

**POLICY FOR ENROLMENT  
INTO  
ASD CLASS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM  
AT**



**Tarbert Comprehensive School**

*Ratified by the Board of Management on: 9/2/21*

## **1. Introduction**

The Board of Management of Tarbert Comprehensive School agreed with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to provide a class for children with Autism (ASD). The class was established in 28/08/2020.

This enrolment policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998), the Epsen Act (2004) and the Schools Admission Policy 2020. The Board of Management trusts that by providing this policy, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

The ASD class operates under the Rules for Post Primary 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 0008/2019. In establishing the ASD class 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). It will be reviewed regularly.

## **SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **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 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).

### **What is an ASD Class?**

Special classes are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables 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 ASD class also.

### **What Happens in ASD Class?**

- *Students learn different skills individually and in small groups in the ASD class and they practise the skills in their mainstream respective classrooms.*

- *Students from mainstream classes work with the students from the ASD class, through students in the ASD class integrating into mainstream and through reverse inclusion.*
- *There is regular communication between the mainstream class and the ASD class teachers/SNAs.*
- *In line with the Continuum of Support, there will be Individual Educational Planning for the student with the school and parents. Each student will have a Student Support File.*
- *Students in the ASD class follow the Post Primary school curriculum, differentiated, as appropriate, to their individual needs.*
- *Students are enabled to become independent learners and be able to ask for help when they need it.*
- *Students' self-confidence and self-esteem is developed.*
- *Students' emotional and behavioural self-regulation is nurtured.*
- *Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced.*
- *Students' social skills especially interacting and communication with their peers is targeted.*
- *Listening skills and following instructions are enhanced.*
- *Students' awareness of their strengths and needs is promoted.*
- *Students' organisational and motor skills are developed.*
- *Students are taught coping skills for various situations in everyday life.*

## **SECTION 2: ENROLMENT**

### **Criteria for enrolment**

1. The class is intended for pupils who have a diagnosis of ASD
2. Relevant Professional Reports must clearly outline the diagnosis of ASD and must have a recommendation from a relevant professional for placement in a Special Class setting.

### **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 ASD class in Tarbert Comprehensive School are requested to complete an enrolment application form available from the School. This includes: the '*Application to Enrol Form*', Application to Enrol in ASD Class, of Tarbert Comprehensive School, 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 I outlines the professional reports required.
4. All potential applicants may be visited by a member of the ASD team to observe the student in their existing placement.
5. 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 ASD Class.

The AB comprises of:

- The School Principal;
- The School Deputy Principal

- The Special Class Teacher
- The Special Education Needs Coordinator (as required)

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

6. 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*').
7. Parents/Guardians are notified in writing as to the decision of the School, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice. Parents must respond within the timeframe specified by the Principal, in line with NCSE closing dates for applications on any given year, if appropriate.
8. In instances where there is spare capacity in an ASD 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.
9. All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our School's Admission Policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under the Act.  
Late applicants will be considered if places are still available; otherwise they will be placed at the end of the waiting list.

### **SECTION 3: REVIEWS/APPEALS**

#### **Review**

In consultation with the AB, the Board of Management of Tarbert Comprehensive School 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 in line with the Annual Admissions Notice.

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

**Note:** Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the School being oversubscribed, the applicant must request a review of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the School being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

#### **Right of Appeal**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this School to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the School being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the School being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education a

#### **SECTION 4: EXCEPTIONAL CASES**

In consultation with the AB, the Board of Management of Tarbert Comprehensive School 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**

### **Annual Review**

An annual review meeting is held by the AB in the second term with respect to each student 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 student. Each student is discussed individually. The most up to date reports/information available on the student are presented to the AB. The student'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 student'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 this review.

Arising from the discussion a decision is reached as to whether or not the ASD 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 ASD class. Discharge is made 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 as the most suitable placement 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.

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

### **MD Class Transition**

Following transition from the ASD class, the AB will also make recommendations on each child's on-going unique educational needs and ASD needs. The AB will finalise an "ASD Class Report" which includes the above recommendations. This report is furnished to the new school of each child leaving the ASD Class. The ASD class staff will liaise with the new school/class for each child leaving the ASD 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*".

## **APPENDIX 1: PROFESSIONAL REPORTS**

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).

**APPENDIX 2: ASD CLASS ENROLMENT FORMS**



**Tarbert Comprehensive School**

**APPLICATION FORM FOR ENROLMENT (ASD Class)**

Parents Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: No.: \_\_\_\_\_ PPSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupils Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Present School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to have the above named child considered for enrolment at Tarbert Comprehensive School for the year \_\_\_\_\_ and give permission for Tarbert Comprehensive School to contact my child's school to arrange a visit of which I will be notified in advance. I also give permission for members of Tarbert Comprehensive ASD Class to have access to all materials forwarded to the college as part of the application process.

**Signed (Parent/Guardian):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Name</b>	
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Name</b>	

**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).

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>
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#### APPENDIX 4: 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 01/05 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 12-year old with ASD with predominantly 15-18 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.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Overall Rating</b>		
<b>To Follow Up on:</b>			
<b>Decision</b>			