

Glenbeg NS
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Admissions Policy for Glenbeg NS Autism Class

Introduction

This admissions policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1988) and the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018. The Board of Management of Glenbeg NS trusts that by doing so parents and staff will be assisted in relation to enrolment/admissions matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Glenbeg NS operates under the Rules for National Schools, The Education Act (1998), The Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), The Disabilities Act (2002), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education Skills (DES) Circulars.

General Information

School Name:	Glenbeg NS
School Address:	Glenbeg, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
Telephone No.:	058-43266
Email:	office@glenbegnationalschool.ie
Website:	www.glenbegnationalschool.ie
Classes Taught:	Junior Infants to Sixth Class Gender
Orientation of School:	Mixed

His Lordship, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan is the patron of the school.

The Special Autism Class was established in September 2018, funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The class is established under the Board of Management's understanding that all expenditure incurred in the construction, funding and resourcing of the ASD unit is borne by the Department of Education and Skills. This school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

Aims

Our aim is to provide a quality driven, appropriate educational service to all children in the autism class, within the requirements of all recent legislation pertaining to Special Needs Education.

We aim to strive towards the inclusion of children in the class into mainstream education, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability for such inclusion.

Objectives

1. To provide the optimum learning environment for children with ASD which is safe, visual, structured, predictable, encouraging, stimulating, interesting, challenging and

- fun.
2. To develop the child's self-esteem.
 3. To improve the child's social skills in so far as appropriate.
 4. To improve the child's level of independence in social situations.
 5. To help the child develop better organisational skills and thereby prepare them for and support them in the transition between primary and secondary schools.
 6. To improve their understanding and use of oral and written language.
 7. To help them to develop more effective communication skills.
 8. To include each child into their peer class in Glenbeg NS in so far as appropriate.
 9. To foster close links between home and school. The success of the special class depends on parents and staff planning and working together. This will enable the development of realistic expectations and agreed goals for each individual child.

General Information

- ❖ The Board of Management provides a class for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills guidelines and support structures. It is committed to providing the highest quality of education for the children concerned. A Multi-Disciplinary approach is recommended by the Department of Health in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills to support these classes and continued financial support from DES.
- ❖ **The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year.**
- ❖ The curriculum is tailored for individual needs and works towards the mainstream primary education.
- ❖ Teaching methods include elements of various styles and techniques i.e. A.B.A.(Applied Behaviour Analysis), T.E.A.C.C.H., P.E.C.S, Lámh signing and a variety of sensory stimuli.
- ❖ The aim is to integrate all pupils within the main body of the school whenever possible.

Taking into account the Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special education need.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis ethnicity, disability (i.e. severity of Autism diagnosis), traveller status, cognitive ability, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria. Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:

- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available.
- Sufficient classroom space is not available.

Taking all of the above into account, and based on the advice of the Management team of the Autism Class, the Board of Management reserves the right of decision making in relation to admission.

Health Service Executive Input

Essential services may be provided by the Health Service Executive. These services include Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Glenbeg NS has no control over these services, merely acting as a relevant setting for their provision. All queries about these services must be addressed to the Health Service Executive and not Glenbeg NS.

Home School Links

The role of parents in their child's education is recognised and valued. Every effort is therefore made to maintain effective communications with parents via frequent parent-teacher/parent-therapist meetings and the Communication Book system of communication.

We also encourage parents to meet jointly with the class teacher and relevant therapists/professionals where possible. We request that parents ring or email the school to arrange a suitable time for meetings.

