



Enrolment Policy for Special Class 2020/2021

Context/Capacity for the school year 2020/21

The decision to provide a Special Class for children with a diagnosis of ASD and in Grace Park ETNS was proposed to the BoM following discussion by the Principal and staff in February 2020. The proposal was to provide a specialised education within a mainstream setting for children with ASD due to the demand expressed in pre-enrolments for the September 2020 intake.

In light of the demand, Grace Park ETNS proposes to open one class in September 2020. This will be a Junior Class catering for children aged 4-8 with a diagnosis of ASD and a recent (within 2 years of the proposed start date) recommendation for placement in a special class in a mainstream setting.

The establishment of this Junior Special Class for children with a required ASD diagnosis is contingent on the necessary funding and resources being furnished to Grace Park ETNS. This policy has regard to and is contingent on the funding, services and resources available to our school in the future.

Grace Park ETNS proposes opening the Junior Special class with up to 4 children to have the best possible start with a maximum of 6 pupils by January 2021. We are committed to providing a high standard and quality of individualised education to our first cohort of students. This is contingent on the DES providing the appropriate SNA support to cater for our incoming pupils' primary care needs.

The Board of Management notes that it is open to any Primary School to set up such a class and therefore does not see itself as providing a service for the entire area.

We propose that places for the Junior Special Class be offered in May 2020, conditional depending on the permanent build being finished and classrooms and additional support rooms being fully furnished to the needs of the Special Class.

There will be no school-based July Provision offered by the school.

Our Aims/Vision Statement

In setting up a Special Class, Grace Park ETNS is committed to developing an educational setting which is focused on the individual needs and abilities of all enrolled students. The staff is committed to providing the highest quality of education for those enrolled in the Special Classes. The aim of the Special Class is to promote growth and learning in an atmosphere of inclusion and mutual respect by focusing on pupils' strengths, needs and abilities to allow them to realise their full potential in life.

To achieve this we aim to

- Enable each child to experience an inclusive education in a flexible and supportive environment
- Enable each child to access the Primary Curriculum and work towards age-appropriate targets



- Enable each child to develop their communication and social skills and experience being a valued member of our school community
- Enhance the emotional development of each child

The Junior Special Class for children with ASD will cater for children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class. Children must be at least 4 and no older than 8 on the 1st of June before they enter Grace Park ETNS. A range of teaching methodologies will be used in the Junior Special Class for children with ASD to cater for their unique needs and abilities. The methodologies employed will aim to optimally address these differing needs in accordance with the eclectic approach recommended by the DES.

Assessment Criteria

When a list is compiled of children who meet the general enrolment policy, the Special Class Admissions Team, consisting of the school Principal, the Secretary and the Special Class Teacher, will determine the applications which also meet the assessment criteria.

A child will be deemed eligible for the Special Class when all the following assessment criteria have been met:

1. The BOM will consider applicants currently enrolled in our school in a mainstream class that meet the assessment criteria.
2. The BoM will consider applications for Special Classes for children with ASD moving from another school and/or Special Needs Class taking into account the proximity to the school, child's age etc,
3. A fully completed online application for pre-enrolment has been submitted to the school by parents/guardian and a request for a special class along with relevant reports has been made by email.
4. The child must have a multi-disciplinary report outlining a definite diagnosis of ASD as per DSM-V and/or ICD-10 made using a professionally recognised Clinical/Educational Psychologist assessment procedure.
5. A recent (within 2 years of the proposed start date) recommendation must be provided by the Clinical/Educational Psychologist indicating that a placement in a Special Class for children with ASD in a mainstream setting is necessary and the most suitable educational setting for the child.

All reports in operation for a child should be provided to the school for consideration by the Special Class Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the Special Class Admissions Team may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

The Special Class Admissions Team may request further information or a meeting with the child in the school setting if deemed necessary.

