



**NCSE Principal Workshop  
11<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Athlone EC**

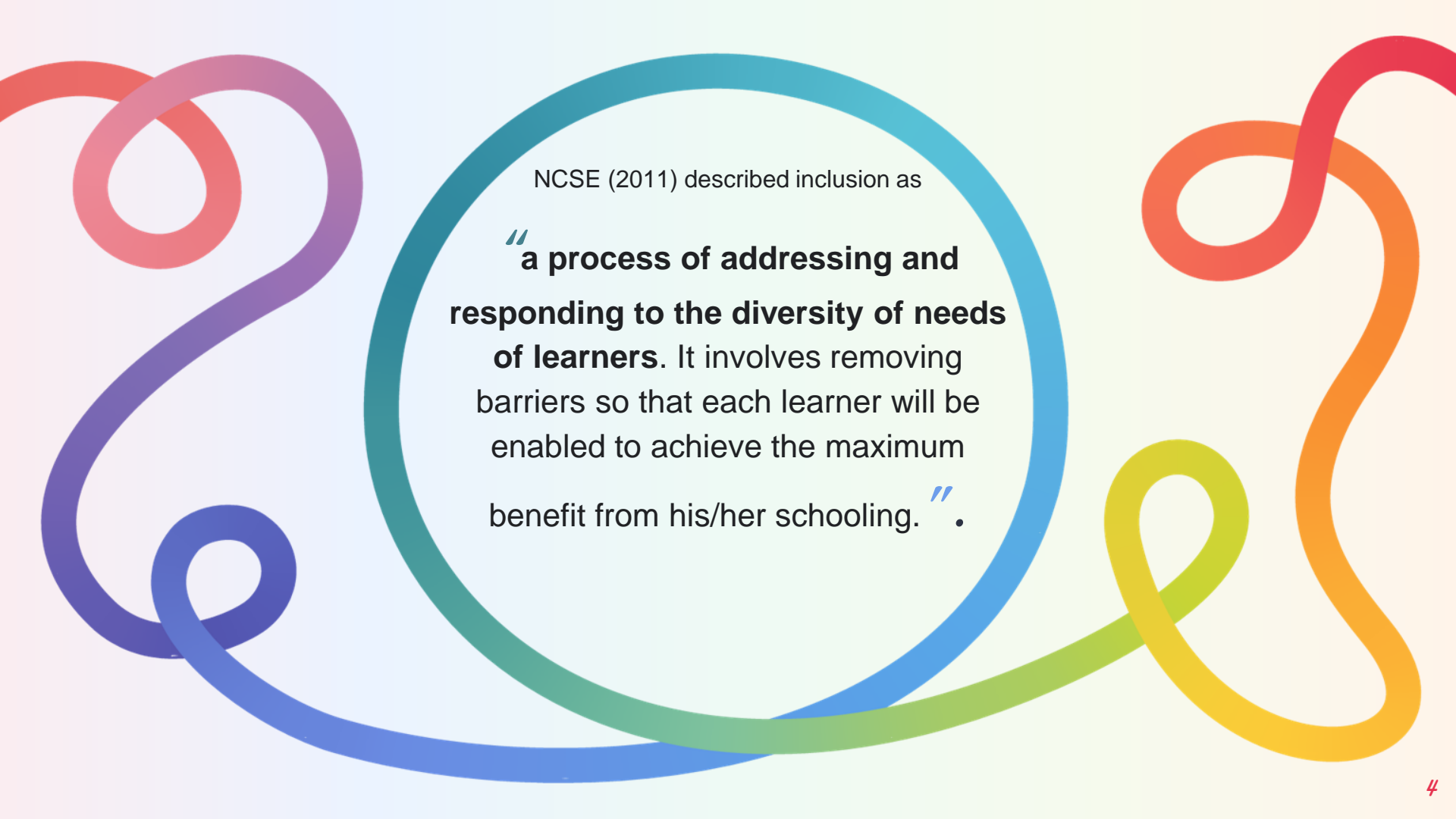


*Culture of:*  
*Inclusion*  
*Diversity*  
*Democracy*  
*Welcoming*  
*Team work*  
*Building*  
*Relationships*

# *Powerstown ETNS*

- 370 pupils
- 16 Mainstream Classes
- 4 Autism classes (2016, 2017, 2022 & 2023)
- 1 DLD Class (+1 new DLD class opening Sept 2025)
- 6 EAL Teachers & 6 SET Teachers
- 11 ANAs in 5 classes & 10 ANAs in mainstream
- 57 different languages & 64 different countries
- 8.5% prevalence of Autism & 13.8%+ Complex needs ( children attending HSE PCT & CDNT)



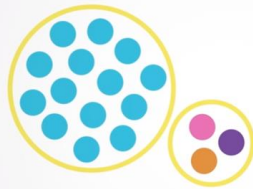


NCSE (2011) described inclusion as

**“a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners.** It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling.” .



