



Admissions Policy for classes for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Summary of this Admissions Policy

ASD classes	A class for children with ASD will open in September 2020 with places for 6 children who meet the criteria as outlined in this policy.
Applications	Applications must be submitted on a school application form and submitted on or before 27th March 2020. This application does not guarantee a place.
Offer of places	An offer of a place will be made by the school within 21 days of the closing date. Where the number of applications is greater than the number of places, these places are offered based on the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Priority is given to current pupils attending mainstream in CSCNS with a diagnosis of ASD as set out above</i>2. <i>Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children currently attending Citywest and Saggart CNS (including step-siblings, resident at the same address if they meet the criteria in relation to diagnosis, age and ability to integrate into a mainstream class)</i>3. <i>Priority will be given to children with a diagnosis of ASD as outlined in the policy</i>
Teaching and learning in the ASD classes	The type of teaching and learning which will happen in these classes will aim to cater to the individual needs of the children in the class. The aim will be to provide for these needs as well as providing for a programme of integration into the mainstream classes.

Introduction

This policy has been drawn up by Principal Mike Byrne, staff and the Board of Management (BoM) following consultation with other CNS schools currently operating ASD classes. It was then discussed at staff level and ratified by management. This policy applies to all applicants to the ASD Classes. This policy is subject to review on an annual basis. Citywest and Saggart CNS operates an inclusive policy. The age range to be considered for enrolment is between 4 and 10 years of age – depending on whether a place becomes available. Citywest and Saggart CNS is dependent on grants and teaching resources provided by the DES and this policy shall have regard to these resources and funding.

Citywest and Saggart will be opening a class for pupils with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in September 2020. The children must have a recommendation that they should attend a specialist class in a mainstream school setting. There will be a maximum of six pupils in the class. This enrolment will be done on a phased basis to allow the children and staff to become aware of the needs of the class. For the most part, the SNAs are assigned to the class and not to individual children.

This policy is set out in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Disability Act 2002. The Board of Management and school management team trust that by doing so, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment. The Principal and the Chairperson of the BOM will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

General Information

Citywest & Saggart CNS operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education & Skills and follows the primary school curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The on-going internal monitoring by principal and staff will be supported by external evaluation by the Department of Education & Skills Inspectorate.

Citywest & Saggart CNS is a co-educational, multi-denominational primary school which is under the patronage of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The school aims to promote the full development of all aspects of the child: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. Citywest & Saggart CNS seeks to provide a high standard of education where each child is supported to reach his/her personal potential. The school is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality and harmony where each child and member of the school community is valued and treated with respect.

It is the policy of Citywest & Saggart CNS to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. Children attending Citywest & Saggart CNS will be taught and encouraged to view diversity as something which reflects the community from which the children are drawn. The school will endeavour to encourage the children committed to its care to have pride in what makes them different and a belief that difference, when respected and valued, gives strength and vibrancy to the whole school community and the wider community in which they live. Children in Citywest & Saggart CNS are taught from Junior Infants about the rights of every citizen in Ireland to equality, regardless of their gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, family status, civil status, membership of the travelling community and/or disability (nine grounds on which it is illegal to discriminate under the Equality Status Act 2004).

As part of its ethos, Citywest & Saggart CNS welcomes children from all faiths and beliefs.

Citywest & Saggart CNS opened in September 2012. The school is currently in temporary accommodation. Planning permission was confirmed in November 2016 at a location in Cooldown Commons which is across the road from our current premises. The building is almost complete.

Citywest & Saggart CNS currently caters for Junior Infants up to 6th class.

The BOM will be committed to the successful implementation of relevant legislation, in particular, the Education Act, (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000) and the Child Protection Procedures outlined in Circular 0081/2017. The Board will fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

This admissions policy will be subject to regular review and possible change.

Classes commence at 8.50 a.m. and finish at 1.30 p.m. for infants and 2.30 p.m. from First Class onwards.

