



ATHENRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Acting Principal: Cathriona Cronin

Application Procedure for Special Class for Autism

Our Special Class caters for 6 pupils. It is an essential requirement that all pupils to be enrolled in the Special Class have a diagnosis of Autism/ASD with complex needs, without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM IV / V or ICD 10 / 11 and a letter of recommendation that a placement in an Autism special class attached to a mainstream school is appropriate. A report from a registered psychologist is required as evidence of this. Furthermore, a letter of eligibility from the NCSE is required confirming that the child meets the requirements for enrolment to the special class setting.

1. Application Process

- Applications for enrolment in the Special Class are available from the office or on the school website www.athenryprimaryschool.ie
- The completed application form along with relevant reports is sent to the Chairperson of the Board or the Principal by February 2nd 2026
- Applications are accepted from parents or guardians only
- On receipt of the application form, the pupil's details are recorded on an Application List. This is done in date order and according to the criteria outlined below (Section 3 & 4) pending consideration for enrolment by Admissions Team
- The completion of an application form and the placement of your child's name on any list do not confer an automatic right for a place in the school.

2. Documentation Required

- A completed application form as outlined above
- A recent psychological report or a report from a multi-disciplinary team or psychiatrist. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. The report must be dated no more than 18 months prior to the proposed admission date. (Parents may be asked to furnish further up-to-date reports).

- A letter of eligibility from the NCSE: Parents or Guardians must obtain a letter from the NCSE confirming that their child meets the eligibility criteria for enrolment in an Autism Class. This letter must be submitted with the child's application to the school.
- Original birth certificate (a copy will be made and the original returned)
- If applicable: A medical report which discloses all pre-existing medical conditions.

3. Eligibility for Admission to Special Class

- To be eligible for admission to the Autism class, a child must have
 - a diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report) AND
 - A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need(s) evidenced in the professional reports AND
 - Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs along with the rationale for same AND
 - A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism
- The pupil meets the criteria for selection as outlined in Section 4 below

4. Enrolment Criteria

- Category 1: Applications from existing pupils in the mainstream school who may need to transfer into the Autism Special class
- Category 2: Applications from children who have siblings enrolled in the Autism Special class
- Category 3: Applications from children who have siblings enrolled in the mainstream school.
- Category 4: Children who are 4 years of age on or before the 31st of March in the year of admission, who are resident within the boundary of Athenry town, on the first day of the first term in Junior Infants
- Category 5: Applications from children whose parents are past pupils of the school
- Category 6: Children of staff members who are 4 years of age on or before the 31st of March in the year of admission
- Category 7: Children of families who are residing outside the boundary of Athenry town, and are 4 years of age on or before 31st of March in the year of enrolment
- Category 8: Late applicants and applicants who are late for the online submission stage or whose documentation (birth cert, proof of address, assessment reports) was submitted after Formal Registration stage (see Annual Admission Notice)

Please note the following:

- The Admissions Team will meet within two working weeks of the closing date for applications and will communicate its decision to the Board of Management. Offers of enrolment will be sent within 21 days in accordance with the Education Welfare

Act 2000. Parents are requested to accept the place offered in writing within 7 days of the date of the offer of enrolment

- The Board will be guided by the principles of natural justice and will be reasonable, fair and transparent
- The closing date for applications is Feb 2nd, 2026

5. Waiting List

- In the event that more applications are received than there are available places a 'Waiting List' will be drawn up for the remainder of the year. This list will follow the enrolment criteria as set out in section 4 above. The pupil's name will be added to the list according to the relevant criteria in date order of application. The pupil in Category 1 is offered a place first and so on down to Category 8. Please note that places offered cannot be held from year to year. If a place is offered and refused, the offer is invalidated and a new application must be made for future placement.

6. Refusal to Enrol

- Parents will be informed in writing of the reason enrolment has been refused and of their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Appeals may be made on the Appeals Application Form available from the school on request within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents. The form is also available on the DES website at www.education.ie

7. Placement Review

- Pupils in the special classes for Autism will have their placement and progress formally reviewed at least once a year. The review will look at:
 - The pupil's progress (academic, social, emotional, behavioural)
 - Updated learning goals and targets
 - Supports and resources needed
 - Whether increased inclusion or a different placement should be considered