Exclusion



Segregation



Integration



Inclusion





# *Unicef states*

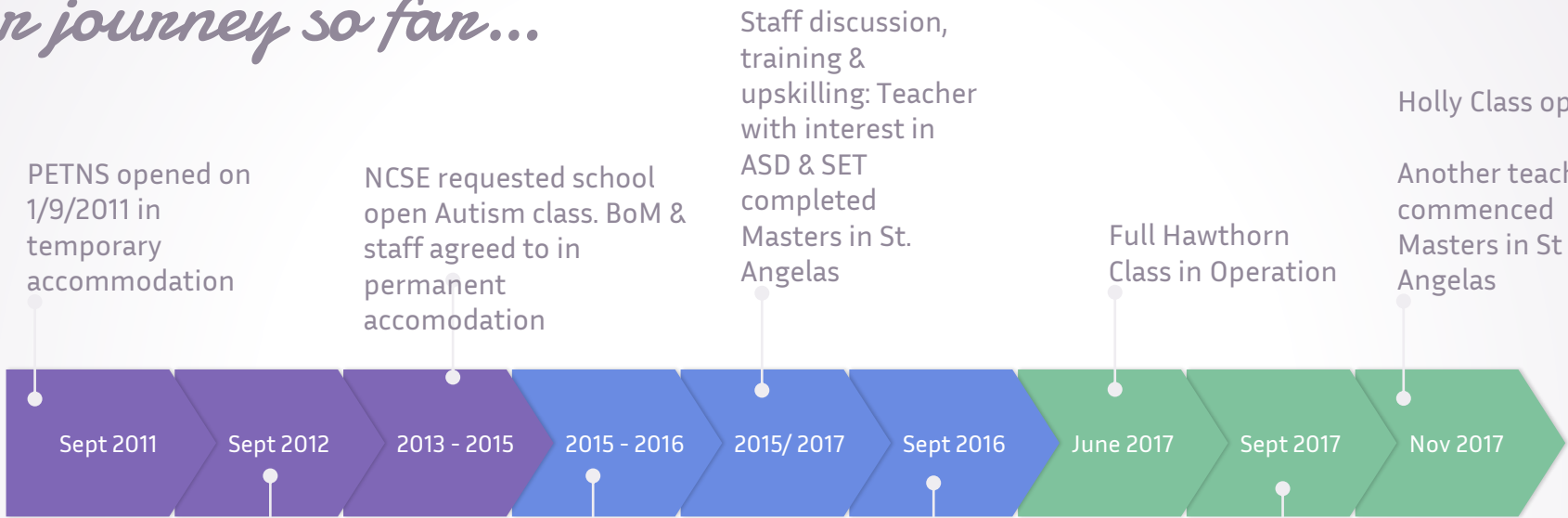
*“Inclusive education allows students of all backgrounds to learn and grow side by side, to the benefit of all.”*



# Powerstown ETNS



# Our journey so far...

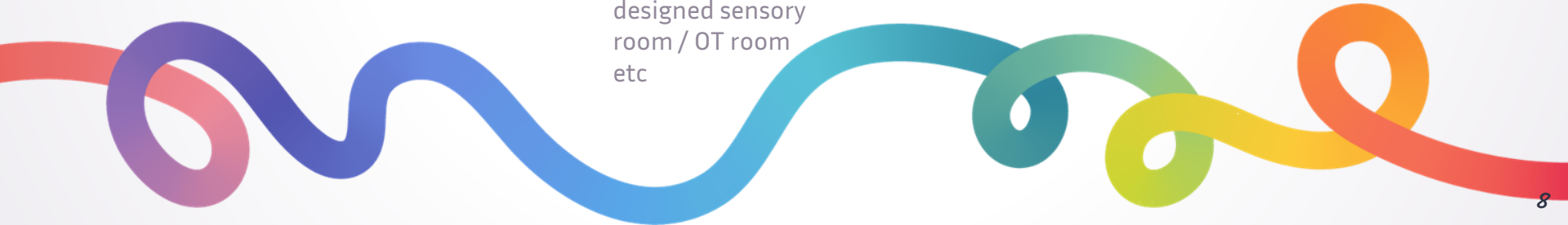


PETNS moved to new temporary accommodation

Engaged with builders re SNU, visited SNUs, designed sensory room / OT room etc

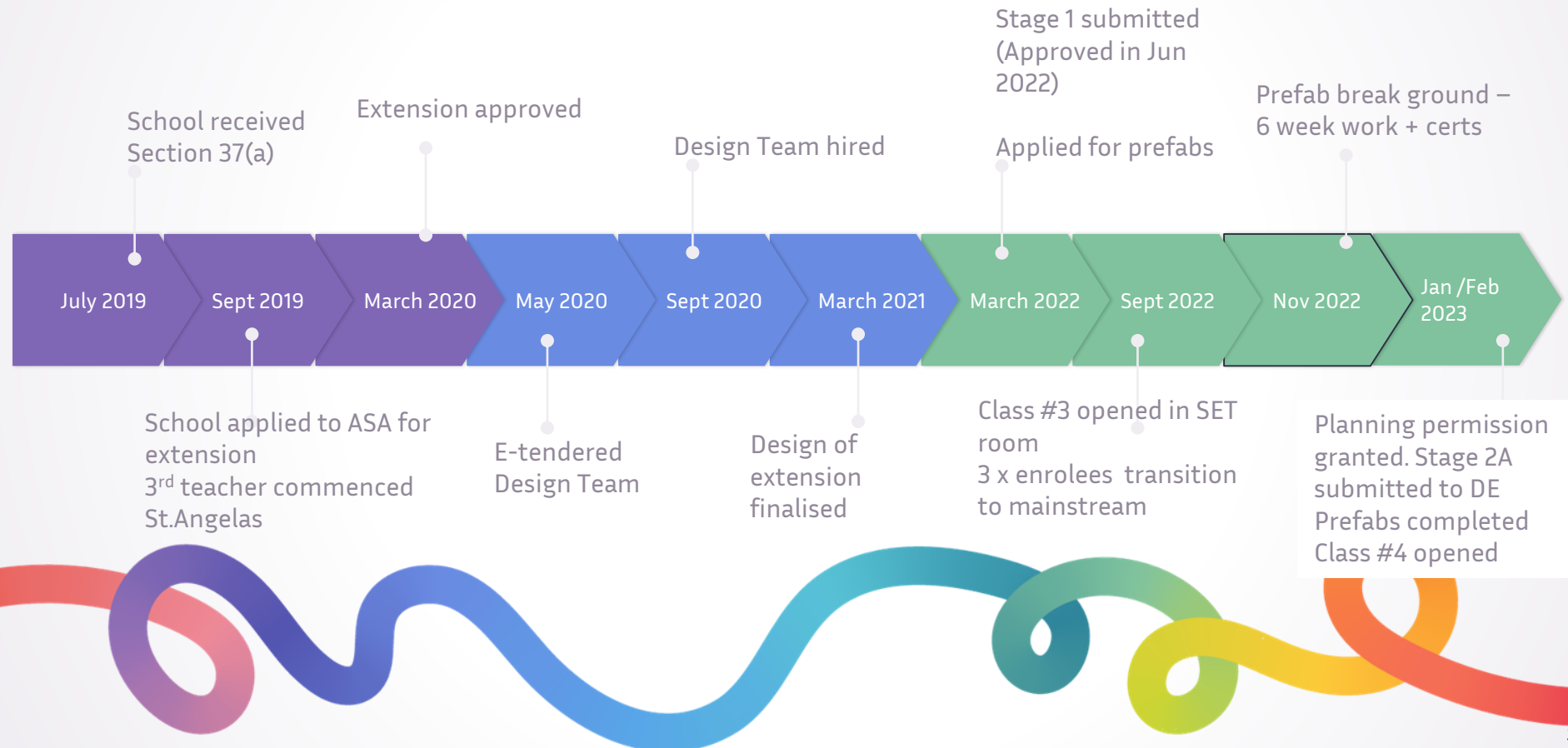
Opened ½ Hawthorn Class (current enrolees)

