



St Paul's Secondary School

Introduction:

Sr. May's is a newly established Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class within St. Paul's Secondary School in Oughterard. The class is named after Sr. May, the original founder of the Special Education Department within the school. Sr. May's ASD class reflects the inclusive ethos of St. Paul's Secondary School which is based on the belief that students with special needs should receive their education within the most supportive environment. This focus on realising the full potential of each individual student will endeavour to develop the students' life skills and prepare them for life after school in an ever-evolving model of best practice.

Special Education Needs Mission Statement:

St. Paul's Secondary School endeavours to provide quality education for all students in a caring disciplined and respectful environment. We aim to prepare students for life and responsible citizenship and to motivate them towards the achievement of their full potential.

Definition:

The purpose of the ASD class is to assist students with ASD to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the best of their ability, in an inclusive way in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives. Wherever possible the students in Sr. May's ASD Class are integrated within the mainstream school.

Aims and Objectives:

- To provide a whole school response to the needs of students with ASD within the overall ethos of the school.
- To provide a safe, nurturing and happy environment in which students are guided and supported.
- To provide a predictable and consistent environment where students' needs are implicitly understood and met.
- To facilitate every aspect of the students' education, from their transfer from primary school to the transition to college/work upon completion of their education at St. Paul's Secondary School.
- To identify any difficulty that students with ASD are experiencing as early and as thoroughly as possible.
- To encourage parental co-operation and involvement and to keep parents/guardians regularly informed of progress.

- To work in partnership with parents/ guardians, students, the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and other outside professionals.
- To set achievable and manageable targets for students attending the ASD Class.
- To employ a variety of resources and teaching strategies to enable differentiation in order to allow the student to access the curriculum.
- To provide access to an extended curriculum whereby students are taught in the areas of social skills and life skills training and stress management strategies
- To attempt to meet the sensory needs of students in ASD Class by providing access to sensory and sensory integration rooms.
- To promote and encourage the integration of all students in the ASD Class within the mainstream school.

Admissions Policy.

Assessment:

An Assessment test is held for all incoming First Year students to St. Paul's Secondary School. This test is held after places have been offered to incoming students and therefore has no influence on selection of students for enrolment. An assessment includes an evaluation of the nature and extent of the student's ASD diagnosis and of the services which the student needs so as to be able to reach his potential and fully participate in and benefit from education.

It may also include:

- Screening tests in literacy and numeracy for all incoming First year students.
- Diagnostic and informal testing to clarify and identify the exact areas of strength and need.

*All testing is subject to the consent of parents/ guardians.

*Definitive conclusions will not be drawn from these tests. They are, however, used as part of a multifaceted assessment involving:

(a) Information from primary schools- consultation with class teacher, learning support teacher/ resource teacher in the feeder primary schools.

(b) Consultation with parents/ guardians.

(c) Consultation, where appropriate, with students with ASD.

(d) Feedback from subject teachers.

(e) Consultation with outside professionals that are involved with students with ASD.

*All procedures, test results and information received are documented and filed. In addition, relevant information in relation to a student with ASD specific educational needs is brought to the attention of mainstream teachers.

Criteria for Enrolment;

- Students who apply must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V/ICD 10) and supporting documentation in order to be considered for enrolment in Sr. May's ASD Programme.

- The class will only cater for children who are 12 years of age or more and 18 years of age or less on the 1st September of the school year in question, unless there is specific approval from the Department of Education and Skills for a particular student who is outside this upper age limit.
- Prospective students must have a professional recommendation by a psychologist, psychiatrist or multidisciplinary team for placement in a Special Class for Autism.
- Students must have a reasonable expectation of being able to follow school rules to be considered for enrolment in Sr. May's ASD Programme.
- Students must have an ability to meaningfully participate in mainstream classes in order to be considered for enrolment in the class. An educational placement in the ASD Programme must be appropriate and beneficial to the student in question.
- The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition the Board of Management of the school is required under section 15(1) of the education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which the board has a responsibility. An Application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.
- Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills the number of places in the ASD Class is limited to 6 students.

Enrolment Procedure:

The process of enrolment begins with:

1. A referral from an external agency or a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
2. A school application form, showing family details and medical history is then completed. This application must be accompanied by an up to date educational psychological assessment and diagnostic report.
3. Fully completed applications are then recorded in the applications file. The deadline for applications is as the same as the Application to Enrol Form for the school.
4. Entry into this file secures a place on the list of applicants. Only applications that meet the criteria for enrolment above will be considered as suitable applications.
5. We require that parents/guardians of applicant pupils provide the college with a full, written original diagnostic history. Psychological reports / Occupational Therapy reports / Speech and Language Therapy reports, or any other reports, which *refer* to the original diagnosis, will not be accepted in lieu of the original written diagnosis.

If the number of the children on the list of applicants exceeds the number of places available the following ranked criteria will apply:

Category 1

Applicants with siblings already in the school.

Category 2

Applicants who are registered in the following primary schools on the closing date of the application:

- Scoil Chuimin agus Caitriona
- St. Annin's National School
- Derryglen National School
- Coillnamuc National School
- Tullykyne National School

Category 3

Applicants not attending these feeder schools for whom this Autism Class would be the nearest facility.

Category 4

All other applicants

Oversubscription

In the event the school is oversubscribed in any of the above categories, the determining factor in allocating places and establishing a waiting list will be random selection. This random selection process will be independently witnessed.

Late Applicants

Late Applicants will be kept on file and will, subject to them meeting the ASD class enrolment criteria, be ranked according to the date and time of receipt of completed application and considered only after all applicants who applied on time have been considered.

