



ST. MARY'S KNOCKBEG COLLEGE

ASD CLASS POLICY

Introduction:

'Autism is a neurological condition characterised by differences in how a person interacts with the world around them' (Asiam.ie). The ASD Class attempts to enable all students with ASD to belong to an educational community without prejudice and within which individual difference is celebrated.

The class reflects the inclusive ethos of Knockbeg College and wherever possible the students in the ASD Class are integrated within the mainstream school.

Mission Statement of Knockbeg College

Our school exists to provide a balanced and holistic education for each of our students. Our aim is to enable and empower students acquire the self-confidence, academic qualifications, life skills and attitudes for leading satisfying lives which should contribute to the betterment of the church and society.

We regard ourselves as a Christian community where the values of the gospel find daily expression in our catholic ethos and all our policies and practices as we nourish a spirituality of compassion, justice and forgiveness.

Core Belief:

The purpose of the ASD class is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with ASD. We aim to empower our students to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the best of their ability, in an inclusive way in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Aims and Objectives of our ASD Class:

- To provide a whole school response to the needs of students with ASD within the overall ethos of the school.
- To provide a safe, nurturing and happy environment in which students are guided and supported.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College School Development Planning

- To provide a predictable and consistent environment where students' needs are implicitly understood and met.
- To facilitate every aspect of the student's education from his transfer from primary school to his transition to college/work upon completion of his education at Knockbeg College.
- To identify any difficulty that students with ASD are experiencing as early and as thoroughly as possible.
- To encourage parental co-operation and involvement and to keep parents/guardians regularly informed of progress.
- To work in partnership with parents/ guardians, students, the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and other outside professionals.
- To set achievable and manageable targets for students attending the ASD Class.
- To employ a variety of resources, equipment and teaching strategies to enable differentiation in the approach to the curriculum.
- To provide access to an extended curriculum whereby students are taught in the areas of social skills and life skills training and stress management strategies.
- To provide access to the alternative Level 2 curriculum for students who meet the criteria.
- To attempt to meet the sensory needs of students in ASD Class by providing access to sensory and sensory integration rooms.
- To promote and encourage the integration of all students in the ASD Class within the mainstream school.

Admission to the ASD Special Classes

The special class for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been developed with the co-operation and support of the NCSE and DoE. The classes can accommodate a maximum of 6 students (boys) each who have a diagnosis of ASD.

- DoE policy dictates that all ability levels should be catered for within the ASD Class. The Board of Management supports such a policy unless the nature and degree of the needs of the student are such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated. Students with severe behavioural difficulties will not be enrolled.
- Parents who wish to enrol their son into the ASD Class should consult the Annual Admissions Notice under the policies section of the school website.
- Parents may be requested to attend an interview with the Principal and must provide all relevant documents pertaining to their child's diagnosis and to their previous schooling/ education. The diagnosis must be in accordance with the DSM V or ICD 10 for resourcing. Documentation must also state the requirement for a 'special class placement' (NCSE requirements)

- Where a report outlining the student's care or educational needs is deemed inadequate or out of date, the Principal/Board of Management may insist that the family obtain an up to date educational and/or psychological report.
- Places within the ASD Class are limited to 12. In the event of over subscription, the criteria outlined in the school's admissions policy will apply.
- Participation in the ASD Class will be subject to ongoing review.
- Transfer from other second level schools to the ASD Class will be in line with the requirements of the Knockbeg admissions policy and applicants also satisfying the criteria for ASD Class.
- Decision to enrol a student in the ASD Class will be made by the Board of Management. Any appeal of this decision must follow the process outlined in the school's admission policy.
- Students who are enrolled in this class will follow an appropriate Junior Cycle Programme (Level 2, Level 3 or a combination of both) and may follow a Transition Year, Leaving 1 and Leaving 2 programmes as appropriate. Students will be registered with the relevant year group.

Assessment:

The nature and extent of the student's ASD diagnosis is evaluated to determine the services which the student needs so as to be able to reach his potential and fully participate in and benefit from education.

It may also include:

- Screening tests in literacy and numeracy for all incoming First Year students and other students, if appropriate.
- Diagnostic and informal testing to clarify and identify the exact areas of strength and need.

