



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Classes Enrolment Policy 1.1

*This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to **child enrolment in our Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class** and to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.*

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Introduction

This 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. Furthermore, the Board of Management and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Powerstown Educate Together ETNS is a national school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. We are a mainstream co-educational national school with an ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) class. Educate Together schools are national schools that teach the national Primary Curriculum and are open to all, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background. Teachers are fully qualified, as in all National Schools.

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

- **Multi-denominational** – children of all denominations and none are equally welcome into our schools.
- **Co-educational** – Educate Together schools are open to girls and boys and gender stereotyping is addressed and challenged.
- **Child-centred** - this applies not only to teaching and learning within the classroom but to all decisions at staff and management level, which must have the well-being of the children at their heart.
- **Democratically-run** – parents are viewed as a positive resource for the school. Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged, where appropriate. The professional role of the teacher is validated at all times.

Context of Powerstown ETNS and our ASD Class

The decision to provide a special class for children with a definite diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Powerstown Educate Together Educate Together National School was taken by the Board of Management of the school in conjunction with the Principal and Staff in January 2015.

The decision was taken with a view to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, who fulfil the enrolment criteria and for whom a place may be made available.

The decision to provide two ASD classes in our school was taken primarily to cater for children resident in Tyrrelstown and Mulhuddart Co. Dublin (“the Catchment Area”). If places are not filled by pupils in “the catchment area”, places will be opened to children residing in Dublin 15.

Students in the ASD class will be integrated with mainstream school activities in our school where appropriate.

The Board of Management notes that it is open to any primary school to set up such a class and therefore does not see itself as providing a service for the entire area.

Our Mission

We aim to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and interacting with the child, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed in consultation with parents and relevant professionals. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will highlight priority-learning needs. These needs will be targeted through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our Aim

Our ASD class aims to offer an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

Acceptance Dates of Enrolment Applications

Applications for a place in our ASD classes and/or on our waiting list are accepted from 22nd August – 30th September each academic year.

All applications received after this time are returned to sender.

Criteria for Enrolment in A.S.D. Class

Subject to sufficient places being made available in the ASD class, the criteria for enrolment to the ASD class, incorporating the Dept. of Education and H.S.E. policies are as follows:

1. An Enrolment Application Form provided by the school should be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child and submitted to the school between 22nd August and 30th September of that year;

2. This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate and all other Supporting Documentation as referred to in the section “Procedure for Enrolment”;
3. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team should be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. (“Multi-Disciplinary Team”). Please note all reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.
4. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. If the child also presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range (this diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.)
5. There must be a recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child;
6. **Age criteria Holly Class:** For 2018/2019 school year, the child must be aged between 5-7 years of age. All children must be 5yrs of age on or before the 1st September on the year of enrolment.

Age criteria Hawthorn Class: For 2018/2019 school year, the child must be aged between 6-8 years of age. All children must be 6yrs of age on or before the 1st September on the year of enrolment.
7. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school’s Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy;
8. An Acceptance Form as issued by the school must be returned to the school within the required time period;
9. Children must be resident within the Catchment Area i.e. which is defined as being resident at a postal address within Tyrrelstown and Mulhuddart, Dublin 15.

Please note that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if sufficient places are not available and/or sufficient classroom space is not available.

Support by Outside Agencies

Parents please note that a guarantee of support by outside agencies such as the H.S.E. cannot be provided. Children who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will be dependent on the local H.S.E. services or Mater Child Guidance Clinic. 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 possible services are being availed of.

Admissions Team

Each application received from **22nd August to the 30th of September 2018** will be considered by the Admissions Team.

The Admissions Team meet **once per year**, during the second week of October.

The team will include the School Principal, the Senior Management Team and/or the Special Class Teacher. The Admissions Team will be advised by the NEPS psychologist. A recommendation will be made by the Admissions Team in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

Deciding Enrolment

In the first instance, the Board of Management prioritises children for enrolment purposes if the child is resident in the Catchment Area i.e. resident and having a postal address in Tyrrelstown/Mulhuddart. This allows children living locally to access the class which will negate unnecessary travelling and allow suitable children to attend school in their local area.

Current Capacity

The Holly class has 6 children in attendance and supported by 1 teacher and 2 Special Needs Assistants at present. The Holly class is currently at capacity.

The Hawthorn class has 6 children in attendance and supported by 1 teacher and 3 Special Needs Assistants. The Hawthorn class is currently at capacity.

