone: (087) 4483613

OR

Email: secretary@pelletstowntetns.com

The application process will open on Wednesday 28th April, 2021, and close at 2pm on Wednesday 12th May 2021.

All complete applications received by this time will be considered. Receipt of acknowledgement of an application by the school does not constitute an offer of a place nor does it guarantee a place in the school. It is simply the recording of an application for admission to our school.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with the admissions policy. The completed application must be accompanied by all of the relevant supporting documentation.

Supporting Documentation

The following Supporting Documentation must be supplied by parents/carers, and must accompany a fully complete application form.

- A copy of the child's Birth Certificate.
- Proof of address provided in the form of a utility bill/bank statement in the name of one of the parents/carers, which must be dated no later than three months prior to the date of application.
- A Diagnosis from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSMV or ICD 10 criteria **and** a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.
- Any other relevant reports – speech & language therapy/occupational therapy and psychological reports

NB: If the school does not receive this documentation with the Application form, the application will not be processed or considered by the school. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/carers(s) to ensure that all supporting documentation is correct and up-to-date, and is received by the school.

Oversubscription

In the event that the number of children that apply for a place in the ASD Class is greater than the number of places available, such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in accordance with the timelines as set out in this policy, in the following order of priority:

Priority category A:

Current students of the school who meet the criteria for enrolment to the ASD class and who will benefit from a more appropriate setting in the ASD class.

Priority category B:

Students with siblings currently enrolled in the school.

Priority category C:

Children living within the Catchment Area, (i.e. Pelletstown – to include the following areas; Phoenix Park Racecourse, Martin Savage Park, Rathborne and Royal Canal Park.)

Priority category D:

Children living outside the Catchment Area.

Priority category E:

Children for whom a completed application is submitted in chronological order of date received after the closing date.

In the event of the number of children in category A exceeding the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, starting with the oldest applicants suitable for the ASD Class

Thereafter;

In the event of the number of children in category B exceeding the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, starting with the oldest applicants suitable for the ASD Class

Thereafter;

In the event of the number of children in category C exceeding the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, starting with the oldest applicants suitable for the ASD Class

Thereafter;

In the event of the number of children in category D exceeding the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, starting with the oldest applicants suitable for the ASD Class

Offer of Place in ASD Class

A child will be offered a place in our ASD class if all of the assessment criteria are met and if there is a place available, following the priority categories as set out above.

If prior to enrolment, it becomes evident that the school cannot at present meet the required needs of the child, the child will be enrolled in the school and the following actions will take place:

1. The child's admission to the school will be delayed until the required supports are provided by the DES.
2. The school will notify, in writing, the parent(s)/carer(s) of the rationale for the decision.
3. The school will notify the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and the requirements necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child.
4. The situation will be reviewed upon communications from the DES/SENO/NCSE.

Post Acceptance

Once a parent(s)/carer(s) has made an application to the school for a place in the ASD class on behalf of a child, the parent(s)/carer(s) of a child being offered a place in the class will be invited to visit the school to meet with the principal and/or SENCO/ASD Class Teacher. Any information requested by the parent(s)/carer(s) will be provided at this meeting.

The parent(s)/carer(s) may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's pre-school/school/home setting to observe the child prior to their starting in Pelletstown ETNS in order to become familiar with the needs of the child and to ensure that the adequate supports can be put in place.

The parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited on another occasion to come with their child to the class to meet with staff and see the classroom.

After placement in the class a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the child. This plan will have 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. The S.E.N.O. (Special Education Needs Officer) will also be made aware of the plan. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.

A child may be phased in gradually to the ASD class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents of the child. It is important that every child gets the best possible start in the class. In order to achieve this, the duration of the child's day may vary depending on his/her needs.

Each child in the ASD class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for inclusion purposes where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

The school reserves the right to review the child's progress from time to time, during or after each year to determine whether the child is ready for inclusion into a mainstream class.

Behaviour

It is accepted that children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Individual Education Plan and Behavioural Support Plan. All pupils including pupils with special educational needs and pupils without special educational needs are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health & Safety Statement.

Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the ASD class or another mainstream class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the Board of Management of the School, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

Refusal to Enrol and/or a Decision to Exclude

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/admission to any student where either

- The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
- The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it is an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made not to enrol the child and/or to exclude the child from the school.

Any applicant who applies for and is not offered a place in Pelletstown Educate Together National School has the right to appeal the decision under Section 29, with the Department of Education and Skills.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was approved by the school's Board of Management on 26th April 2021.

This Policy is valid for enrolments for 2021/2022 school year only and is subject to annual review.

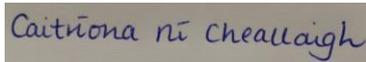
This policy will be published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

Signed:



(Eric Young, Chairperson Board of Management)

Signed:



(Caitríona Ní Cheallaigh, Principal/Secretary to BOM)

Date: 26th April 2021