

Fossa National School.

Class for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Board of Management of Fossa National School agreed with the Department of Education and Science to provide classes for children with a diagnosis of Autism. These classes were established in September 2013.

The Board of Management of Fossa National School agreed with the Department of Education and Science to provide an Early Intervention Class and a senior ASD Class for children with a diagnosis of Autism who come within the average to mild range of intellectual ability. This provision was changed on the instruction of the DES on September 2015 to a junior and senior class which specifically caters for children with autism. The enrolment age for children attending these special classes is exactly the same as the governing age required to attend all mainstream classes in Primary schools.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

This enrolment 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. The chairperson of the Board of Management Mr Kieran Coffey, Fossa National School and the principal teacher Mr Pat Clifford will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

The A.S.D. classes operate 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), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circulars.

Fossa National School,

Fossa School Killarney

, Co. Kerry

Roll No: 17012B

Phone No: 064 6634863

Email: fossaschool@gmail.com

The classes depend on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down, by the Department. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

SECTION 2; ENROLMENT

CRITERIA FOR ENROLMENT

1. There must be a definitive diagnosis of Autism. Fossa National School requests the relevant professional's report establishing the child's original ASD diagnosis.
2. Fossa National School will require an up to date psychological assessment report from a registered Psychologist.

Please note that an “up-to-date psychological assessment” is defined as:

- A psychological assessment report that clearly specifies whether the child meets the DSM-1V, V, or ICD -10 criteria for a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- A reference to the child's current cognitive functioning as well as current behaviour analysis as ascertained by valid and reliable psychometric tests and clinical impressions.
- A report completed within approximately 12 months prior to a decision being made with regards to the child's application, should be furnished
- The Board of Management of Fossa National School in consultation with the assessment agencies will facilitate children whose overall learning needs are within the mild spectrum.
- Each application will be assessed by the Admissions Committee and a consequent determination will be made based on these assessments.
- The age profile of children in the Senior and Junior A.S.D. classes must correspond with the age profile of the other children in Fossa National School. (i.e. those in mainstream classes from Junior Infants to 6th class).

Enrolment Procedures

1. Registration process begins with written application, a telephone call or a visit from the parents.
2. Parents seeking to enrol their children in the A.S.D. classes in Fossa NS are requested to complete an enrolment application form available from the school or on the school web site www.fossanationalschool.com
3. The enrolment application form is returned to the school along with copies of psychological assessments.
4. Applications with relevant reports will then be submitted for review to the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee will consist of the Principal, the Special Needs co-ordinating teacher and the NEPS Psychologist. A recommendation based on the available professional reports, while also recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, will be made to the Board of Management. The Board of Management is responsible for and must respect the rights of the existing community and in particular the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgement which will be guided by the principles of natural justice and the best interest of all children.
5. If the number of pupils wishing to enrol exceeds the number of places available and Fossa National School is deemed to be the most appropriate placement then the following criteria will apply:
 - * Siblings of existing pupils, priority eldest
 - * Children living in the parish, priority eldest
 - * Children recommended for the placement by the Admissions Committee, organiser, priority eldest.
6. Parents are notified of a placement, within 21 days from the receipt of the enrolment application form and required psychological assessments and must respond within 14 days of the date of the placement offer. If not successful in securing a placement there is a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act of 1998.
7. Parents accepting a place in the ASD classes must forward a completed registration form, a birth certificate and baptismal certificate (in the case of Catholic children) to the school. The child will be registered under the name

which appears on the birth certificate. The address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment.

Where specific legal documents outline the family status/custody arrangements relating to the child(ren) details of the arrangements should be provided.

Subsequent legal changes to the name(s) or guardianship of the child(ren) should be communicated in writing to the school.

“Enrolment” – At the introductory stage children will be integrated into their new class environment as per their individual needs (for example a child may initially commence 2 hours and this may increase an hour per week for a further 2 weeks until the child has adapted to the new environment). This will be individually assessed in consultation with parents.

In all cases admission must be monitored and reviewed – children shall not remain in this class if the class is not meeting their needs.

Classes for Children with ASD

1. According to the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) CIRCULAR 9/99 the current pupil teacher ratio applicable is 6:1. This is comprised of 1 teacher and 2 Special Needs Assistants per 6 children.
2. The outreach services of a multi-disciplinary team from the Regional KIDS (Kerry Intervention Disability Service) will be available to the class on occasions when their resources permit such intervention.
3. In-service training for staff will be made available on an on-going basis. In the light of whole team training, it may be deemed necessary at times to leave the children at home. Parents/Guardians will be given ample notice of dates.
4. All teacher absences will have a substitute teacher employed.
5. All school staff will have access to specific training that focuses on educating/

working with children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

SECTION 3: APPEALS

The Board of Management of Fossa National School in compliance with Section 19(3) of the Educational 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 in the school, 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, 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 Department 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 Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie

SECTION 4: EXCEPTIONAL CASES

The Board of Management of Fossa National School 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 Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education
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.

SECTION 5: DISCHARGE POLICY

The age profile of the children in the A.S.D. class must correspond with the age profile of the other children in Fossa National School (i.e. those in mainstream classes from Junior Infants to 6th class)

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reached the age of thirteen.

Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after September 30th in any year may be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge the following year. A transition programme will be put in place to ease the transition for the children.

Discharge may also be recommended 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.

Teaching Method

The method of instruction within the class will be based primarily on T.E.A.C.C.H. and C-ABA, Social Stories, Intensive intervention, PECS etc.

The current facilities and resources available to both classes are only suited to the needs of children whose overall special learning needs are within the average to mild spectrum.

Individual Education Plan – Children will have regular access to I.E.P.'s in the setting of Fossa School.

School Ethos

Fossa School is an inclusive school which has a strong emphasis on positive constructive discipline where good behaviour is recognised, appreciated and rewarded. We encourage our students to be confident and assertive in a pleasant and compassionate way. This ethos is applied to all children within the school.

Incidences of Challenging Behaviour

Incidences of challenging behaviour will be dealt with by the multidisciplinary team that are trained in ASD. Consequences will be consistent and will incorporate the school's ethos whilst ensuring that the health and safety of all children is paramount. Incidences of Challenging Behaviour will be dealt with in the following way:

- a.** all incidents will be recorded stating clearly the perceived trigger factor.
- b.** the incident will be dealt with in accordance with our Code of Behaviour, Pastoral Care Policy and recommendations from the psychologist.
- c.** Individual behaviour plans will be implemented where necessary.

Parental Involvement

1. The involvement of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be welcomed and appreciated.
2. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be required to participate in I.E.P.'s twice yearly.
3. Transport will be the responsibility of Parent(s)/Guardian(s).
4. The class teacher will require the name, photograph and phone number of any persons who have been authorised to collect the children after class.

Mr. Pat Clifford

School Principal

SECTION 6: POLICY APPROVAL/RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Fossa National School

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

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The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education office, acting on behalf of the Patron.