Fulfilling assessment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:



1. The educational provision being given to the children currently in the Special Classes for ASD would be detrimentally affected by the level of specialised intervention required for the new child.
2. The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the DES, NCSE and the HSE the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
3. In the opinion of the BoM the child poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

Taking all the above into account and based on the advice of the Special Class Admissions Team, the BoM reserves the right of admission.

The Special Class Admissions Team will advise the BoM on the placement of a child. The final decision as to the placement of a child in the Special Class for children with ASD lies with the BoM.

Application/Enrolment Process

Applications to the Junior Special Class for ASD begin with completion of a pre-enrolment form (as in the general enrolment policy) and an expression of interest from parents in the Special Class per email to info@graceparketns.com including any available reports. Applications will be reviewed in order of the Priority Categories on a first come, first served basis.

Priority Categories are as follows:

Priority category 1: Applicants currently enrolled in our school in a mainstream class that meet the assessment criteria, for whom a complete application is submitted on or before May 25th 2020.

Priority Category 2: Applicants who are siblings of pupils currently enrolled in the school, for whom a complete application is submitted on or before May 25th 2020

Priority Category 3: Applicants living in the area defined in Appendix 3/defined catchment area, for whom a complete application is submitted on or before May 25th 2020

Priority Category 4: Applicants living outside the area defined in Appendix 3/defined catchment area, for whom a complete application is submitted on or before May 25th 2020.

Priority Category 5: Applicants for whom a complete application is submitted after the closing date of May 25th 2020 in chronological order of date received.

Each application will be reviewed according to the Priority Categories. There will be a maximum of 6 places in the Special Class. These will be filled according to the Priority Categories once the



assessment criteria (outlined below) are met. When the number of applicants exceeds the places available, the date and time of pre-enrolment will be used to determine the order in which places are allocated.

The offer of a place is contingent on a place being available in the associated mainstream class. This enables the student to access the mainstream place to the greatest extent possible and promotes inclusion and integration.

Once the class is full (6 pupils), applicants will be placed on a waiting list according to the Priority Categories on a first come, first served basis. The waiting list will be in operation for the school year only. If a place becomes available in the Special Class due to a child transferring to another school, the applicant at the top of the waiting list as per Priority categories will be offered a place once they meet assessment criteria. The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only for which the application was initially made and ceases on 30th June. Those who wish to apply for a place for the following school year must re-apply in accordance with the Special Class enrolment policy for that school year.

Receipt of acknowledgement of an enrolment 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 BoM in accordance with our general enrolment policy.

Offer of Placement

Available places in our Special Class will be offered to applicants on our pre-enrollment list in order of our Priority Categories once all assessment criteria have been met. When the number of applicants exceeds the places available, the date and time of pre-enrolment will be used to determine the order in which places are allocated.

A child may be gradually phased into the Junior Special Class once arrangements are agreed upon by teacher and parents/guardians. If the school cannot meet the needs of a child, the school reserves the right to review the child's progress after each year to determine whether this is indeed an appropriate school placement for the child. If the school cannot meet the required needs of the child or if a child does not meet the criteria for placement in our Special Classes for children with ASD the following actions will take place:

1. The school will notify, in writing, the parents/guardians of the rationale for the decision
2. The school will notify, in writing, The National Educational Welfare Board and the National Council for Special Education and Skills of the decision and the requirement necessary for the school to meet the specified needs of the child.



Parents of children who have been offered a place in Grace Park ETNS will be supplied with a copy of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. Enrolment of the child in the school is conditional upon the child's parents/guardians confirming in writing that the Code of Positive Behaviour provided is acceptable to them, and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code by the child.

Positive Behaviour Support

It is accepted that children with special educational needs may display challenging, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using a range of strategies and through implementation of the child's Positive Behaviour Support Plan. All pupils including those with or without SEN are subject to our schools Code of Positive Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement. Parents and guardians must accept and agree to the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. In cases where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the school to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the BoM, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting be found for their child.

Approval Date

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of Grace Park ETNS on April 27th 2020.

This policy was approved by our patron body Educate Together May 26th 2020.