Application Procedure for Enrolment

Enrolment Applications for the 2018/2019 school year will be accepted from the 22nd of August until 30th of September 2018. **The closing date for the submission of enrolment applications is the 30th September 2018.**

All applications received on or before this date will be acknowledged within 2 working weeks of the closing day for the submission of applications. Our ASD Enrolment Policy and further information will be posted to our website in due course.

All applications received after this date will be returned to sender.

Requests for application forms and queries regarding supporting documentation should be made to:

*School Secretary,
Powerstown Educate Together ETNS,
Powerstown Road,
Tyrrlestown,
Dublin 15.
D15VR80
Telephone: (01) 8272018*

Receipt of acknowledgement of an enrolment 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 Manager/Board of Management in accordance with our enrolment policy.

The Enrolment Application must be accompanied by **all** of the following supporting documentation (“Supporting Documentation”) supplied by parents:

1. An original Birth Certificate (together with a photocopy)
2. **Two** of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area (these must be dated within three months of application):
 - a) ESB Bill
 - b) Gas Bill
 - c) Landline Telephone Bill
 - d) NTL Bill
3. **A Diagnosis from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autistic**

spectrum disorder according to DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria and a recommendation for a placement in a special class within a mainstream school.

NB If the school does not receive this documentation with the Enrolment Application form, the application will not be processed or considered by the school. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that all supporting documentation is correct and is received by the school.

Where the number of children who apply is greater than the number of places available in the ASD class, parents can request that their child be added to our waiting list if they meet our enrolment criteria.

In the event that the number of children that apply for a place is greater than the number of places such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in the following order of priority:

A. *Current students of the school/students who have been offered a place in the mainstream school for the coming September*

then

B. *Children living within the Catchment Area*

then

C. *Children living within D15*

then

D. *Children living outside the Catchment Area*

- In the event of the number of children in category **A** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the youngest applicants (within the age of 4 and 6 on the 1st of September) given a place.

Thereafter;

- In the event of the number of children in category **B** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the youngest applicants (within the age of 4 and 6 on the 1st of September) given a place.

Thereafter;

- In the event of the number of children in category **C** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with

the youngest applicants (within the age parameters of 4 and 6 on the 1st of September) given a place.

Thereafter;

- In the event of the number of children in category **D** exceed the number of places available, children within this category will be offered a place according to their chronological age, with the youngest applicants (within the age parameters of 4 and 6 on the 1st of September) given a place.

All unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing by post of their place on the waiting list.

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.

Return of Forms of Acceptance

Letters of offer for places/place on waiting list in the ASD class will be sent within 2 calendar weeks of the final closing date for applications.

The letters of offer of place include Acceptance Forms which must be returned within two weeks of the letter of offer being issued by the school. All acceptance forms must be accompanied by a signed acceptance of the School Code of Behaviour in accordance with Section 24(4) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. If the school does not receive the acceptance form within the two-week period, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list for that school year.

The letters of “option of a place on the waiting list” must be returned within two weeks of the letter being issued. If the school does not receive the acceptance of waiting list place within the two-week period, your child will be removed from the waiting list and the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list for that school year.

Late Applications

Applications for places in the ASD class made on or after 1st of October will not be considered.

Post Acceptance

Once a parent/guardian has made an application to the school for a place in the ASD class on behalf of a child, the Principal will undertake to communicate to the parent/guardian the decision of the Board of Management within two calendar weeks of the application deadline. The decision should be communicated to the parents in writing.

1. The parents of a child being offered a place in the ASD class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Continuum of Support (COS) Team and the Principal of the School. Any information requested by the parents will be provided at this meeting.
2. The parents may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's pre-school/ school/home setting to observe the child.
3. The parents / guardians will be invited on another occasion to come with their child to the class to meet with staff and see the classroom.
4. After placement in the class a relevant Individual Education Plan will be provided for the child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child and will be supported by a psychologist from the N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychology Service) team
5. The S.E.N.O. (Special Education Needs Officer) will also be made aware of the plan
6. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
7. A child may be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents of the child. It is important that every child gets the best possible start in the class. In order to achieve this, the duration of the child's day may vary depending on their needs.
8. Each child in the ASD class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes, when appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

The school reserves the right to review the child's progress from time to time, during or after each year to determine whether this is indeed an appropriate school placement for the child.

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 the child's **Individual Education Plan**. All pupils including pupils with special needs and pupils without special needs are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health & 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 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.

Refusal to Enrol and/or a Decision to Exclude

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/admission to any student where either –

1. The student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
2. The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it is an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made not to enrol the child and/or to exclude the child from the school.

This policy is subject to annual review by the Board of Management