Application and Enrolment Procedure

Pre-Enrolment Procedure:

1. A school enrolment application form, incorporating an application to enrol in the ASD Class, is completed (available from the school office and www.glenbegnationalschool.ie)
2. This application must be accompanied by an up to date educational psychological assessment which confirms the diagnosis of **ASD** in line with current Department of Education and Skills criteria. **PLEASE READ THE ENROLMENT CRITERIA BELOW AS THEY ARE VERY SPECIFIC AND NOT NEGOTIABLE.**
3. Applications must be accompanied by an original birth certificate. Date of application, date of birth, address and telephone numbers must be entered on the application form.
4. **The closing date and time for the submission of enrolment applications is 3pm on 31ST January @12noon each year.**
5. **All applications received on or before this date will be acknowledged within 3 weeks of the closing day for the submission of applications.**
6. Applications will be dated and numbered in order of receipt

Upon receipt of completed application (see above), an Admissions committee will review all applications and advise the Board of Management of those pupils who are eligible for enrolment.

Enrolment Criteria to be taken into consideration by the Admissions committee are laid out as follows.

Enrolment Criteria

The maximum number of pupils in the ASD unit in Glenbeg NS is 12 pupils in total. The ASD unit in Glenbeg NS comprises of two ASD classes, Spraoi 1 and Spraoi 2. Subject to sufficient places being made available in the ASD class, the criteria for enrolment to the ASD class, incorporating the Department of Education and Skill and HSE policies, are as follows:

1. The Enrolment Application Form provided by the school must be fully completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child.
2. The enrolment Application Form must be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate.
3. **All** reports in existence on a child must be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions committee. These will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and only shared with professionals on a need to know basis. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions committee will invalidate an Enrolment Application. A recent psychological or psychiatric assessment is mandatory. A report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team should also be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of

a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist.

4. A child must have:
 - a. a diagnosis of ASD (DSM-IV/V or ICD-10) from a psychologist or psychiatrist.
 - b. a recommendation that a special class attached to a mainstream school is the most appropriate educational placement for the child in light of his/her complex needs (**note, a recommendation for *either* mainstream with supports or a special class attached to a mainstream school will not meet DES criteria for enrolment in a special class**).

In order to access the supports of a special class DES current policy require:

A student must have a recent report from a relevant professional or team of professionals (for example, psychologist, SLT, psychiatrist) stating that:

- i) s/he has a diagnosis (ASD); and
 - ii) s/he **has complex or severe learning needs** that require the support of a special class setting and the **reasons why this is the case**. The professional report **must state that the specific needs of the pupil are severe or complex** (*ie using these precise words*), **give a description of these needs, recommend that a special class is the most appropriate educational placement** for the pupil in light of the severe or complex needs (and in line with parental choice) and **give reasons** as to why this is the case.

5. As inclusion is an integral part of our school ethos, it is a necessary criterion of enrolment that any child attending the autism class will have their placement reviewed on an ongoing basis. *If a child attending an ASD class shows little potential for some future inclusion into the mainstream class setting, the suitability of the placement will be reviewed.*

The level of inclusion, duration and timing will be decided upon by the principal and the staff of ASD Classes in consultation with the mainstream teacher, parents of the child in question and on the basis of information shared at an annual review meeting.

6. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the terms of the school's relevant behaviour policies and other relevant policies. In order to facilitate this, teachers will teach skills to enable pupils to follow behaviour and other relevant policies with support if necessary. Behaviours will be taught and practised and plans will be put in place to generalise behaviours.
7. The Admissions committee may request further information or may request parents/guardians to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's preschool/school/home setting to observe the child.
8. The school acknowledges that all children with ASD present with differing profiles. For this reason, all applications must be considered individually.

The receipt of the enrolment application forms, psychological/professional reports and written recommendation is not a guarantee of enrolment.

9. **Once the committee is satisfied that the child presents as fulfilling the above criteria and that a place is available, a place will be offered.**

Return of Forms of Acceptance.

Letters of offer of places in an ASD class will be sent by the **21st of February**. The letter of offer includes an Acceptance Form which must be returned within **7 school days** of the letter of offer being issued by the school. Acceptance into an ASD Class is contingent upon a signed

acceptance of the school policies including the School Code of Behaviour in accordance with Section 24(4) of the Education Welfare Act, 2000. If the school does not receive the acceptance form within the required time period, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list for that school year.

