

ASC Policy

Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Autism

Background & History

Autism is a pervasive, developmental disorder; difficulties experienced by those diagnosed with autism can vary in severity. Current estimates state that approximately *1 in every 100 children now receive a formal diagnosis of autism. This has meant that the numbers of pupils attending the school who are diagnosed with autism has risen and may well continue to rise in the foreseeable future. This policy has been written to supplement other current policies in the school and should be considered alongside the existing policies and documents already in place particularly the school's SEN Policy.

History

The ASD Class was established in September 2013. At this time there was one teacher and two SNA's, and classes were run in a non-adapted traditional classroom. In September 2015 we moved into our self contained purpose built ASD Unit which consists of one classroom (which both include a "chill-out" room and toilets), a multi-sensory room, OT room life skills room with kitchen equipment and a staff toilet which has washing/changing facilities for the children.

In September 2021, we extended our intake and a second ASD class was established. This classroom is located in the main school building to allow our students to further develop their independence and also to gain practical skills helpful to prepare them for the transition to secondary school. Children in our Senior ASD class will also continue to have access to a quiet room, sensory room, life skills kitchen and OT room.

Guiding Principles

We want all children with ASD to feel that they are a valued part of the School Community. We do this through inclusion, which has at its core, the following principles;

Setting suitable learning challenges/goals. The mild and moderate curriculum is in use.

Responding to children's diverse learning needs.

Overcoming barriers to achieving their full potential.

Addressing the triad of impairment

Providing a structured, safe and suitable environment

Rationale

The rationale for this policy is to ensure compliance with the Education Act (1998) the Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), Disability Bill (2002), and the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004).

Aims

Kinvara NS aims to meet the needs of its pupils with autism by:

Offering a variety of consistent, high quality provision

Ensuring that staff have access to CPD and support

Collaborating with a range of professionals and communicating with parents/care

Planning to address the individual and specific needs of pupils with autism including behavioural needs

Delivering curriculum which balances social and academic need, mental health and emotional wellbeing to ensure all children have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.

To use all resources efficiently and equitably so that all children develop as learners, engage meaningfully with the curriculum and develop the skills and competencies necessary to lead an independent life.

To enable all pupils with disabilities in the school to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.

Placement / Provision

Pupils within the infant class age range will enter the junior ASD class. Pupils starting their placement at Kinvara NS after the infant age range onward will be placed within an appropriate class; this decision is based on the needs, age, ability of the pupil in relation to staffing levels, staff expertise and the needs of the other pupils in the class and if there is a place in the class.

Enrolment

"A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his/her overall needs" - The Ed. For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004.

A special enrolment policy pertains to the special class. A child will be admitted to the Special Class if a space is available, and all admission criteria are met.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's Special Needs in advance of enrolling in Mainstream. The B.O.M. will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report. No child will be refused permission solely on the grounds of S.E.N.

In order to gain a better understanding of the needs of the child the school may request

Pre-school teacher questionnaire

Teacher Observation i.e. home/preschool visit prior to enrolment

OT and SLT activities and recommendations noted

Principal and teacher liaises with Early Intervention teams (children under 6 yrs) or school age team (children over 6)

Class teacher liaises with the child's mainstream classroom teacher

School Support Plans

An I.E.P. is then formulated by breaking down the existing levels of attainment of the S.E.N. child into finely graded targets. This is a collaborative process

between Class Teachers (mainstream & ASD), Support Teachers, S.E.N.O., parents and outside agencies.

The plan includes:-

The nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills.

The degree and nature of the child's Special Needs.

Phased inclusion of the SEN child into ASD unit as deemed appropriate by ASD teachers.

The child's present level of performance.

The services to be provided.

Targets and goals on a termly basis

The management of school support plan is the responsibility of ASD Class Teachers and Support Teachers. The plan is reviewed throughout the year.

Staffing

Each class is led by a classroom teacher. Additionally each class also benefits from support of one or two special needs assistants (SNA's), depending on class sizes.

At Kinvara NS we believe that pupils independence should be promoted wherever possible and, although there will be some opportunities for pupils to work 1:1 with staff throughout the day, we do not have a policy of providing continual 1:1 support for pupils. *Wherever possible, Kinvara NS will cover staff absence from existing staff from within the school in order to promote consistency and continuity which is particularly beneficial for pupils with autism.