*All testing is subject to the consent of parents/ guardians.

*Definitive conclusions will not be drawn from these tests. They are, however, used as part of a multifaceted assessment involving:

(a) Information from primary schools- consultation with class teacher, learning support teacher/ resource teacher in the feeder primary schools.

(b) Consultation with parents/ guardians.

(c) Consultation, where appropriate, with students with ASD.

(d) Feedback from subject teachers and ASD Resource Teachers.

(e) Consultation with outside professionals that are involved with students with ASD.

*All procedures, test results and information received are documented and filed. In addition, relevant information in relation to a student with ASD specific educational needs is brought to the attention of mainstream teachers.

Induction:

It is the objective of the ASD Class Co-ordinators and SNAs to facilitate the successful transfer of students with ASD from their primary school to Knockbeg College. The ASD Class Co-ordinators visit the students in their primary school and also meet with the students' class teacher and/or resource teacher. All relevant documentation including the Post-Primary Transfer Form & Education Passport materials are requested to be forwarded from the Primary School. The student with ASD and their parent(s)/guardian(s) then meet with the Co-ordinators of the ASD Class and receive a tour of the school prior to commencement of new school year. An individualised timetable is forwarded to each new student prior to the commencement of the school year.

Role of ASD Class Co-ordinators:

- To support inclusivity and access to education.
- To support the delivery of the mainstream curriculum in a way that meets the needs of students with ASD and to provide access to an extended curriculum, which will include; Social Skills training, Life Skills training, Sensory programme, Stress Management Strategies etc.
- Assessing and recording students' needs and progress. (Student Profile, SSP, Monthly Plan)
- Devising individual visual timetables.
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each student.
- Direct teaching of the students on a one to one basis or group setting within the ASD Class.
- Collaborating with class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of I.T. and a range of other related matters.
- Monitoring and managing student's behaviour and progress.
- Meeting with relevant professionals, in the student's interest such as psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists.
- Co-ordination of timetable and programme for SNA's and ASD Resource Teachers.
- Organising and facilitating a range of structured lunchtime activities.
- Regular Progress Meeting with SNA's.
- Meeting and regular communication with parents/ guardians.
- Support the Transition Planning from Primary to Post Primary and from Post Primary onwards.
- Ensure a safe and predictable environment where positive and respectful relationships are modelled and expected.

- Collaborate with management when serious behaviours occur by supporting the student in developing alternative behaviours.
- Identify triggers which may be the motivating factors for inappropriate behaviours.
- Develop supportive structures which will provide alternatives to these behaviours, thereby encouraging emotional regulation, promoting independence, and increasing the occurrence of positive experiences.

Role of ASD Resource Teachers:

- Collaborate with mainstream subject teacher in the event of subject learning support lessons.
- Collaboration with ASD Class Co-Ordinator in relation to Social Skills/ Life Skills lessons.
- Submission of completed Monthly Plans to ASD Class Co-ordinator.

Consultation with mainstream teachers:

- Communication of relevant information between ASD Class Co-ordinator and mainstream teachers is on-going.
- Collaboration in devising SSP targets and sharing of these targets through Office 365.
- General guidelines for the teaching of students with ASD and comorbid diagnosis are shared with mainstream teachers.
- For those students completing the Level 2 Learning Programmes, it is the responsibility of all teachers working with the student to plan for and assess those students.
- Mainstream teachers have the facility to request that a student return to the ASD Class at any time. In the event of serious discipline issues, the Knockbeg College Code of Conduct will apply but the ASD Class Co-ordinators will endeavour to support the student in repairing the harm caused and developing alternative strategies for dealing with stress or conflict.

Role of parent(s)/ guardian(s):

Partnership with parents/ guardians plays a crucial role in enabling students who attend the ASD Class to achieve their potential. Parents/ guardians are regarded as the primary educators of their child and their input and involvement at every stage of their son's education is encouraged and valued.

The role includes;

- Keeping the school informed about issues which may impact on their son's ability to perform on a given day.
- Working collaboratively with staff in planning and implementing SSPs.