Applications for places in an ASD class made after **31st January** cannot be considered for the new school year if all places are filled for this school year.

In the event that the number of children that apply for a place (and qualify as per the criteria above) is greater than the number of places available (which depends on the number of places available in the year of application) such places will be filled on review of Enrolment Applications received in the following order of priority:

1. Children who live in the Glenbeg NS catchment area. (Appendix 1)
2. Children who have, or have had, siblings in the school.
3. Children of staff in the school.
4. Children of parents/guardians who are past pupils of the school.
5. Any remaining applicants: if there are still places available, admission will be filled on an age basis ie. priority to the oldest child and so on until admission is full.

From time to time a pupil may transfer to an ASD unit from a mainstream school during the school year, if the school has a vacancy in the ASD unit before the enrolment process has opened in January.

Disclosure of all pre-existing medical needs is required, and any relevant reports in this context shall be forwarded to the school.

In allocating places the Admissions committee will consider the readiness of the child, the suitability of placement and age appropriateness of the child.

Please note that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if sufficient places are not available and/or sufficient classroom space and/or resources are not available.

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/admission to any student where the student has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education. ***It is recommended that parents/guardians make contact with the SENO to verify eligibility for a special class.***

N.B. If the school does not receive the required documentation with the Enrolment Application form, the application will not be processed or considered by the school. It is the responsibility of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to ensure that all supporting documentation is correct and is received by the school.

All unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 within 42 days from the date of the decision by the Board of Management.

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, a list, based on the criteria outlined in above, will be maintained for **the current year of application only**. If a place becomes available during the period of this admission statement's existence the place will be offered to the next qualifying pupil on such a list.

Transfers

The school may request other relevant documentation if a pupil is transferring from another school. All documents need to be received in order for the application to be deemed fully completed.

The Board of Management of Glenbeg NS respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. **This consideration is paramount when assessing any entry to Autism Classes.**

Appeals

The Board of Management of Glenbeg NS, in compliance with section 19(3) of the Education Welfare Act 2000, will make a decision in writing in respect of an application for enrolment within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of enrolment applications and will inform the parents/guardians in writing of that decision.

Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to a refusal to enrol in the letter issued 21 days after the closing date for receipt of applications. (Please note the address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment).

If the Board of Management refuses to enrol a child, the parents/guardians of the child may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 school days of the date of refusal to enrol. It must be made in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and clearly state the grounds for appeal. The Board of Management will respond within 10 school days of the receipt of such an appeal.

If following the conclusion of the appeal procedures at school level, a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision made, the parent/guardian has a statutory entitlement under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007), to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. It should be noted that such an appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the school's refusal to enrol.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007), are available on the Department of Education and Skills website www.education.ie

Post Acceptance

Once a parent/guardian has accepted a place in an ASD Class, the Principal will communicate with the parent/guardian as follows:

1. Parents of prospective pupils are encouraged to arrange an appointment to visit the school and its facilities and to meet with the class teacher/s.
2. The parents/guardians may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the staff to a child's pre-school/school/home setting to observe the child.
3. The first year will see the implementation of the child's Student Support Plan (SSP). Ongoing assessment and regular review will determine whether the child's placement is appropriate.
4. The SSP will be updated on a regular basis by the staff.
5. The S.E.N.O (Special Education Needs Officer) will also be made aware of the plan.
6. **The children may be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents of the child. It is important that every child gets the best possible start in the class. In order to achieve this, the duration of the child's day or school starting date may vary depending on the needs of the child.**
7. Each child in an ASD Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for inclusion purposes.
8. Mainstream pupils will participate in a reverse inclusion process when appropriate, whereby mainstream pupils will on occasion participate in activities in an ASD Class.

9. Parents of children in the ASD Classes will be expected to liaise with the HSE for essential services based on the children's needs e.g. Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy if they have not already done so.
10. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills regarding suitable transport for the child to and from school. This needs to be arranged in advance of admission, if required.