Birch class opened

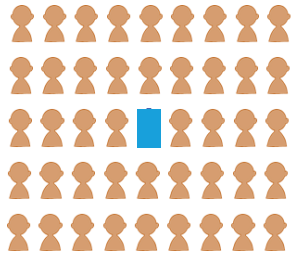




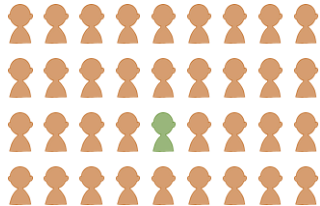
# Our journey so far...



# Autism in Ireland



One in 45 people are [Autistic](#) (18 – 84 year olds)  
This is more than 111,844 people in Ireland.



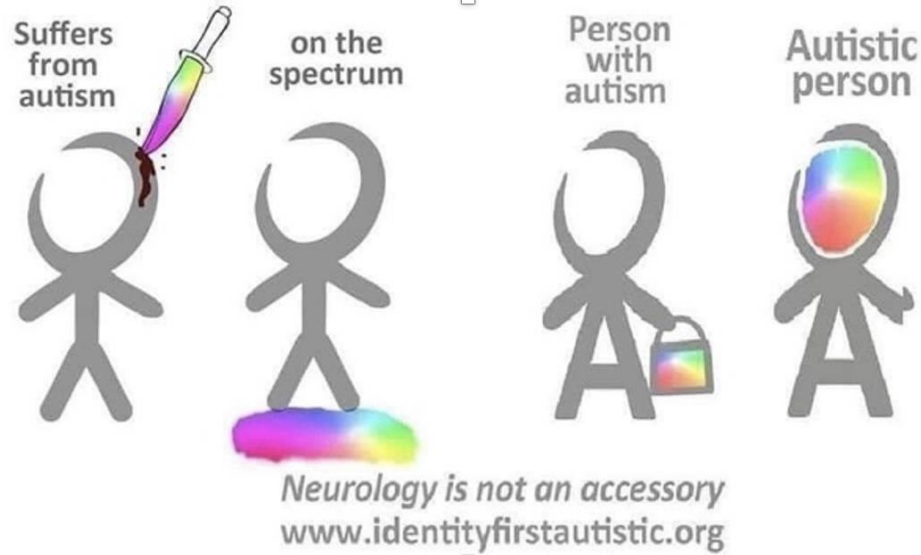
1 in 36 eight year olds have [autism](#)

# Identity First Language

- Within AsIAM, they have found that many within Ireland's autism community have indicated a preference for using **identity-first language** when talking about themselves and their condition. That is to say that they might refer to themselves as "autistic" instead of "I have," or "I'm living with autism."

- Aslam handout [here](#): Identity first language explained [here](#)

- If ever in doubt, it is always best practice to ask an autistic person how they would like to be referred to





## *Essential starting point: School Culture*

- Develop awareness of Autism and culture of **inclusion** e.g. Aslam & Middletown (awareness & acceptance shouldn't be assumed)



[www.littlepuddins.ie](http://www.littlepuddins.ie)

 Amanda  
Mc Guinness

*& then.....*

- Staff discussion & acceptance (both teachers and ANAs for Autism class and mainstream inclusion class(es))
- Upskilling opportunities
- Principal relationships with staff.



# The paperwork

1

## Admissions Policy & Selection

DE criteria, Local criteria, "exceptional circumstances" allowed by some patrons

2

## Recruitment & training (T & ANAs)

Can be in-house, but need relief staff. Consider how long staff might want to 'stay' in class  
2 classes easier than 1 - comaradrie & support

3

## NCSE: Special Class enrolment & bus transport

Download from website & send to parents with letter of offer (which invites them to a meeting).

