



## **Admission Policy: ASD Special Class**

### **Interim Policy for 2022/2023 School Year**

Coolmine Community School, with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established a special class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This special class caters for a maximum of six students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). A student who does not have the category of need specified may be refused admission.

This is an interim policy which is in place for the 2022/2023 school year. This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's admissions policy and code of behaviour. A building for the special class is currently being sourced. Students will be accommodated on site when the building for the special class is fully commissioned. Students will be facilitated with a transition programme until the building is ready to open. Applications for home tuition may be made in the interim, through NCSE if Parents/Guardians wish.

**Admissions Policy to ASD classes is attached as Appendix A to this Policy**



## **Appendix A: Admission Policy to the ASD classes**

This policy must be read in conjunction with, and is part of, the overall Admission Policy for Coolmine Community School. The aim of Coolmine Community School is to offer a positive meaningful educational experience to the student that allows them to develop to their full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and interacting with the student, a Student Support File and Individual Plan will be developed following consultation with Parents / Guardians and with other relevant professional staff (for example, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Psychologist, Special Educational Needs (SEN)Coordinator, Special Education Teacher (SET), Occupational Therapist, School Principal / Deputy Principal and so on), as deemed appropriate. The aim of the ASD special class is to offer a specific learning environment within a mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

### **External support services**

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Coolmine Community School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible. Furthermore, Coolmine Community School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. Coolmine Community School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for Parents / Guardians alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

## **Pre-enrolment**

1. All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-V<sup>1</sup> and ICD 10<sup>2</sup>.
2. A prospective student for the ASD special class must have a recommendation in a professional report for placement in an Autism specific special class. This report must be from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and / or Physiotherapist).
3. Details of all agencies involved with the student and all professional reports should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team. The withholding of such reports / details may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents / Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the ASD special class is six students. It should also be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the ASD special class.

Parents / Guardians of the applicant must accept and agree to the Coolmine Community School Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

<sup>2</sup> International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision

## Enrolment

All applications for enrolment in the ASD special class will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy. Where the number of applicants exceeds the places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Current students enrolled in the school
2. Students in Category A (page 4 and 5, Admissions Policy). Within Category A priority will be given to students who meet the criteria for admission to the special class and are already enrolled in an ASD class in 6<sup>th</sup> class.
3. Students in Category B (page 4, Admissions Policy) Within Category B priority will be given to students who meet the criteria for admission to the special class and are already enrolled in an ASD class in 6<sup>th</sup> class.
4. Students in Category C (page 5, Admissions policy). Within Category C priority will be given to students who meet the criteria for admission to the special class and are already enrolled in an ASD class in 6<sup>th</sup> class.

Parents / Guardians should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria numbered above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, a process of random selection will apply. The remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Application Process**

An enrolment application form, a copy of which is available from the school, should be fully completed and submitted by the Parents / Guardians on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is published in the Annual Admission Notice for the relevant year.

This enrolment application form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the applicant and accompanied by all the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessments and diagnostic reports. The enrolment application form can also be accompanied by school reports and relevant documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended. Proof of address is necessary.

Only applications that meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area / region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the decision-making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the ASD special class.

The Board of Management will make the final decision on all applications to enrol.

### **On acceptance of a place**

- Parents / Guardians of a child being offered a place in the ASD special class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal / Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement / enrolment of their child. Any information requested by the Parents / Guardian will be provided at this meeting.
- Parents / Guardians may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Education Team at Coolmine Community School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation.
- Parents / Guardians will be invited to accompany their child to visit Coolmine Community School ASD special class and meet staff.
- Parents / Guardians may be consulted about the Individual Plan and student support file for their child.
- The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Support plans
- A child may be phased gradually into the special class through a mutually agreed process between Parents / Guardians and the management of the school.
- Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the ASD special class will be assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class for integration purpose by school management.

The placement of every student within the ASD special class will be subject to regular review, by school management, staff and where appropriate the professional services external to the school. The review will consider which of the following is most appropriate:

- ✓ To continue within the ASD special class at Coolmine Community School.
- ✓ To integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary.
- ✓ To seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student as Coolmine Community School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student.

In such an instance, the support and assistance of the staff at Coolmine Community School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

### **Code of Behaviour**

As already indicated above the Parents / Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Coolmine Community School's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

Children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Individual Support Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement



adopted by the Board of Management at the school. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the ASD special class or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents / Guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child.

Coolmine Community School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents / Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to Coolmine Community School will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, Department of Education under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Ratified by Board of Management on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

**Signed:**

Chairperson:

*Richard Carroll*

Principal:

*Patricia McPhillips*