

## ASD Class

### Carrig N.S.

## Enrolment / Admissions Policy

### **About ASD class**

Established in 2020 under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and Carrig N.S. This class offers a specialised educational service to children who have been fully diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

### **Aims and General Information**

We, in Carrig National School, want to give the highest quality of education to our children. We want the individual to reach his/her 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/guardians as primary educator of their children; together we can provide the skills for a loving approach to learning. We use a variety of teaching approaches in the class and bear in mind the individual needs of each pupil in the class.

A further aim of the class is to provide a caring learning environment which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. The Principal, Staff and Parents/Guardians are partners in their children's education with the co-operation and communication between the home and school being vital ingredients in the education process. We share the same purpose – the care and wellbeing of the children in our care. For this reason, we place great emphasis on the areas of communication, daily living skills, socialisation and literacy.

The class strives to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil. With a dedicated teacher and Special Needs Assistants, the school provides individual attention in a small class catering for the uniqueness of each pupil's personality. Our principal aim is to enable the children to attain their educational potential and fulfil their role in society.

### **Admissions Policy**

This class is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills. This school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available. Subject to regular assessment by teachers and other relevant professionals, children shall attend ASD Class for the normal eight-year Primary School cycle from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

### **Enrolment**

The Board of Management reserves the right of admission within the terms of this policy. The Board of Management also reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Dept. of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions. Other factors that may be considered are:

- Size and available space in classrooms
- Educational needs of children of a particular age
- Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs
- Health and Safety

The Board of Management will not, with due regard to the legislation mentioned above, refuse a child on the basis of

1. Ethnicity
2. Disability
3. Traveller Status
4. Political Beliefs
5. Family or Social circumstances
6. Religious Beliefs

### **Class Size**

Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills the maximum class size is six pupils.

### **Enrolment Procedures/Admission Policy**

The process of enrolment begins with:

#### **Criteria for Enrolment**

1. Each child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder using the DSM-IV/5 or ICD 10 criteria as set out by a professional/individual approved by the Department of Education and skills and a multi-disciplinary assessment report. The report must be current.
2. A recommendation that a specialist ASD placement from a competent professional is best suited to the child's needs must be clearly stated in the child's psychological assessment.
3. Carrig N.S. will also require a written professional recommendation for a place in an ASD class in a mainstream setting.

Please note that applications will not be processed until these documents are received. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is the 31st March. Completed applications will be responded to within 21 days of the closing date.

4. As inclusion is an integral part of our school ethos, it is a necessary criterion of enrolment that any child attending the class must be capable of integrating into a mainstream classroom setting. The level of integration, duration and timing, will be decided by the principal and staff in consultation with the mainstream teacher, external advice and the child's parents. Information will be shared and discussed at support plan meetings.

A fully completed application form must be filled in by the parents and relevant reports must be submitted to the school.

5. The school acknowledges that all children with ASD present with differing profiles. For this reason, all applications must be considered individually. The completed application form does not constitute an offer of a place.

6. The receipt of the enrolment application forms, psychological report and written recommendation is not a guarantee of enrolment. The child must be age – appropriate for the ASD class to which they are applying.

### **Decision Making**

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy. The Board will notify parents of their decision within 21 days of the closing date for receipt of applications.

The Board will have regard for relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of children.

The Board is bound by the Department of Education and Skills Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years. Children applying to enrol in Carrig N.S. must have reached the age of 4 years by 31st August of the year they will commence school.

- Each child in this class must have a definite diagnosis of an ASD. He/she must also have a written professional recommendation for a place in an ASD class in a mainstream setting.
- If a child with a primary diagnosis of ASD applies for placement in our class, this child should have potential for some level of integration into the mainstream class as per guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills. It is expected that a child should be able to sit at a desk for a reasonable period of time.

If the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply once a definite diagnosis of ASD has been provided by a qualified professional and accompanied by a professional recommendation for a place:

1. Sisters/brothers including step siblings of children already enrolled in the school, priority eldest
2. Children whose primary residence is in the parish/local area starting with those nearest to the school, priority eldest
3. Children of staff members, priority eldest
4. If places are still available, children will be allocated a place by random selection, independently verified.

The Board of Management of Carrig N.S. respects the rights of the existing school community and the children enrolled. This consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the ASD Unit.

### **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.

The Board of Management of Carrig N.S. respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. This consideration is paramount when assessing entry to this class.

## **Code of Behaviour**

All offers of enrolment are subject to acceptance of the School's Code of Behaviour, a copy of which is appended to this policy.

## **Appeals**

The Board of Management of Carrig N.S., 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. 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 student, the parent/guardian of the student may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 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 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](http://www.education.ie)

## **Exceptional Cases**

The Board of Management of Carrig N.S. 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 Dept. of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education;

AND / OR

2. Based on the child's psychological assessment and / or other medical reports, the Board of Management forms the opinion that the student poses a potentially unacceptable health and safety risk to other students, or to school staff or to the school property.

Each child's progress in the class will be reviewed annually by the staff and relevant professionals available to the school.

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy was communicated to all teachers. This policy will be available to all parents.