4

## Transition programmes & prep

Individual face to face meeting with parents, discuss class, structure, transition programmes, child's strengths & parents targets for child

## *Bus Escorts*

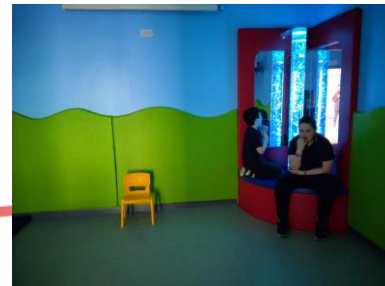
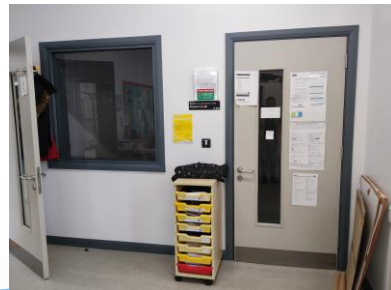
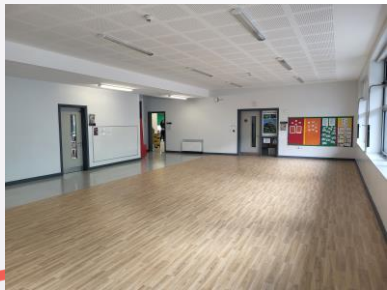
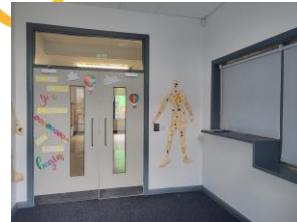
- Hire
- Contracts
- Training
- Set up on payroll
- Communication with staff and parents



# *The Building*





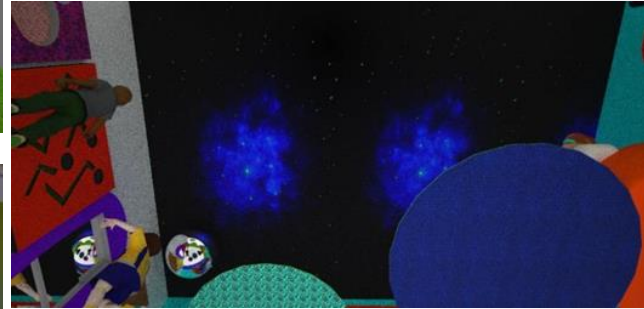


## *Infrastructure essentials*

- Appropriate areas - sensory room, quiet area, black out tents etc
- Appropriate furniture
- Storage space (ensure able to be out of sight)
- Phone / Walkie talkie
- High handles on the doors
- Magnetic locks
- Secure gates



# *Sensory Room Design - The Dream*



# Recommended Courses

- The 4 day introduction to autism
- The 2 day TEACCH course
- The 5 day TEACCH course
- The 2 day PECS training
- Introduction to LAMH
- 5 day contemporary ABA
- Intensive interaction/Floor time/SCERTS
- Autism Specific Assessment Training – ABBLS/VBMAPP/PEP3
- Accessing the curriculum for students with Autism - /Numeracy and Literacy
- Training in the management and behaviours of concern
- Social Skills training e.g. social stories, video modelling, comic strip conversations, peer tutoring
- Sensory integration training
- ELKLAN Language builders for autism
- Attention Autism
- ***CPI/MAPA, Studio 3 / Positive handling (paid for by school)\*\****





## *Recommended Teacher Preparation..*

Staff require lead in time to;

- attend training,
- shadow and gather recommendations from other Autism classes,
- furnish and set up classroom,
- gather resources and equipment,
- develop transition programmes,
- meet with parents,
- meet with pupils,
- Observe current education settings
- consult with professionals/clinicians,
- initiate individual education programmes

This time frame would also allow for allocation of bus services for pupils and permit the appointment of bus escorts.

# Transition Programme

## TRANSITION SCHEDULE

19 /5/21	Principal meets with parents
Week of 24th May	CHILD's NAME & mom to meet Hawthorn Staff at 2.15pm Date TBC with staff and mom
Week 1 31/5	1 hour per day, e.g. 9am - 10am  <i>Daily feedback on pupil's progress between parents and classroom staff. If the child is ready, move to Stage 2.</i>
Week 2 8/6	2 hours per day, e.g. 8.30 - 10.30am  <i>Daily feedback on pupil's progress between parents and classroom staff. If the child is ready, move to Stage 3.</i>
Week 3 14/6	Half day, e.g. 8.30 - 12pm  <i>Daily feedback on pupil's progress between parents and classroom staff. If the child is ready, move to Stage 4.</i>
Week 4 21/6	Full day, 8.30 - 2.10pm  <i>Daily feedback on pupil's progress between parents and classroom staff.</i>

## Transition Schedule Holly Class:

**October:** Individual meetings with children and their parents to visit classroom, take pictures, etc.  
Dates TBC.

**November:** Children gradually introduced to the class – gradually increasing days and gradually overlapping with other children

Week 1: November 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>	8.30 – 10.00: Child A & Child B 10.30 – 12.00: Child C & Child D 12.30 – 2.00: Child E & Child F
Week 2: November 13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup>	8.30 – 10.30: Child A, Child B, Child C 11.00 – 1.00: Child D, Child E, Child F
Week 3: November 20 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>	8.30 – 11.30: Child A, Child B, Child C 10.00 – 1.00: Child D, Child E, Child F  *1 and a half hour with 6 children
Week 4: November 27 <sup>th</sup> – December 1 <sup>st</sup>	8.30 – 12.00: All children

**December:** Review how each child is settling in and increase all children to a full day when ready.

# Transition Booklet



This is my school. It is called Powerstown Educate Together National School.

This is my new classroom. It is called the Hawthorn Class.



Here are some of the people I will work with in my new class.