- Supporting their son in their understanding of expected behaviours as prescribed by the Knockbeg College Code of Conduct.

Communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) is on-going. This is done through the home school journal and/or text messaging/ phone calls/ emails. Meetings with parent(s)/guardian(s) are held at least twice yearly to review progress and plan future targets. Parent(s) guardian(s) are encouraged to support the school in working with their son with ASD.

Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA):

- The SNA's primary function is to ensure the care and support needs of the students on a daily basis. Duties shall be modified to support the particular needs of each student concerned.
- Support communication between the ASD Class Co-ordinator and mainstream teachers.
- Assisting in the supervision of students as required including daily supervision, out-of-school visits, walks, examinations, and similar activities.
- General assistance to mainstream teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature.
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Attend regular meetings with ASD Class Co-ordinators to discuss progress of student(s).
- Submission of student observation forms - dated and signed, to the relevant ASD Class Co-ordinator, weekly or more often if required.
- Collaboration with ASD Class Co-ordinators in devising student's SSP and with other professionals as required e.g. SENO, NEPS Psychologist etc.
- Facilitate the implementation of agreed SSP targets.
- The care role of the SNA, in instances where SNA support is required to assist with behavioural related care needs, is to assist the teacher to meet the care needs of the students by: (a) preserving the safety of the pupil and others with whom the pupil is in contact (b) assisting to ensure the prevention of self-injurious or destructive behaviour (c) reinforcing good behaviour on the student's part and acting as a positive role model for the child (d) Assisting with recording data in relation to pupil behaviour and behavioural development.
- Other duties appropriate to the SNA role, as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. SNAs may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the role when special need students are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.

**Due to exceptional circumstances presented by the recent pandemic, or similar SNAs may be required to engage online in support of their allocated student in the event of a lockdown.

Student Support Plan (SSP):

A Student Support Plan is prepared for every student who attends the ASD Class

Contents of a Student Support Plan include;

1. The nature and degree of the student's special educational needs.
2. The nature and degree of the student's abilities, skills and talents.
3. The special education provision provided to the student.
4. The present level of educational performance of the student.
5. The targets for the student, in which achievement will be attempted, will take place over a period not exceeding 12 months.

A copy of the SSP is given to and signed by the parents/guardians. It will be available upon request to the SENO and other relevant professionals.

Parents/ guardians may appeal against:

- Any statement or description of their son's special education needs that they consider incorrect or inadequate to meet their son's needs.
- The failure of the school or Department of Education and Skills to implement any part of the plan.

Curriculum and Integration:

All students attending the ASD Class in Knockbeg College attend mainstream classes in so far as possible. The ASD Class will endeavour to provide the relevant supports for students with ASD to support their integration into the mainstream classes, so that they can be taught alongside their peers, with the majority of their learning taking place there.

During time in the ASD Class, students have access to an extended curriculum (either individually or in a small group setting) where they may receive social and life skills training, a sensory programme, stress management strategies and Level 2 Programmes, where appropriate. Students will also benefit from pre and/or post tutoring of mainstream subjects.

The Individualised Timetable:

Students in the ASD Class operate from a modified timetable. The number of academic subjects undertaken is wholly dependent on their needs and abilities. At the beginning of a cycle, students are given the opportunity to sample subjects before a decision is made on an individual timetable. Activities in the ASD Class are also individualised. Each student's timetable is constantly under review and changes can be made throughout the academic year.

Exams:

Reasonable accommodations may be put in place in order to negate the stress that is associated with class tests and exams for students with ASD.

Students may be provided with appropriate reasonable accommodations in state exams if deemed necessary by the State Examinations Commission. However, exam centres are set up in The ASD Class for all in-house and state exams.

Legislation:

The school authorities are committed to complying with the following legislation and guidelines:

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs- Post Primary 2007
- The National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities 2007
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Disability Act 2005
- The Education for Persons with Special Education (EPSEN) Act 2004
- The Comhairle Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Education Act 1998

Ratified by the Board of Management

<u>Michael Regan</u>	<u>18-10-2022</u>
Chairperson of the Board of Management	Date

Review Date: _____