



## **Marymount National School**

Ballsgrove, Drogheda,

Co. Louth, A92 FD60

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### **Policy for Autism Class**

#### **Introductory Statement**

The Board of Management of Marymount NS. 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.

#### **General Information:**

**Name of School:** Marymount NS

**Address:** Ballsgrove, Drogheda, Co. Louth

**Telephone:** 041 9837150

**E-mail:** [office@marymountgns.ie](mailto:office@marymountgns.ie)

**School Patron:** Most Rev. Thomas Deenihan

#### **Rationale**

In setting up the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class in Marymount NS, the decision was taken with a view to providing an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an autism disorder and who fulfil the enrolment criteria. The decision was taken primarily to cater for children resident in Holy Family Parish. The Board of Management notes that it is open to any primary school to set up such a class.

The Board of Management is committed to providing the highest quality of education for the children concerned and with the involvement of all relevant partners has developed this policy for the Autism class in conjunction with overall school policy.

The ASD class at Marymount National School is a class for children who have been recommended for placement in an ASD class in a mainstream primary school and who have the potential to integrate into a mainstream age appropriate class. All placements will be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that the placement continues to be appropriate for the child. The maximum class size is 6 pupils.

#### **Aims.**

We aim to offer a meaningful positive educational experience promoting growth and learning, which allows the child to develop to their full learning potential in an inclusive atmosphere which offers clarity, predictability and calm.

Our ASD class offers an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion in education as part of the school community as appropriate with regard to general levels of learning disability, available resources and suitability for such inclusion.

We wish to provide a broad curriculum which focusses on the strengths and abilities of each child while supporting their areas of need.

### **Enrolment Procedure.**

The full procedure with regard to enrolments to Marymount School and to the ASD class can be found in our Admissions policy which is available on our website. A hard copy of same is available from the school office on request.

Application forms can be downloaded from the school website or a hard copy can be requested from [office@marymountgns.ie](mailto:office@marymountgns.ie) or by telephoning the school on 041 9837150.

Applications for enrolment to the ASD class should be accompanied by all the supporting documentation as per the criteria laid out below.

Please refer to the school's annual admissions notice with regard to application opening and closing dates, decision dates and number of available places.

Receipt of acknowledgement of an application does not constitute an offer of a place, nor does it guarantee a place in the school.

All decisions with regard to enrolment applications are made by the Board of Management in accordance with our Admissions policy.

### **Assessment criteria for admission to the ASD Class**

Marymount NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD. Pupils seeking to enrol in the special class must have the following:

1. A multi-disciplinary report with a diagnosis of a qualifying ASD (DSM IV, V or ICD 10) and with a recommendation to attend an ASD class attached to mainstream school.
2. The diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.
3. A recent recommendation (within two years of the proposed admission date) must be provided by the above professional indicating that a placement in an ASD class in a mainstream school is warranted. A needs analysis/recommendation in respect of each child will also be required in order to provide the best education possible for the children.
4. The school has in place the resources as per DES guidelines to meet the special needs of the child.

Parents please note that a guarantee of support by outside agencies such as the HSE or Enable Ireland cannot be provided by the school. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy etc. will be dependent on local services, public or private. The school does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is up to

the parents/guardians to ensure that all services are being accessed and being availed of and that all reports and recommendations are provided to the class teacher for planning purposes.

### **Enrolment Criteria**

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year. The maximum number of students that can be enrolled is six. In the event that the number of children seeking enrolment into the ASD classes exceed the number of places available, the order of priority will be as follows:

1. Children already enrolled in the school.
2. Siblings and step and foster siblings of children enrolled in school.
3. Children residing within Holy Family Parish.
4. All remaining applicants.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

### **Oversubscription.**

In the event that there are two or more eligible students tied for a place or places in the ASD class in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

In the event that the number of eligible pupils seeking enrolment in the ASD class from within any category exceeds the number of available places, then the school will offer places beginning with the eldest in descending order of age until all remaining places have been allocated. Any outstanding eligible applications following allocation of all available places will be placed on a waiting list as per our Admissions policy.

### **Offer of Placement**

A child will be offered a place in our ASD classes if all of the assessment criteria described above are met and there is a place available. Acceptance procedure is as per the School Admissions policy.

### **Post Acceptance.**

Once a Parent /Guardian has accepted a place in the ASD class, the Principal will communicate with the Parent/guardian as follows:

- Parents/ Guardians will be invited to visit the school and meet the principal and a member of the Special Ed team.

- The Parent / Guardian will be requested to consent to a visit by school staff to the child's pre-school / home setting to observe the child.
- Parent/Guardian will be invited to bring their child to meet the staff and see the classroom.
- The child will be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between parent and school.
- After placement in the ASD class, a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the child. This plan will be drawn up in consultation with all parties involved with the education of the child and will be reviewed at least twice during the year in the context of a review of progress, suitability of the placement and planning for future development. The IEP may be updated where necessary.

### **Behaviour**

It is acceptable that a child with Special Educational Needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviours using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Individual Education Plan. All pupils including special needs pupils and non-special needs pupils are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the ASD class or another mainstream class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the BOM of the school, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child. In such a situation, the school will use all means at its disposal to assist parents in securing a more appropriate placement for the child.

### **Placement Review.**

The school reserves the right to review the child's progress at a minimum of twice a year and to recommend whether the placement is appropriate for the child.

Occasionally concerns regarding the suitability of a child's continued attendance at the school may arise. In such circumstances, a review of the school's ability to meet the child's needs, or a review of safety and the safety of others may be necessary. Any such review will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the Board of Management in conjunction with the Principal and other relevant staff members. Parents and Guardians should be kept informed of any concerns that might arise in relation to their child's continued attendance at the school at the earliest opportunity and should be given ample opportunity to engage in the discussion around the placement and concerns arising. In the event that it is determined that the child is not suitably placed in the school, the BOM may request a multidisciplinary team assessment be carried out in order to determine the best course of action regarding future placement.

**July provision will not be offered or met by the school.**

## Discharge Policy

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the unit once they have reached the age of thirteen or have completed the 8 Year primary school cycle whichever occurs first. It is compulsory that the year the student turns thirteen or completes the 8 Year primary school cycle, whichever occurs first, will be their last year. Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after September 30<sup>th</sup> in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year. It is the responsibility of the parent/s to organise a suitable secondary school placement. Marymount School will facilitate the transfer of records/reports and will assist with any other information required.

Discharge may also be recommended if, after consultation with the parents/guardians and other professionals it is felt that the placement is not appropriate and that an alternative placement would better serve the interests of the child. (See Placement Review) Discharge from the unit may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.

### The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any child where either:

- 1) The child has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health the school cannot meet such needs/or provide the student with an education in line with the assessment, recommendations, the needs analysis received, and the Individual Educational Plan drawn up by the school.
- 2) In the opinion of the Board of Management the student poses a risk to the health and safety of the other students, to school staff or to school property.

### Ratification and communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on-

1/7/2020.

Peter Darcy

Peter Darcy ,Chairperson, Board of Management