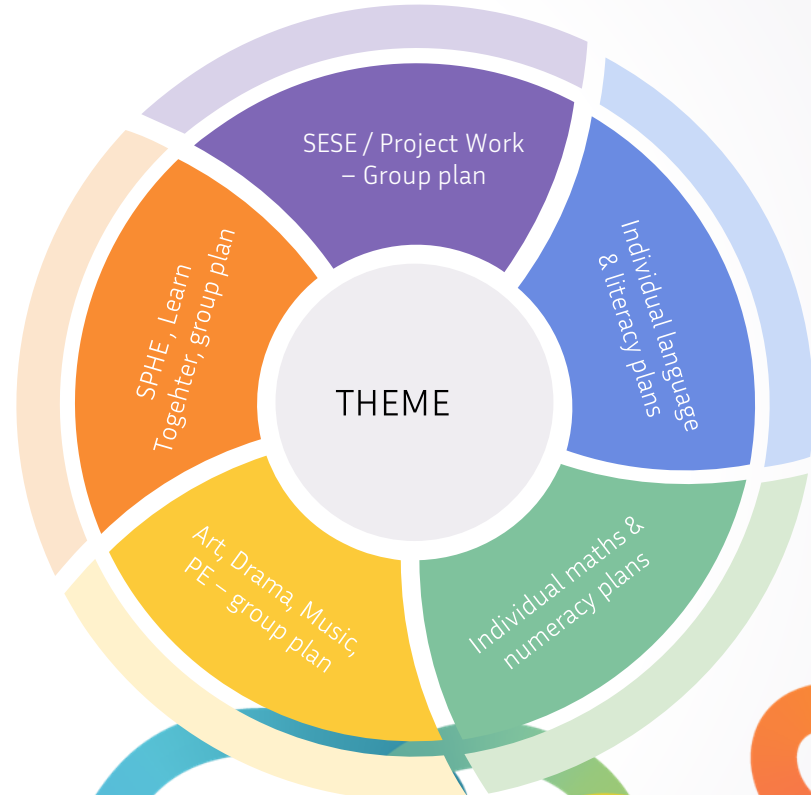
This is where I will hang my coat and put my lunchbox.



This is where I can do some of my table top work.

# Autism Class Planning

Try to link with inclusion class topic





#### Oral Language

- Vocabulary: Range of vocabulary relating to theme
- Attention Autism group work
- Sequencing events
- Matching and find the missing \_\_\_ games with topic vocabulary
- Whole class discussions – class news

#### Writing / Fine motor

- Craft activities related to themes
- Pincer grip – tweezers, pegs, pencil/crayon grip
- Making, writing thematic words
- Free writing/drawing with variety of materials
- Writing words - multisensory
- Writing – individual targets
- Writing – daffodils by William Wordsworth

#### Reading

- Exploration of library books
- Stories / Nursery rhymes – read and sequence words and pictures, match pictures to words, WH questions.
- Letters, phonics, vocabulary, etc - Individual targets
- PM Reading Stations

#### Maths Topics

- Maths work related to individual targets
- Time

## March

### Spring / Our Local Environment

#### SESE (Science, History, Geography)

- History of tyrellstown house
- Tyrellstown house in spring – what plants can we see?
- Exploration of environmental changes in springs
- Trees and plants around our schools

#### Physical Education: Aquatics

- Swimming every Friday in Coolmine
- Outdoor and adventure activities – spring treasure hunts

#### S.P.H.E. / Learn Together

- Getting Along
- Friends For Life
- Class discussion – how we feel at home / school
- Teamwork

#### Arts (Visual Arts, Music)

- Paint flowers
- Cherry Blossom trees – create with a range of materials
- Sticky panel flower collage
- When The Bees Died exploration and related activities

Class teacher: Gary & Sonia

Hawthorn/Holly Class Thematic plan: March 2022

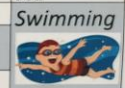
# Planning, Organising and Timetables

- Colour coded per child
- Organising 6 individual timetables and making them work as a class is tough!
- Organisation, planning, team meetings and reviews essential



Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20-10:00	Pamela/Sharon	Theresa	Sobhan		
10:20-11:40	Sobhan	Sharon	Theresa		
12:20-1:10	Theresa	Sobhan	Sharon		
1:10-2:10		Theresa			
8:20-10:00	Sobhan	Theresa	Pamela/Sharon		
10:20-11:40	Theresa	Sharon	Sobhan		
12:20-1:10	Sharon	Sobhan	Theresa		
1:10-2:10		Sobhan			
8:20-10:00	Sharon/Theresa	Theresa	Sobhan		
10:20-11:40	Sobhan	Sobhan	Sharon		
12:20-1:10	Sobhan	Sharon	Theresa		
1:10-2:10			Sharon		
8:20-10:00	Theresa	Pamela/Sharon	Sobhan		
10:20-11:40	Sobhan	Theresa	Sharon		
12:20-1:10	Sharon	Sobhan	Alice Maria		
1:10-2:10			Theresa		
8:20-10:00	Theresa	Sobhan			
10:20-11:40	Sharon	Alice Maria			
12:20-1:10	Sobhan	Sharon			
1:10-2:10					