The Vision of our class for children with ASD

The vision of these classes is to provide a nurturing environment for these children. It aims to provide a stimulating, caring and welcoming environment, where each child is valued and respected. The class will offer a curriculum which will endeavour to meet the needs of the individual child and provide them with the necessary skills to live as independent a life as is possible for them.

This class will offer a safe and secure environment away from the distractions of a busy school but also will provide opportunities for the integration into mainstream classes in order to develop friendships and important social skills with their peers.

The holistic development of the child is of utmost importance. Whether it be academic, social or otherwise, the needs of the child will be bridged through a child-centred and active way of teaching.

Students attending our classes for children with ASD are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-advocacy and self-discipline. The school plays an active role in promoting these qualities. Through direct intervention and by adult example students are encouraged to develop an awareness and respect for each other, the staff and their surroundings.

Rationale

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements;
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater to the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it and;
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school.

Legal Framework

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that "A recognized school shallSubject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school".

Section 15 (2) (d) states the BOM shall “publish The policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure those policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice are respected”.

Section 27 (1) states that “A Board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school” and (2) that “the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers”.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Section 19 (1)] requires that a BOM shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school’s Admission/Enrolment Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the BOM, shall as soon as possible (but no later than 21 days) after receiving such information “make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof”.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community” regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values [Section 7 (3)].

Approaches to teaching and learning in our classes

The school will be cognisant of current theories and methods of teaching. Pupils with autism generally display significant difficulties within the ‘Triad of Impairment’ which is at the heart of autism. These impairments relate to:

- difficulties in language and communication,
- social relationships, and
- rigid patterns of behaviour/thought/interests.

These difficulties can form major barriers to learning. Our role is to help our pupils develop skills to overcome some of these barriers.

A modified curriculum will be the guiding education programme with additional emphasis on:

- behavioural management
- the development of adaptive and independence skills
- social and communication skills

In order for the teacher to develop individualised educational plans, a period of observation and baseline assessment will be necessary.

Code of Behaviour

The school has a code of positive behaviour which will apply to these classes. However, there is scope for greater flexibility for children with additional needs. Suspension and expulsion would be last resorts when dealing with behaviours. The emphasis will be on finding the root cause of the behaviours and develop strategies to prevent this from occurring again.

Staffing procedures and available places in our ASD class

In accordance with the regulations as set down by the Department of Education and Skills, there are six places available for pupils with ASD who fit the criteria for placement in our class for children with ASD. The school will be allocated to one teacher and two SNAs to facilitate teaching and learning and meeting the children's care needs. Should a child who is currently attending the class leave the school or should a child be ready to transfer into the mainstream, places may become available.

Initially, any new child attending the class will attend on a phased-in basis and on a reduced day. The organisation of this phased approach will be at the discretion of the principal after consultation with the staff. This is to help children settle into their new environment and familiarise themselves with their surroundings and the other pupils and staff members. It is very important that we try to ensure this initial settling in period will be a positive experience for all involved.

Meeting with parents and children

Meetings will be held with parents and children following admission to the ASD class to discuss the individual needs of the child. Permission will be sought from parents to visit the child's pre-school/ school placement with a view to speaking to staff members about the child's needs, academic / social-development and capabilities. If it is considered from these meetings and conversations that the school can successfully address the child's needs (and the child is capable of meaningful integration both in the specialist and the mainstream classroom) then the child and family will be invited to the school to become accustomed to the school and meet with staff. The purpose of all these meetings and conversations is:

- to inform the decision as to whether or not the class in CSCNS is an appropriate placement for the child
- and to facilitate a smooth transition into school if accepted.

