



## AUTISM CLASS ENROLMENT POLICY

*(Updated in line with Circular 0039/2025)*

### Introduction

The Board of Management of Carrigeen NS has set out this policy in accordance with the provisions of:

- the Education Act 1998
- the Education Welfare Act 2000
- the Equal Status Act 2000
- the Disabilities Act 2002
- the Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004
- **Department of Education Circular 0039/2025**

The BOM trusts that this policy will assist parents/guardians, Principal and BOM.

### School Context

Carrigeen NS is a mainstream co-educational primary school which caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th Class. We have a Catholic ethos and operate under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory.

In 2021, the BOM, in conjunction with the Principal and staff, decided to establish a special class for children with a diagnosis of autism. The decision was made to provide an education in a mainstream setting for children who have an autism diagnosis and who fulfil the enrolment criteria.

The maximum class size per autism class is six pupils, supported by one teacher and two special needs assistants. The second SNA will only be assigned upon the enrolment of a fourth student.

In December 2024, our school received approval for a second autism class, which will open in September 2025. This second class will operate under the same structure as the first autism class, ensuring a high level of support for pupils. Both autism classes will be funded and resourced by the Department of Education.

### Aims

- To offer an autism-specific learning environment within a mainstream setting.
- To provide a positive, meaningful educational experience in our autism classes, allowing pupils to develop to their full potential.



## Carrigeen NS

[www.carrigeenns.com](http://www.carrigeenns.com)

**'Promoting full personal, moral and social development in caring Christian communities of learning and teaching.'**

- To create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil.
- To provide a broad curriculum that focuses on the abilities, strengths, interests and needs of each pupil.
- To facilitate optimum inclusion in mainstream education where appropriate, taking into account levels of learning needs, resources, and suitability for such inclusion.
- To prepare each pupil for life, emphasising communication, daily living skills, socialisation, and literacy skills.
- To recognise and value the role of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their child.

## *Enrolment Criteria*

Enrolment in our autism class will be considered where it has been demonstrated that a pupil requires the support of a special class because they are unable to learn effectively in a mainstream class for most or all of the school day, even with appropriate supports.

**To access a place in our autism class, the following documentation must be submitted:**

- **A psychological report from a relevant professional or multidisciplinary team confirming:**
  - **A primary diagnosis of Autism (DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11)**
  - **The complexity of the pupil's needs**
  - **A clear professional recommendation and rationale for placement in a special class**
- **An eligibility letter issued by the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) confirming that the pupil meets the Department of Education's criteria for enrolment in a special class**

**The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if the above criteria are not met or if the school determines that it cannot meet the needs of a particular child.**

## *Enrolment Procedure*

- Applications will be taken in line with our school's annual admissions notice and general enrolment procedures.
- **Parents/guardians are required to notify the NCSE via the parents notify process by 1st October of the preceding school year, where a special class or special school place is required.**
- **Parents of prospective applicants should request the SENO's contact information from the school if required.**
- Applications must include all supporting documentation outlined above.
- All applications will be acknowledged, dated, and numbered in the order of receipt.
- After the closing date, the Admissions Team (Principal, member of ISM team, and SET teacher) will review applications. Advice may be sought from our SENO or other relevant professionals.
- The Admissions Team will determine the suitability of each application and make recommendations to the BOM, who will ratify successful applicants.
- Written notification will issue to all applicants regarding the outcome.
- Successful applicants will be issued an Acceptance Form, to be signed and returned by the stated deadline.
- Unsuccessful candidates will be placed on a waiting list for one year only.



**! Note on mainstream pupils:**

**If a pupil already enrolled in mainstream at Carrigeen NS requires a special class placement, they may apply during the designated enrolment period and will be considered along with all other applicants. They must meet the same eligibility requirements and cannot be prioritised over other applicants who submitted on time and are on the waiting list.**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the school and its students effectively.

## *Excess Applications*

Where applications exceed available places, the following decision-making criteria apply in a fair and transparent manner:

1. The child is already a pupil in the school (mainstream), provided they apply on time and meet the special class criteria.
2. The child has a sibling currently enrolled in Carrigeen NS.
3. Children residing in the townland of Carrigeen.
4. Children residing in the greater parish of Mooncoin.
5. Children of staff members.
6. Children whose parents/guardians are past pupils.
7. Applicants from outside the parish – prioritised by proximity to school (Eircode/Google Maps).
8. Date of application (only considered for late applications).

## *Review*

Pupils' placements in the autism class will be reviewed annually. This review will:

- Evaluate the child's progress and continuing needs;
- Involve consultation with parents/guardians, staff, and external professionals;
- Assess the continued suitability of a special class placement or the potential for transition to mainstream or another setting (e.g., special school).
- Following a decision that the autism class is no longer the most appropriate place for a pupil, they may move to a mainstream class in our school if that is recommended.

## *Discharge*

The autism class caters for pupils aged 4–13 years. Pupils will normally be discharged:

- At the end of the academic year in which they turn 12, or
- If they are fully integrated into the mainstream setting, or
- Following a determination (after one year or a formal review) that the placement is no longer appropriate.



## *Right of Appeal*

Parents/guardians may appeal a decision to refuse admission under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The appeal should be made to:

**The General Secretary, Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1**, using the official appeals form. The school must be notified in writing if an appeal is being pursued.

## *Review and Ratification*

This policy will be reviewed regularly in light of Departmental circulars and changes to legislation. It was reviewed in July 2025 in accordance with Circular 0039/2025.

Signed:

Date:

Chairperson