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20-8:40	WASH HANDS	WASH HANDS	WASH HANDS	WASH HANDS	WASH HANDS
	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE
8:40-9:00	SCREEN GROUP	SCREEN GROUP	SCREEN GROUP	SCREEN GROUP	SCREEN GROUP
9:00-9:30	1:1 WORK	1:1 WORK	1:1 WORK	1:1 WORK	1:1 WORK
	Aistear Sobhan 1:1 Work	Aistear Sobhan 1:1 Work	Aistear Sobhan 1:1 Work	Aistear Sobhan 1:1 Work	Aistear Sobhan 1:1 Work
9:35-9:45	SENSORY ROOM	SENSORY ROOM	SENSORY ROOM	SENSORY ROOM	SENSORY ROOM
9:50-10:00	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard
10:00-10:20	WASH HANDS SNACK	WASH HANDS SNACK	WASH HANDS SNACK	WASH HANDS SNACK	WASH HANDS SNACK
10:20	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE	CHOICE
	MULTI P. AREA		MULTI P. AREA	FE HALL	
10:45	Work with... SEE TIMETABLE BELOW	10:30 Happy Hooves Equine Therapy 11:00 Work Station	Work with... Independent Work Station Choice	Work with... Independent Work Station Choice	
11:25	GROUP WORK	GROUP WORK	GROUP WORK	GROUP WORK	
11:40	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	Senior Infant Yard	
12:10	WASH HANDS LUNCH CHOICE	WASH HANDS LUNCH CHOICE	WASH HANDS LUNCH CHOICE	WASH HANDS LUNCH CHOICE	
12:30	Group	Group	Group	Group	Group
12:55	STORYTIME	STORYTIME	STORYTIME	STORYTIME	STORYTIME
1:10PM	HOMETIME	HOMETIME	HOMETIME	HOMETIME	HOMETIME
1:10-1:25 K	K=Independent Work K= Work with...	K=Independent Work K= Work with...	K=Independent Work K= Work with...	K=Independent Work K= Work with...	K=Independent Work K= Work with...
1:25PM					
1:40	OT Room	OT Room	OT Room	OT Room	OT Room
1:50-2:00	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice
2:00-2:10	HOMETIME ROUTINE	HOMETIME ROUTINE	HOMETIME ROUTINE	HOMETIME ROUTINE	HOMETIME ROUTINE



# *Inclusion & Reverse Inclusion*

Reverse inclusion is the process of including typically developing children in autism class.

- Art
- Cooking
- Table top activities



Inclusion activities

- Based on child's strengths
- Yard / Lunch time
- Arts / PE / Free writing
- Project work
- Core curriculum
- **Peer learning**
- **Inclusion / transfer plan**

## *2022/23: 3 children transitioned from Autism class to mainstream*

- Continuous opportunities for inclusion in mainstream activities (2018 – 2021)
- Lots of discussion with parents & children
- 2021/2022 school year: Included 80%-90% of school day
- ANA review in May 2022
- Training mainstream staff – ANA from class moved to mainstream
- Transition programme

### **2022/2023**

- Transition programme
- Detailed handover from autism staff to SET, SNA & CT
- Continue on bus
- Peer learning programme – developing friendships priority



# *Breaking down barriers*



- Organise for autism class teachers to observe children in mainstream - cover required by mainstream staff
- Mainstream staff to observe & support autism classes e.g. droichead observations, TP students in class encourage mainstream to spend some time in autism classes, SET cover / timetable for same, mainstream inclusion teachers to observe children in autism classes

# Communication with parents

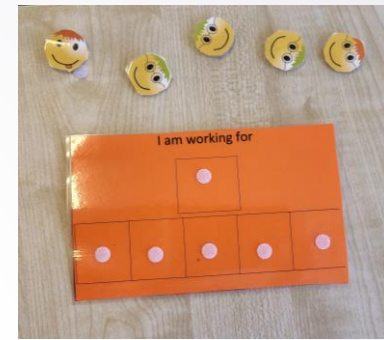
- Building relationship with parents, phone calls, face to face, coffee mornings
- Communication book / app e.g. Seesaw

The image displays three screenshots from the Seesaw app. The leftmost screenshot shows a classroom photo of several students sitting at a wooden table, working on papers. The middle screenshot shows the 'Hawthorn Class' teacher profile, featuring a green header with a plus sign and 'Add' button, and navigation tabs for 'Journal', 'Activities', 'Inbox', and 'Progress'. Below these are sections for 'Class Journal' (1579 posts) and individual student profiles. The rightmost screenshot shows a text post from a parent, starting with 'Hi Gary,' and describing a child's behavior: '...was a bit off today morning since he woke up. Lot of crying for no reason before the bus came in. Hope he's ok in the class.' The post is dated 'April 28, 2022, 8:35 AM' and includes a reply from 'Gary McDermott' stating: 'Absolutely fine in school so far anyway! Will keep an eye. He's been in great form this week though!'



# Classroom essentials

- Lanyards with important visuals
- Consistency of staff (including language used - keep it consistent)
- Bumbag with clicker/sand timers ESSENTIALS that are easily reachable
- Sand/digital timers
- First then charts
- Motivation and intrinsic rewards
- Sensory toys
- Token boards (I am working for)
- Preference assessments at the beginning of each term to see what are highly motivating reinforcers for children



# *Pupil cane*

- Start with child's strengths
- Develop child's interests
- Pupil voice
- Right to learn
- Safety
- Progress / Attainment
- SSP targets







## *Staff care*

- Time to settle in - don't rush into work - keep demands low apart from basic timetable demands (yard, snack etc)
- Safety, Behaviour, Communication, Ready to Learn, Academia
- Have everything ready - schedule pictures and resources
- Regular check ins (both team and with principal)
- Relief cards
- Being able to speak your mind
- Training
- Safety – risk assessments / supports for challenges / emergency plan
- Constantly reflect, evaluate, learn and adapt
- **Implement what child needs on their worst day, on their best days!**

# Emergency Plan

## **Safety Plan/Emergency Response**

If child engages in **extreme injurious behaviour** as described below or injures another child/staff member:

**PHONE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.**

### **Extreme Self-Injurious Behaviour**

1. Attempts to injure himself

### **Extreme Injurious Behaviour (to others)**

2. Attempts to injure / injures peer
3. Attempts to injure / injures staff

### **Role of Staff:**

- *Staff member 1:*  
Stay with child, remove any necessary and/or administer First Aid if needed
- *Staff member 2:*  
Phone School Office to notify parents, Ambulance/GP.
- *Staff member 3:*  
Remove other children from the classroom for their safety.