Learning Environments

An organised and well planned learning environment is essential for the holistic development

of pupils with autism. All learning environments within Kinvara NS will therefore provide:

A high level of visual support eg. timetables/first then
Clear teaching areas and opportunities for interaction
The necessary amount of structure to address the needs of pupils with autism in each class eg. TEACCH
Opportunities to develop intended and spontaneous communication
Low arousal environments where necessary
Access to other environments where possible eg. Gross Motor Room/Multi Sensory Room/Kitchen/mainstream classrooms for inclusion etc.
Inclusion
The goal of inclusion is to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that values their individuality. This school attempts to promote inclusion through:-

Modifying activities.

Allowing all children the opportunity to participate in targeted group work in the class e.g. maths

Providing appropriate tasks and practical work.

Establishing a "Buddy System".

All children with ASD require SNA support in order to attend their mainstream class

Curriculum

The overall curriculum delivered at Kinvara NS is based on the National Curriculum which has been differentiated. The National Curriculum is also used in the ASD classes in addition to other ASD specific curricula eg. TEACCH Pre-School Curriculum/NCSE CAT-GLD/Stepping Stones where appropriate. The curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced taking into account the social, academic, social, emotional needs and general wellbeing of pupils with autism. The overall curriculum delivered at (school name) includes opportunities to address the following:

Communication and Language/Engagement/Joint Attention

Interaction/Social Skills

Flexibility of thought

Sensory sensitivity and regulation

Anxiety
Independence
Self Care
Safety Awareness
Real life experiences outside of the school environment

Planning

Teachers short term planning follows the school's own schemes of work which are adapted from the National Curriculum. Teachers differentiate learning opportunities for pupils with autism in a variety of ways, all of which are detailed in their class plans.

Additionally, every pupil with autism has a pupil needs analysis which highlights areas of learning needs and strengths and School Support Plan which covers the following areas:

Communication
Sensory Needs
Social & Emotional Needs
Independence

Behaviour

The impact of autism on pupils may cause high levels of frustration and/or anxiety resulting in challenging behaviour which presents a barrier to their learning. At Kinvara NS we acknowledge that the following basic principles of good autism practice can reduce the incidence of such behaviour:

Ensuring all staff have an awareness of the strengths and difficulties associated with autism and co-occurring conditions
Providing a structured and consistent approach which enhances predictability
Supporting pupils communication in order to reduce frustration
An understanding that social interaction can place additional demands on pupils over and above academic learning intentions
Addressing sensory needs throughout the day helps pupils to remain calm and focused

Recording behaviours using eg. ABC/STAR charts and put in place Individual Behaviour Plans where necessary.

Seek support from outside agencies if necessary, appropriate and available eg. Multi-D Teams/Middletown/NCSE etc.

Kinvara NS will follow the school code of behaviour for all students in the ASD class.

CPD for Staff

Staff have a range of CPD opportunities to enhance their understanding of autism and to develop their autism practice. Autism specific CPD is delivered through the NCSE and Middletown Centre for Autism.

Collaboration

Autism can be a complex and challenging condition therefore we recognise the need to collaborate with a range of other people to provide a holistic and consistent environment.

Kinvara NS make an effort to collaborate with the following where available:

Parents and carers

ASD Team

BOC Services

Autism Early Intervention

Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs)

Speech and Language Therapy Assistants (SALTAs)

Occupational Therapists (OTs)

Physiotherapists

Educational Psychologists (EPs)

Social Services Personnel

NCSE

Middletown Centre for Autism

Other/Issues

The school is wheelchair friendly.

The school has a Safety Statement and An Administration of Medicines policy.

Each Special Needs child has access to a shared S.N.A.

The school promotes a positive school environment through S.P.H.E.

CPD e.g. Studio III, Teacch

Pep3

Out of School Trips

School trips are a regular feature of Special Needs Provision. Permission forms in relation to the proposed trips and for seeking medical assistance in the event of an accident are sought from parents. A number of contactable mobile phone numbers are held by staff. S.N.A.'s are issued with clear instructions as to their duties for the day.

Complaints Procedure

Parents with a complaint first contact the ASD Class Teacher. The complaint is investigated and if not resolved is referred to the Principal. If the matter remains unresolved, the complaints procedure will operate.

Implementation

This policy has been in operation since 2014 and was last reviewed and updated in May 2021. (To be ratified at the June BOM)

Review

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

In September 2021, we extended our intake and a second ASD class was established. This classroom is located in the main school building to allow our students to further develop their independence and also to gain practical skills

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helpful to prepare them for the transition to secondary school. Children in our Senior ASD class will also continue to have access to a quiet room, sensory room, life skills kitchen and OT room.

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