In order to best support students and without affecting their eligibility for a place in Sr. May's ASD Programme we require that we are made aware of:

1. Any medications that the applicant pupils may be in receipt of either at home or in the course of the school day.
2. Any additional medical conditions and / or dietary restrictions / requirements that the individual may have.
3. In order to determine our suitability for a student we strongly recommend that applicant students have School Transition Reports completed by a psychologist in conjunction with the feeder school and parents/guardians. Ideally all applicant students should have a School Transition Report but it is especially important for applicant students whose most recent psychological, cognitive, multi-disciplinary, educational, developmental, clinical assessment etc. are more than two years old by the October 31st in question. The application of students without a School Transition Report may be affected if these are not provided.
4. School Transition Report and most recent psychological/cognitive/multi-disciplinary etc. assessment should recommend placement in an ASD special class in a mainstream post-primary setting. The applications of students without such a recommendation or with a joint recommendation may be affected by their absence.
5. Where a School Transition Report is not available applications should have a "Statement of Need" from the relevant HSE service. In this instance the student's

current school will also be asked to complete a School Transition Report. Applications without a “Statement of Need” or school completed School Transition Report where needed may be affected by their absence.

6. In the year prior to potential entry into the ASD Programme staff will contact both the parents/guardians of the applicant student and subsequently their school to arrange a school visit. Parents/guardians will be made fully aware of the details and nature of this visit.
7. In order to determine our suitability for a student we require that the Principal and/or selected member/members of the ASD Programme staff are facilitated in meeting and engaging with the Principal of the feeder school and/or any other school personnel (such as mainstream teachers, resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants) who are deemed to have played a significant role in the applicant pupil’s education to that point.
8. To determine our suitability for a student we require that the parents/guardians of the applicant pupil, and the Principal of the feeder school, agree to facilitate a selected member/members of the ASD team in conducting as many observations as appropriate of the pupil in his/her current educational placement.
9. In order to determine our suitability for a student we require that the feeder school, with parental permission, supply St. Paul’s ASD Programme staff with copies of the applicant students’ work and their most recent SSF (IEP).
10. Parents/guardians of students offered a place in the Sr. May’s ASD Programme will inform St. Paul’s of their decision to accept or turn down a place in Sr. May’s ASD Programme within ten working days of offer letter being posted.
11. Once a pupil has been offered a place on the programme they will be invited to participate in a transition programme. We regard pupils’ participation in the transition programme to be essential in ensuring their smooth transition to their new environment, as well as in facilitating ASD Programme staff in making any necessary academic/other reasonable accommodations for the pupil in a pre-emptive and responsible manner.

Student Support File (Individual Education Plan-IEP)

An Individual Student Support File (IEP) is prepared for every student who attends the ASD Class.

Contents of the Student Support Plan include;

1. The nature and degree of the student’s special educational needs.
2. The nature and degree of the student’s abilities, skills and talents.
3. The special education provision provided to the student.
4. The present level of educational performance of the student.
5. The targets for the student, in which achievement will be attempted, will take place over a period not exceeding 12 months.

A copy of the SSF is given to and signed by the parents/guardians. It will be available upon request to the SENO and other relevant professionals.

Curriculum and Integration:

All students attending the ASD Class in St. Paul's Secondary School attend mainstream classes in so far as possible. Sr. May's ASD Class will provide the relevant supports for students with ASDs to enable them to integrate into the mainstream classes, so as they can be taught alongside their peers with the majority of their learning taking place there.

During time in the ASD Class, Students have access to an extended curriculum (either individually or in a small group setting) where they will receive social and life skills training, a sensory programme and stress management strategies. The L2LP programme is also offered as part of the new Junior Cycle curriculum where it is deemed suitable. Students will also benefit from pre and/or post tutoring of mainstream subjects.

The Individualised Timetable:

Students in Sr. May's ASD Class operate from an individual modified timetable. The number of academic subjects undertaken is wholly dependent on their needs and abilities. Activities in the ASD Class are also student specific. Each student's timetable is constantly under review and changes can be made throughout the academic year if necessary.

Catering for unstructured time:

Students in Sr. May's ASD Class are provided with lunchtime activities, which are supervised by a teacher/ SNA. The majority of these activities, which will take place twice weekly, are open to students in 1st and 2nd year thereby enabling students in the ASD Class to socialise and get to know their peers in a structured, yet informal setting.

Exams:

Reasonable accommodations have been put in place in an effort to negate the stress that is associated with class tests and exams for students with ASD.

Mainstream teachers are asked to give adequate notice of all class tests. Students in the ASD Class have the option of completing class tests within the ASD Class with the teacher or SNA. Students may also be provided with appropriate reasonable accommodations (RACE) if deemed necessary by the State Examinations Commission.

This process is continued up to and including the Junior Cycle Examination (and beyond if necessary) where reasonable accommodations, if deemed necessary, are made for students with ASD under the direction of the SEN Co-ordinator and in consultation with students/ parents/ mainstream teachers.

Support Services and links to outside agencies:

The ASD Class in of St. Paul's Secondary School has established links with the following agencies:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Special Education Support Service (SESS)
- Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
- National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)
- Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Psychology Services in Health Service Executive (HSE).
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Legislation:

The school authorities are committed to complying with the following legislation and guidelines:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Comhairle Act 2000
- The Disability Act 2005
- The Education for Persons with Special Education (EPSEN) Act 2004
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities 2007
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs- Post Primary 2007

Exceptional Cases

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student with Autism in very exceptional situations. Such a very exceptional situation could include the following:

1. The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education or
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.
- 3. The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition the Board of Management of the school is required under section 15(1) of the education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which the board has a responsibility. An Application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and

safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

The Board of Management of St. Paul's Secondary School respect the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. This consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the school's Special Class with ASD designation.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

_____ (date)

Signature -Chairperson, Board of Management: _____

Signature -Secretary, Board of Management: _____