

Limerick East Educate Together

ENROLMENT POLICY FOR ASD CLASS 2019-2020

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, parents 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. Limerick East 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), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education Skills (DES) Circulars.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

An Autistic Spectrum Disorder (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 2019-2020. The establishment of this Unit was contingent on approval for additional accommodation being granted by the Department of Education School's Capital Appraisal Section and also on the necessary funding and resources being furnished to Limerick East 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.

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About our School

Limerick East Educate Together National School is a national school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. We are a mainstream co-educational national school with an ASD class. Educate Together schools are national schools that teach the national Primary Curriculum and are open to all, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background. Teachers are fully qualified, as in all National Schools.

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

- **Equality based** – children of all denominations and none are equally welcome into our schools.
- **Co-educational** – Educate Together schools are proactive in promoting an approach to learning that encourages and supports the wide variety and range of talents among the children irrespective of gender.
- **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 their heart.
- **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.

We in Limerick East Educate Together school strive to give the highest quality of education to our children. We want the individual to grow to his/her full potential. Our aim is that this education will prepare each child for life to the best of his/her ability. We recognise and value the role of parents as the primary educator of their children. Together we can provide the skills so that the children begin to develop a love of learning. We take an eclectic approach to teaching our pupils. We don't subscribe exclusively to any one approach to the education of children with Autism.

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Our Mission

Established in 2017 under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills, Limerick East Educate Together ASD class offers a specialised educational service to children who have a diagnosis of autism from a psychiatrist, psychologist or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team. Children should have been assessed and classified as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria or equivalent and a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.

The special class strives to create a supportive and caring environment for each child. With a team of dedicated teachers and special needs assistants, the school provides individual attention in a small class setting catering for the uniqueness of each child's personality.

Parents/guardians of children are encouraged to participate in the development of their child's learning.

Our Aim

Our ASD class aims 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. We strive to enable the children to attain their educational potential.

Application Procedure for Enrolment

Enrolment Applications for the 2019-2020 school year will be accepted until the 19th March 2019. All applications received on or before this date will be acknowledged within 21 days of the closing date for the submission of applications.

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

*School Secretary,
Limerick East Educate Together National School,
The Old Stables,
Mungret College,
Limerick.*

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 Board of Management in accordance with our enrolment policy.

The Enrolment Application must be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation (“Supporting Documentation”) supplied by parents:

1. An original Birth Certificate (together with a photocopy)
2. **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 DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria or equivalent and a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.**

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

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The list of applicants will be reviewed by the Admissions Team, which will consist of the Principal, member of the special education team and a member of the school's BOM.

Factors taken into consideration are:

1. Diagnosis – Child must be diagnosed as being on the ASD spectrum with a recommendation for placement in a special class attached to mainstream.
2. Integration - Child must be capable of integrating into mainstream, even at a minimal level, at an appropriate age level.
3. Appropriateness – Child must be capable of accessing the Primary School Curriculum.
4. The child must be aged at least 5 by 30 July 2019.

Once the team is happy that the child presents as fulfilling the above, places will be allocated in accordance with the criteria below. The Team may request further information or a meeting with the child in the school setting if necessary.

The receipt of the enrolment application forms, psychological report and written recommendation is not a guarantee of enrolment.

The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together, in compliance with section 19(3) of the Education Welfare Act 2000, will make a decision in writing in respect of an application for enrolment within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of enrolment applications and will inform the parents/guardians in writing of that decision.

Transfers

The school may request other relevant documentation if a pupil is transferring from another school. All documents need to be received in order for the application to be deemed fully completed.

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The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. This consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the ASD class.

Appeals to a Decision to refuse to enrol

Parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to a refusal to enrol in the letter issued 21 days after the closing date for the receipt of applications. (Please note the address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment.)

If the Board of Management refuses to enrol a child, the parent/guardian of the child may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 school days of the date of the refusal to enrol. It must be made in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, and clearly state the grounds for the appeal. The Board of Management will respond within 10 school days of the receipt of such an appeal.

If following the conclusion of the appeal procedures at school level, a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision made, that parent/guardian has a statutory entitlement under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education and Skills. It should be noted that such an appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the school's refusal to enrol.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 2007), are available on the Dept. of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie

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Criteria for Enrolment in ASD Class

The maximum class size is six pupils. If the number of eligible children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order.

1. Pupils currently enrolled in our mainstream school and seeking to transfer to the ASD class.
2. Siblings of existing pupils.
3. Siblings of past pupils.
4. If after steps 1, 2, 3 places are still available. Remaining places will be allocated through a lottery system. This will be overseen by three members of the admissions team.

The first year will be used to;

- Assess the child's educational needs.
- Develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). to address identified needs.
- Assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.

Taking into account the Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding available, the school supports the principles of;

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special education need.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs.
- Traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political/religious beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria. Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if;

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- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
- Sufficient classroom space is not available.
- The Admissions Team decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child.

Taking all of the above into account, and based on the advice of the admissions team of the ASD Class, the Board of Management reserves the right of admission

Support by Outside Agencies

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive. These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy. Limerick Educate Together National School **has no control over these services, merely acting as relevant setting for their provision. All queries about these services must be addressed to the Health Service Executive and not Limerick East Educate Together National School.**

Post - Acceptance

1. The parents of a child being offered a place in the ASD class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Ed. Team and the Principal of the School.
2. The parents 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.
3. After placement in the class a relevant IEP will be provided for the child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved in the education of the child and will be supported by a psychologist from the National Psychological Service (NEPS) team.
4. The S.E.N.O. will also be made aware of the plan.

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5. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
6. A child may be phased in gradually to the special 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 their needs.
7. Each child in the ASD class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes.

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 this is indeed an appropriate school placement for the child.

Behaviour

All efforts will be made by the school to manage challenging behaviours that may occur using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's IEP. All pupils including children with special 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 school 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.

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Discharge Policy

Discharge may be recommended if the admissions team, after consultation with the parents/guardian feel that placement is not appropriate.

Discharge from the Unit may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.

Evaluation

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. The Policy will be reviewed annually. This Policy will be amended and updated as required.

This policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on the date below

Date	28.11.19
Chairperson	Jane Harris
Principal	Michael Quealy