



Scoil Naomh Feichín

Enrolment Policy

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Class 2024/2025

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Feichín has set out this policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act of 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Disabilities Act 2002. The Board trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment of children in the school's newly established special class for children with autism.

Scoil Naomh Feichín is a mainstream co-educational primary school with an enrolment of approximately 300 pupils. Our school has a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Armagh.

Rationale for the Establishment of an second ASD Class

The decision to provide a second special class for children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Scoil Naomh Feichin was taken by the Board of Management in conjunction with the principal and staff in May 2023. The decision was taken with a view to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who fulfil the enrolment criteria.

Aims and Objectives

We aim to offer a positive, meaningful, educational experience, which allows each child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. Our ASD Class offers an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion in mainstream education as part of the school community, as appropriate, with regard to levels of general learning disability, resources and suitability for such inclusion. We will provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities and strengths of each child while supporting their areas of need.

Application Procedure for Enrolment

- Enrolment Application Forms for the ASD Class will be accepted following the publication of the Admissions Notice each year. The closing date for submission of enrolment applications will be included in the Admissions Notice.
- All applications will be placed on a Waiting List in order of the date of receipt of completed Enrolment Application Form for the ASD Class.
- Applications received will be acknowledged within one calendar month of the closing day for the submission of applications.
- Requests for Enrolment Application Forms for the ASD Class and queries regarding supporting documentation should be made to:

The Principal, Scoil Naomh Feichín, Termonfeckin, County Louth.

- Receipt of acknowledgement of an enrolment Scoil Naomh Feichín ASD Class 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.
- Each Enrolment Application **must** be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation:
 - ✓ The child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV/V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team.
 - ✓ Copy of the child's Birth Certificate.
 - ✓ A written psychological assessment /report (dated within the six months prior to the application being submitted) or a written report from a multi-disciplinary team must be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist.
Please note: All reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
 - ✓ There **must** be a recommendation by the relevant professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both **necessary and suitable** for the child. In this regard it should be noted that the academic ability of the child will be taken into account when considering an application and will be subject to continuous assessment and review.

The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of the Admissions Policy.

All applications received by the closing date will be considered by the Admissions Team.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The team will include the School Principal, Special Education Coordinator and Special Class Teacher. The Admissions Team may seek the advice of the school's allocated NEPS psychologist and SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser).

The function of the Admissions Team is to:

- ✓ Ascertain how many places are to be filled in the ASD Class. The maximum number of pupils in the class will be 6 pupils.
- ✓ Review all applications and all documentation relevant to a child applying for a place in the ASD class
- ✓ Verify the class's suitability in meeting the needs of the child
- ✓ Verify that there is a recommendation from a psychologist for placement in a special class in a mainstream school.
- ✓ Verify the suitability of the child for potential meaningful integration in an age appropriate mainstream class
- ✓ Verify that the child is 4 years old on or before September 1st on the year of enrolment
- ✓ Verify that the child has an intelligence score in the Average or Low Average range (a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient score of 75 or greater) when compared to other children of a similar age.
 - ✓ Identify qualifying applicants with reference to these criteria.

- ✓ Prioritise each qualifying applicant with reference to selection criteria.
- ✓ To make a recommendation based on these findings to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management is responsible for and must respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular the children already enrolled. The Board of Management has the right to endorse or overrule any decision made by the Admissions Team.

In particular, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if they believe the school cannot meet the needs of a particular child.

- In the event that the number of eligible applications is greater than the number of places, such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in the following order of priority:
 - ✓ Siblings of children enrolled in the school.
 - ✓ Children of school staff
 - ✓ Children from the local area (as defined by the Parish Boundary of Termonfeckin).
 - ✓ Children in the surrounding parishes to Termonfeckin.
 - ✓ Children outside of these areas.
 - ✓ Children appropriate in class age to children already enrolled.

If the number of children in any category exceeds the number of places available, qualifying applicants will be offered a place in accordance with a *'first come, first served'* basis as per the Waiting List.

- All unsuccessful qualifying applicants will be placed on the Placement List, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available. All unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 within 42 days from the date of the decision by the Board of Management. The Placement List is valid for vacancies which occur in the current school year only. All applications will be reviewed with reference to the selection criteria in April each year.
- Parents who are offered a place must complete and return the school's Enrolment Registration Form within two weeks of the letter of offer to accept a placement. If the school does not receive the Registration Form within this two-week period, the place will be offered to the next child on the Placement List for that school year.

Pupils Transferring

Pupils may transfer to the ASD class during the school year, subject to availability of places. Pupils transferring must enter the same class level that they are leaving and have the necessary diagnosis and recommendations as outlined above.

Placement & Integration

- After placement in the class, a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for each child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child. The ASD 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.
 - Each child in the ASD Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes provided that this is in the best interests of the child, while having due regard to the educational benefit of all pupils enrolled in our school. Every opportunity will be used to promote inclusion in mainstream classes provided the child is ready for this step and has the necessary supports in place.

- A review will take place at the end of the child's first year to assess whether the child's placement is appropriate. The review will be carried out by school staff with parental involvement. The outcome of the review will be examined by the Board of Management.
- In the event that a placement is inappropriate, the school will liaise with appropriate agencies in an effort to obtain a more suitable placement

Conduct & Behaviour

It is accepted that children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of each child's Individual Education Plan. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the class 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.

Discharge from the Special ASD Class

It is school policy that the year that the student turns 13 will be their final year in Scoil Naomh Feichín. Pupils who reach the age of thirteen, on or after September 1st in any year, will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year.

The onus will be on the parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. Scoil Naomh Feichín will facilitate all transfer of records/reports as well as assist with any information required with regards to the student and Scoil Naomh Feichín will be deemed to have authority to forward all relevant reports and assessments to the relevant secondary school unless specifically instructed in writing not to do so.

Discharge may also be recommended after the first and/or any subsequent year if, following psychological assessments and consultation with the parents/guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and serves the best interest of the child. Discharge may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school. The Board of Management has the right to overrule any decision made in this regard.

Evaluation

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

Review

This policy is subject to review by the Board of Management as required.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Feichín at its meeting held on:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Fr Paul Byrne PP

Chairperson, Board of Management.