Placement Review:

The school reserves the right to review the child's progress from time to time whether during or after each year to recommend whether this is indeed an appropriate school placement for your child.

Occasionally concerns regarding the suitability of a child's continued attendance at the school may arise. In such circumstances, a review of the school's ability to continue to meet the child's needs and safety and to meet the safety of others may be necessary. Any such review will be undertaken by the Admissions committee in consultation with the Board of Management. Any decision will be made in conjunction with the Principal and other relevant staff members.

Parents/guardians will be kept informed of any concerns that might arise in relation to their child's continued attendance at the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/guardians will also be given an opportunity to engage in the discussion surrounding the placement and concerns that arise from the child's placement itself. In the event that it is determined that the child is not suitably placed in the school, having regard for the realistic service options available at the time, the BOM may request a multi-disciplinary team assessment be carried out to determine the best options for the specific child.

General Discharge policy

Discharge may be recommended if the Admissions committee, after consultation with the parents/guardian, feel that the placement is not appropriate. Discharge from the unit may also happen if a pupil is fully included into mainstream school.

It is school policy that once a child has completed 6th Class they will be discharged from the ASD Class.

Behaviour Review

While some children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant, or oppositional behaviours, all efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Support Plan. With supports and assistance pupils will be expected to learn skills to enable them to follow rules relevant to the School Code of Behaviour. **All pupils including pupils with special needs are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement.**

While recognising the right of the parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of Glenbeg NS is also responsible to respect the right of the existing school pupils. This requires balanced judgments, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children.

In the case of some applicants, to facilitate the child's access to the curriculum or to the building or to transport, it may be necessary to provide specific additional resources to that which are already available in the school (e.g. staff/accommodation/equipment/environmental adaptations or other supports may be required). In such instances it may be necessary to delay a child's starting date in the school to ensure that all essential supports are in place beforehand.

It is understood that pupils may not have the skills to meet the expectations of the Code of Behaviour. It is with this in mind that skills will be taught and practised and so facilitate the child's inclusion (with ongoing support if necessary).

Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the ASD class or another mainstream class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the Board of Management of the School, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

Criteria on which Children are selected to be split in ASD Classes:

The children will be divided primarily according to age, with a secondary aim being to achieve reasonable gender balance. The only exception to this is where, on the advice of relevant professionals, it is deemed more educationally beneficial for a child to be set in the same class grouping according to-

- Language/communication skills
- Individual differences in thinking and learning styles
- Physical needs

No exception can be considered if it would cause the numerical split between classes to become disproportionate.

The 2 ASD classes will come together whenever possible, when shared learning opportunities arise.

Children in the ASD classes, when feasible, will be integrated into their equivalent class in the mainstream setting and take part in larger classes, on a regular basis.

General Points

Absences

Parents/Guardians are asked to contact the school via Aladdin Connect if their child is absent. This could be followed by a note written in the child's home/school diary. If a child needs to leave early parents must follow the Sign-Out procedure.

When you want to speak to a teacher.

We realise that it may be difficult for some to get to Glenbeg NS. Please remember that you are always welcome. **It is impossible, however, for teachers or other staff members to talk to parents if they arrive unexpectedly. Please ring and make an appointment to see the Teacher/Principal through the school Secretary on 058-43266 or via email office@glenbegnationalschool.ie**

Information we need.

In order for us to be entrusted with the care of your child we require the following information:

1. Emergency contact numbers and procedures.
2. Likes and dislikes.
3. Medical needs.
4. Hygiene needs.
5. Family members and extended family and friends.

This list is not exhaustive.

Changes in family circumstances e.g. separation, the arrival of a new baby, moving home, the death of a grandparent etc, can have an effect on your child. We strongly advise that you notify the class teacher of any such changes.

Dress/Clothing/Belongings.