If there are *less than two* SNAs **Ring Emergency Bell IMMEDIATELY**

<b>Dial 9 for an outside line</b> <b>Ambulance: <u>112</u></b>	<b>Child's Name, Age, Parent Name &amp; contact number</b>	<b>Diagnosis:</b> Autism
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## **Information for GP/ Ambulance Service.**

**Explanation:** Explain Incident

**Phone No:** 01 8272018

**Location of incident:** Powerstown Road, Tyrrelstown, D15VR80

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Conscious:** Yes/No

**Breathing normally:** Yes/No

**Phone:** Parents' Names & contact details

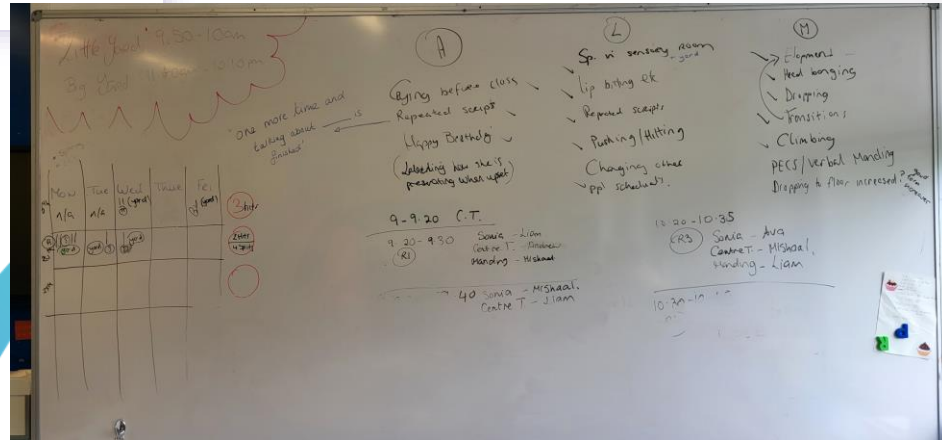
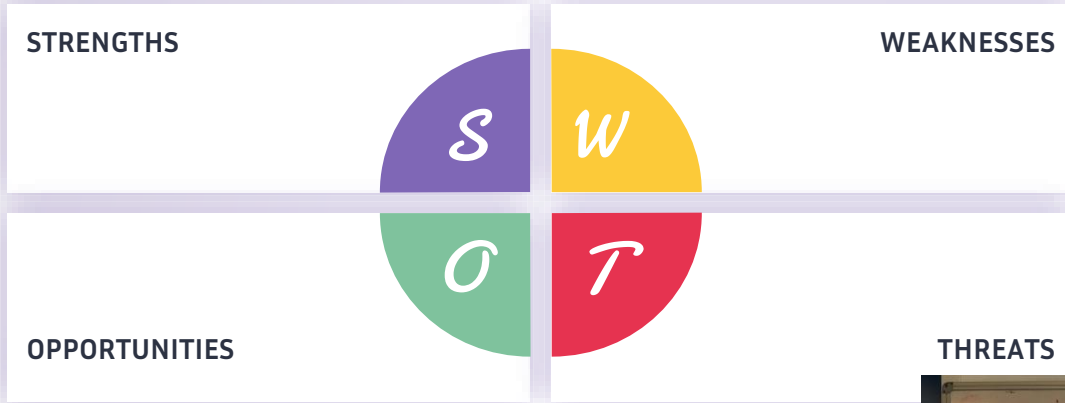
**G.P.:** Name & Contact Details

## *Sub cover*

- ANA & autism teachers are united as a team and involved in all planning, preparation, SSP, safety plans, timetables etc **together**
- Our ANAs strongly support the substitute teachers
- Substitutes are internal for Autism class – sub covers mainstream!



# Constructive Reflection e.g. SWOT Analysis



# Successes

- The Team
- School culture
- Every behaviour has a function
- Our first graduate
- Inclusion programme, peer learning & transition to mainstream
- Supporting our current pupils with new class
- Breaking down barriers
- Realistic expectations and using “obstacles” as a learning tool
- Spending Capitation + then some (equine therapy, swimming, CPD, OT, SLT)
- Asking for help - & getting it!



# Challenges

- Accessing multi-disciplinary supports for pupils
- Curriculum provision (new PLC didn't have pre-levels initially, RSE, stay safe curriculums etc)
- Challenging Behaviour– \*school based behaviour practitioner
- Breakdown of placements
- Management of staff & parent expectations
- Finalising planning paperwork / templates
- Staffing inclusion – if an ANA goes to mainstream 1 CT +1 ANA with ~5 children – but child won't manage in mainstream without ANA
- Different needs / differences with lots of contrasts – e.g. one child sings to regulate, others dislike noise. Need space to cater for all
- Adapting to change in schedule e.g. fire drill, visitor, staff absence

# *Supports*

- Colleagues including Principal & ISM
- Board of Management
- Local Community
- NCSE: SENO, Behaviour advisors, behaviour practitioner
- Local networks & principal groups
- Education Centres
- NEPS
- Community Disability Network Teams (CDNT)
- NABMSE
- Middletown Centre
- Aslam
- Garda Bus!