This policy was approved and ratified by the Board of Management on 2/3/2020

Signed:   
(Chairperson Board of Management)

## **Integration and Inclusion of pupils from the Autistic Class into Mainstream Classes Policy Statement.**

### **Rationale**

The policy was formulated so that;

1. Teaching staff had well defined guidelines on best practice.
2. Parents were aware of these practices.
3. There was consistency throughout the school.
4. Optimum learning experiences were provided for all the children of the school body.

### **Aims**

1. To provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with Special Educational Needs to become exposed to learning in a mainstream setting.
2. To enable the children in the mainstream classes to observe and interact with children with special needs, encouraging understanding and tolerance.
3. To develop the social skills and self-esteem of the children in the Autistic Class.

The need for a policy on inclusion developed from the collective desire of the teaching staff to have a defined and uniform whole school approach to the issue of integration. The policy was devised following consultation with all stake holders including the principal, mainstream and special class teacher, the National Educational Psychological Service, The National Council for Special Education and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills.

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 states; "A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with-

- (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
- (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

The amount of integration/ reverse integration that each child receives in Carrig N.S. is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. teachers (both special education teachers and mainstream), the principal and support staff. The views of other interested parties such as Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists will be taken into account. However, the staff's decision is final. Decisions on integration and reverse integration are made on an individual basis, respecting the uniqueness of each child.

### **Implementation**

The school promotes a policy of integration with age appropriate peers on a social level and ability appropriate on a curriculum level.

The policy is open to review at all times. The school insists that a maximum of 2 children per class be integrated at any given time. Early levels of integration into mainstream are on a social level only. The

child from the Autistic class will not partake in general class learning until they have mastered the art of –

1. Entering the class without trepidation.
2. Sitting down at a designated desk
3. Interacting on a social level with the child(ren) nearest them.
4. Having lunch with the whole class
5. Acting on general teacher instructions within the classroom setting.

It is important to note that the number of children being integrated at any given time is dependent on the pupil numbers in the mainstream classes.

### **Curricular Integration**

Having adjusted on a social level the child from the Autistic class will, on a phased basis, be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level. Art and Craft classes and storytelling sessions at Junior and Senior Infant level will be targeted initially. Integration into these classes will continue up through the classes. It is important to note that this will happen on a gradual basis as the Autistic pupils require time to settle into their classroom.

Music has also been designated an area open to integration. This extends to school choirs (communion), carol singing groups, school plays and recitals. Religion and SPHE are also open to integration.

Physical Education is also an area open to integration. The child is integrated into the class that best suits his/her physical condition.

### **Reverse Integration**

A policy of reverse integration extends to all classes. This involves:

1 The child from Autistic class being integrated for certain curriculum subjects initially through reverse integration whereby a number of children from the mainstream class are withdrawn to join the child in their own environment. It is hoped that this will in the long term lead to conventional integration in the mainstream class. The level of integration into a mainstream class for a core curriculum subject will be on an individual basis only and will differ from child to child. The school will retain discretion as to the particular children who should avail of curricular mainstream integration.

### **Staff Roles**

#### **Principal**

With reference to the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, the role of the principal entails:

1. Direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole schools approach to integration.
2. Responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resources.
3. Monitoring the effectiveness of policies and making relevant adjustment following consultation.
4. Working with parents and out of school agencies.

#### **Special Class Teachers**

1. Will identify the appropriate curriculum area the child in Autistic class should experience.
2. Ensure S.N.A support is available during any period of integration.
3. Collaborate and consult with mainstream teachers in setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant short term and long term targets.
4. Assume responsibility for an ongoing IEP in consultation with the relevant support services, parents and the principal. At present each Special Class teacher is only obliged to produce one IEP per school year. It is up to the professional opinion of the teacher involved if the IEP needs to be updated more frequently

#### **Class Teachers**

1. Will differentiate teaching programmes to meet the needs of the child from the Autistic class.
2. Provide a suitable seating arrangement in a mainstream setting.
3. Collaborate with the special class teacher and the S.N.A.
4. Provide feedback on progress.

#### **Special Needs Assistants/ Care Assistants**

Each class will be allocated a number of S.N.A's by the area SENO. Generally, the S.N.A'S are allocated to the school and employed by the Department of Education. They are not assigned to any one child and there is great scope in their job specification to move between classes when needs arise.

Their main role is to assist the class teacher with the specific goals and targets set down in the child's IEP. (Individual Education Plan)

#### **Staff Development**

It is hoped that a suitably qualified practitioner will provide opportunities for in service staff development in relation to the implementation of a workable system of integration once a year

#### **Health Service Executive Input**

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive. These services include Speech and Language therapy and Occupational therapy. Carrig N.S. 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 the school.

#### **Information Required**



In order for us to be entrusted with the care of your child we require the following information.

1. Emergency contact numbers and procedures.
2. Likes and dislikes.
3. Medical needs
4. Hygiene needs
5. Family members and
6. Extended family and friends.

Changes in family circumstances, e.g. the arrival of a new baby, moving home, the death of a grandparent, etc. can have an effect on your child. You may wish to notify the class teacher of any such changes.

#### **Substitute Teachers**

If the Autistic class ASD teacher is absent, a substitute teacher will be employed. The Autistic class teacher will leave a detailed work plan and details of each child's individual routine. The principal and other school staff will provide any necessary assistance.