It is expected that your child will wear the school tracksuit and or uniform. A large part of our school programme for your child is building up his independence. We want your child to be able to manage and look after his own clothing and belongings. You can help us by:

1. Choosing clothes and shoes that make life easier for your child. (Buttons, zips and laces sometimes cause problems). Velcro runners and elastic waistbands are simplest.
2. Tracksuits are a must for P.E. and swimming days. In the case of a pupil attending an ASD Class a decision on whether it is possible to include a pupil will be made by jointly staff, parents and relevant professionals.
3. Togs, hat and towel are needed for swimming.
4. Put your child's name on everything that is worn to school.
5. Keeping a change of clothes in the school for your child is an available option.

Illness:

Every child's health is important to us. In order to ensure the highest standard of medical care, the following have been agreed:

1. Home is the best place for a sick child.
2. Wounds should be properly dressed.
3. Please notify us of any medication that your child may be taking.
4. As a rule, teachers are unable to administer medication. Please contact the Principal for arrangements and to discuss the Administration of Medicines Policy.
5. Never send medication to school with your child. It should always be handed from adult to adult.

Healthy Lunch Policy:

While respecting the dietary difficulties faced by many of our children, we encourage healthy, balanced diets. Suitable snacks include fruits, yoghurts, crackers, cheese and sandwiches. Please inform the school if your child has a special dietary requirement or any food allergies. We have a Healthy Lunch Policy available in school.

Information and Communication Technology

All the children have access to computers whether in an Autism class or Mainstream classroom. The staff will also consider the need for assistive technology if it arises and if resources allow. Any allocation of assistive technology is dependent on a recommendation from your child's attending psychologist/psychiatrist or other health professional. Applications for assistive technology are decided on by the DES/NCSE.

Inclusion of pupils from an ASD Class into Mainstream Classes

The amount of inclusion/reverse inclusion that each child receives in Glenbeg NS is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. teachers (both special education teachers and mainstream), the Principal and support staff. The view of other interested parties such as Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists will be taken into account. However, the staff's decision is final.

The school promotes a policy of inclusion with age appropriate peers on a social level and ability appropriate on a curriculum level.

The policy is open to review at all times.

Early levels of inclusion into mainstream will focus on fostering social inclusion. With support the child in an ASD Class will be encouraged to partake in mainstream general class learning with the initial focus on mastering the following:

1. Entering the class without trepidation.
 2. Sitting down at a designated table.
 3. Interacting on a social level with the child (children) nearest them.
 4. Having lunch with the whole class.
 5. Engaging in a "buddy system" at playtime.
 6. Acting on general teacher instructions within the classroom setting.
- Points 1 to 6 will happen with SNA support if necessary.

Curricular Integration

Having adjusted on a social level the child from an ASD Class will, on a phased basis will be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level. Inclusion into this class will continue up through the classes.

Music has also been designated an area open to integration. This extends to school choirs (communion), carol singing groups, school plays and recitals.

Religion and SPHE are also open to integration.

Physical Education is also an area open to integration. The child is integrated into the class that best suits his/her physical condition. This includes coaching from outside agencies.

Where possible the children from an ASD Class will also be fully included in the school sports day.

The level of inclusion into a mainstream class for a core curriculum subject will be on an individual basis only and will differ from child to child. The school will retain discretion as to the particular children who should avail of core curriculum mainstream inclusion.

Staffing

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

At Glenbeg 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.

Staff Development

Opportunities for on-going staff development through in-service courses, SESS (Special Education Support Service) input etc will be encouraged and availed of by both teachers and special needs assistants.

Evaluation

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy may be amended and updated as required.

Children attending the ASD class in the school will be expected to follow the Code of Behaviour.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Glenbeg NS at its meeting held on **24th September 2024.**

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

TOWNSLANDS

- Ballintaylor
- Ballinure
- Ballycullane
- Ballyguiry
- Boherard
- Carrowncashlane
- Coolnagour
- Crussera
- Glenbeg
- Glenmore
- Killongford
- Kilmurray
- Kilnafarna
- Kilossera
- Lackenfune
- Lisfennel
- Newtown
- Shanakill
- Twomilebridge
- Windgap