Criteria for Enrolment

1. Each child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder using the **DSM-IV/5 or ICD 10 criteria as set out by a professional/individual approved by the Department of Education and Skills and a Multi-Disciplinary assessment report**. This report must be current.
2. A recommendation that a specialist ASD class placement from a competent professional is best suited to the child's needs must be clearly stated in the child's psychological assessment.
3. As inclusion is an integral part of our school ethos, it is a necessary criterion of enrolment that any child attending the class must be capable of integrating into a mainstream classroom setting. The level of integration, duration and timing will be decided upon by the principal and staff in consultation with the mainstream teacher, external advice and the parents of the child in question. Information will be shared and discussed with all parties at the support plan meetings.
4. A fully completed application form must be filled in by the parents and any relevant reports must be submitted to the school.
5. The completion of an application form does not constitute an offer of a place.
6. The child must be age-appropriate for the ASD class to which they are applying.

The closing date for applications for the 2020/2021 school year is the 27th March 2020. Applicants applying after this date will be placed on a waiting list and will only be considered when all other applications have been processed.

If the number of children who satisfy the above criteria (1-6), exceeds the number of places available; the following additional criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment. Prioritisation will follow the sequence indicated in the three additional criteria below.

Additional Criteria

4. *Priority is given to current pupils attending mainstream in CSCNS with a diagnosis of ASD as set out above*
5. *Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children currently attending Citywest and Saggart CNS (including step-siblings, resident at the same address if they meet the criteria in relation to diagnosis, age and ability to integrate into a mainstream class)*
6. *Priority will be given to children with a diagnosis of ASD as outlined above*

All unsuccessful applicants who meet the criteria for enrolment will be placed on a waiting list. Priority on the waiting list will be decided in accordance with the date of application. Families, whose children are on the waiting list for the current school year, must make a new application for the following school year if they wish their child to be considered for a place in that year.

All unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 providing the class has not reached its full capacity.

Registration Procedure for All Classes

All applications for places should be received by 27th March 2020. These will be responded to within 21 days of the closing date for the submission of applications. Applications for places made after this date will only be considered when the initial waiting list is cleared.

An original birth certificate will need to be provided to the school along with a psychological report recommending this placement in an ASD class attached to a mainstream school (A current and relevant report). This will be photocopied and the original will be returned.

Completed enrolment forms should be sent to:

*ASD Class Admissions,
Citywest & Saggart Community National School,
Fortunestown Lane,
Citywest,
Dublin 24.
Telephone: 014133080*

Registration alone does not guarantee a place in the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the BOM in accordance with the enrolment policy. Application forms will only be accepted from 1st September, the year prior to enrolment.

Return of Forms of Acceptance

Letters of an offer for places for the ASD class will be made by post at the beginning of April 2020 prior to commencement of the new academic year. All other letters of offer will be sent as places become available. All completed acceptance forms must be returned to the address shown above, within two weeks of the letter of offer. The exact date will be stated in the offer letter. It is the duty of parents to ensure that, by that date, the school has received:

1. A fully completed acceptance form
2. All other documents sent along with acceptance form which request a signature

If the school does not receive the fully completed documentation by the nominated date, the Board will assume that the place is not being accepted and the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

Waiting List

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing by post that they have been placed on a waiting list. The application alone does not guarantee a place in the school. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board in accordance with school policy. All unsuccessful applicants have a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

If a place is not offered for the class applied for, parents who wish to remain on a waiting list for the following school year must reapply by the 1st June. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure this application is made in time; otherwise, the child's name will be removed from the waiting list. In the case of reapplication, the date of the original application will be used to allocate places.

Evaluation

The Board will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the policy and review and amend the policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon

- Effective management placed on the application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Applicants informed in good time regarding the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
- Positive parental feedback

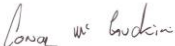

Monitoring Procedures

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the principal for consideration by the full staff at the same time. The principal will report to the

BOM regarding the process of enrolment in December each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete.

Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. Any staff member, Board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. This policy will be reviewed next in March 2020.

This policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management	
Signed:  Chairperson	Signed:  Principal
Date: 12.12.19	Date: 12.12.19