# The Team



Communication & relationships

Staff training and support

2 classes is easier than 1

Infants, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>. 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> & Admin DP



# *Holly & Hawthorn Class 2022*



*Let's review*





**Useful Resources:**

[Autism Good Guidance Practice for Schools \(2022\)](#)

[NCSE Guidelines for setting up & organising Special Classes \(2016\)](#)

[click here](#) for Department of Education Technical Guide for specialised accommodation for children with Special Educational Needs

EPSEN Act [click here](#)

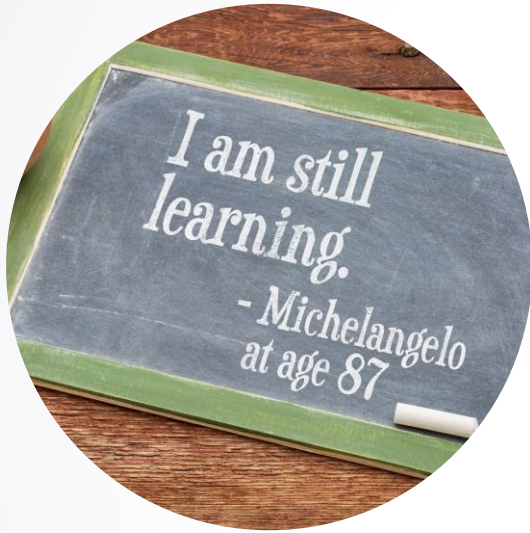
NCSE supporting pupils with Autism [click here](#)

NCSE Evaluation of Education for Autism, Daly [click here](#)

DoE - special class building [click here](#)

NCSE evaluation of special class provision 2014 McCoy [click here](#)

NCSE evaluation of special class provision 2016 [Banks](#)



# Thanks!

**Any questions?**

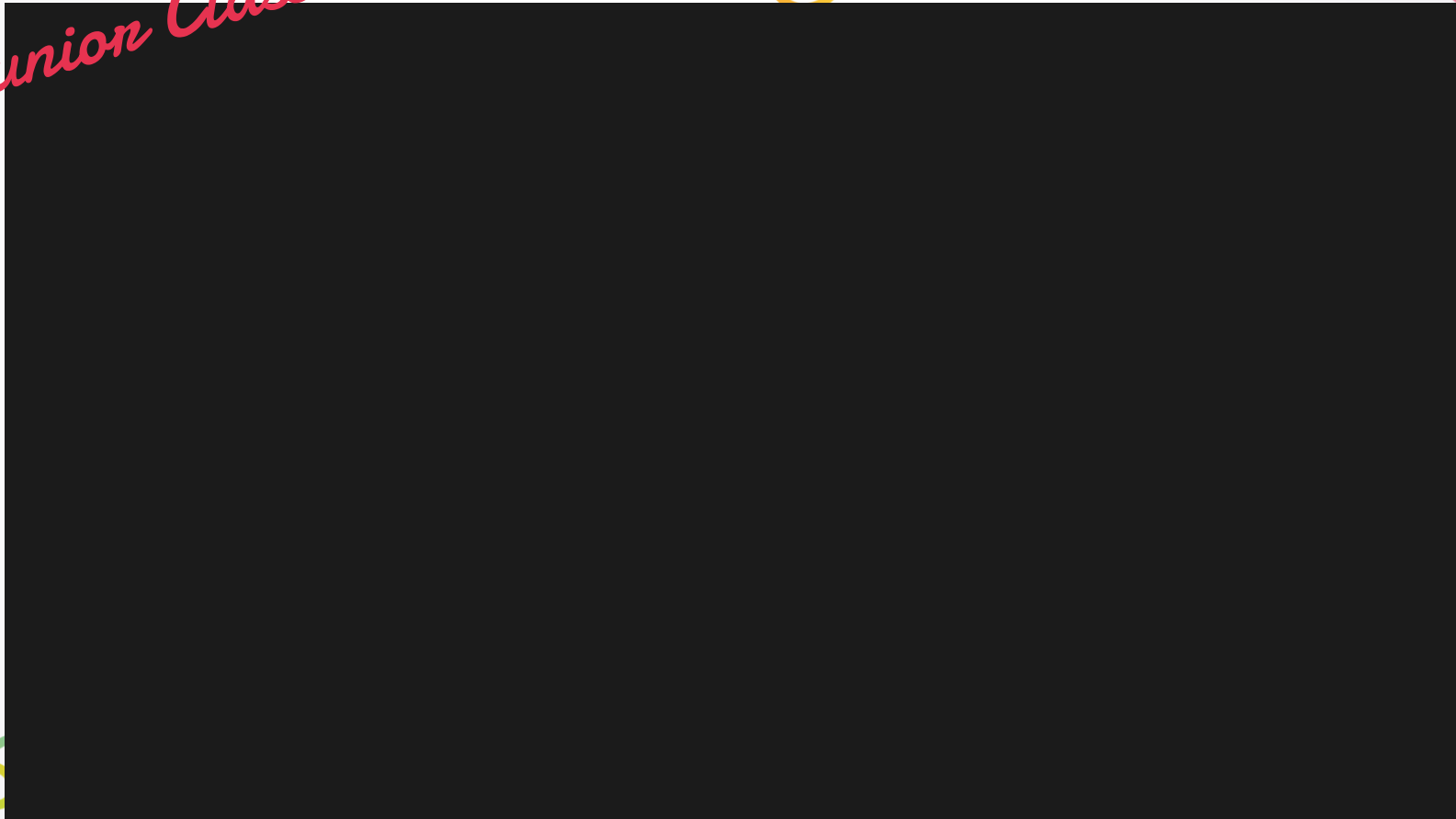
You can find me at:

- [principal@powerstownet.com](mailto:principal@powerstownet.com)
- Powerstown ETNS D15VR80





# *Our Junior Classes*



# Final thoughts...

## Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

## Equity



**Everyone gets the supports they need** (this is the concept of “affirmative action”), thus producing equity.

## Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

## Agency



Through equity, and social justice, each has the access they need to health and education to build wealth in order to **buy their own seat inside the stadium**.