

Rainbow Unit Admissions Policy

Special Classes for Pupils with Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

General Introduction

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Coolcotts sets out its policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and the Disabilities Act 2005. The Board trusts that by so doing Parents/Guardians will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Board of Management Chairperson and the Principal will be happy to clarify any matters arising from the policy. Scoil Mhuire operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns.

Name of School:	Scoil Mhuire
Address:	Coolcotts Wexford Y35 TR29
Phone:	(053) 9144 761
Email:	scoilmhuire@coolcotts.com
Website:	www.coolcotts.com
Roll No.:	19739N
Opening Hours	8.50am to 2.30pm (1.30pm for Junior Day)

Scoil Mhuire is a mainstream, co-educational primary school that caters for girls and boys from Junior Infants to 6th Class. The first special class for pupils with Autism was established in our school in 2002. There are currently three special classes funded and resourced by the Department of Education & Skills and they cater for pupils from four to twelve years.

Taking into account the regulations and programmes of the Department of Education & Skills, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act 1998, and the funding available, Scoil Mhuire supports the principles of:

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

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability (i.e. severity of Autism/ASD), Traveller status, 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:

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

Taking all of the above into account the Board of Management reserves the right of admission.

Our Mission & Aims

In our special classes we strive to provide a high quality and positive educational experience for our pupils, including access to a wide-ranging curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to their needs, within the requirements of all recent legislation and national guidelines pertaining to Special Educational Needs (SEN). We work to ensure that each pupil develops

to his/her potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. We work to enhance the pupils' communicative and social skills. In providing an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream primary school, we aim to facilitate meaningful inclusion in the school community, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability for such integration. We consistently acknowledge and respect the role of the Parent/Guardian as the child's natural and primary educator.

Registration Procedure

The registration process begins with a referral from the Autism Team, Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) or a telephone call or visit from the Parents/Guardians. The following information will be noted in the Registration Record:

1. Date of registration.
2. Name and date of birth of the child.
3. Address and telephone number of the Parents/Guardians.

Registrations will only be progressed following receipt of the required professional report(s) as referred to in Point 3 of the Application to Enrol Procedure.

Application to Enrol & Enrolment Criteria

Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child in a special class are required to adhere to the following enrolment criteria:

1. Complete and submit an Application to Enrol form which is available at the school.
2. Provide an original Birth Certificate for the child, a photocopy of which will be retained by Scoil Mhuire.
3. Provide a diagnostic report prepared by a Psychologist, Psychiatrist or Multi-Disciplinary Team within the last 2 years that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autism spectrum disorder using the DSM-V or ICD 10, including a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
4. Provide all other reports in operation on the child, e.g. occupational therapy report, speech and language report etc.

The closing date for the submission of Applications to Enrol is 30th April each year for entry to a special class in August/September of that same year. Applications to Enrol made after the 30th April will be considered if all places for August/September are not already allocated. A completed Application to Enrol form is an expression of interest by a Parent/Guardian in enrolling their child in a special class and is not an offer of a place.

Decision Making

Each Application to Enrol will be considered by the Admissions Team. The team will include the Principal, the SEN Co-ordinator and a special class teacher. The team will consult with the SENO and/or National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Psychologist as appropriate. A recommendation will be made by the Admissions Team to the Board of Management in relation to each Application to Enrol. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

The maximum class size is six pupils. Where the number of children on the waiting list of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order:

1. Pupils who previously attended a special class in Scoil Mhuire and following a period of full integration in a mainstream class have been reassessed and have a recommendation of re-enrolment in a special class.
2. Pupils already enrolled in a mainstream class in Scoil Mhuire where it has been demonstrated that the pupil requires the support of a special class because he/she is unable to learn effectively in a mainstream class for most or all of the school day even with appropriate supports and where the pupil meets the enrolment criteria.

3. Brothers and sisters of existing Scoil Mhuire pupils, priority to oldest, who meet the enrolment criteria.
4. Children residing in the Borough District of Wexford (see Appendix 1) who meet the enrolment criteria. Proof of address will be provided in the form of two utility bills dated within the previous three months at the time of the school's request for such confirmation.
5. If places are still available, places will be allocated as per the waiting list, once an assessment has been made by the Admissions Team that the applicants meet the enrolment criteria.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the Board's decision in writing. Their name(s) will be placed on a waiting list, in accordance with the above criteria for places that may become available.

Offer & Acceptance of a Place

A Letter of Offer of a place in a special class will be sent within four weeks of the final closing date for applications. The Letter of Offer includes an Acceptance Form which must be returned within 14 days of the Letter of Offer being issued by the school. The Acceptance Form must be accompanied by:

1. Signed acceptance of Scoil Mhuire's Code of Behaviour in accordance with Section 24(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, which includes its provision for pupils with special educational needs.
2. Signed consent to a visit(s) by school staff to the child's pre-school/school/home setting to observe the child.

If the school does not receive the Acceptance Form within the 14 day period, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list for that school year. If the offer of a place in a special class is declined, the applicant's name will be removed from the waiting list. The only exception to this will be where an applicant is jointly enrolled in a mainstream preschool and a special preschool and his/her Parents/Guardians are availing of a second year under the Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme (ECCE) for their child. In this circumstance, the applicant's name will remain on the waiting list for a further 12 month period.

Following Acceptance of a Place

Following Scoil Mhuire's receipt of the completed Acceptance Form:

1. The Parents/Guardians of the child being offered a place in a special class will be invited to visit the school to meet with the Principal and the SEN Co-ordinator.
2. The Parents/Guardians will be invited to come with their child to visit the special class, to meet with school staff and see their classroom.
3. The child may be phased in gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the Parents/Guardians of the child. In order for the child to get the best possible start in their class, the duration of the child's school day may vary depending on his/her needs.
4. The first year will be used to assess the child's individual needs and develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to address their identified needs.

Annual Review Process

As a pupil's learning needs may change over time, his/her enrolment in our special class will be kept under continual review. Each pupil's progress will be reviewed at the end of each school year or at shorter intervals if required.

The review will include a careful examination of the pupil's progress in achieving his/her learning targets. The review will consider:

- The pupil's views and those of Parents/Guardians, teachers and other relevant professionals.
- The suitability of the special class placement.

- Whether the pupil's needs might be best addressed in a mainstream setting or whether a more supported setting is required (e.g. a special school setting).

Following a decision that the special class is no longer the most appropriate placement, a pupil may move to:

- A mainstream class in the same school or
- A mainstream class in a school more local to the pupil's home or
- A different category of special class or
- A special school.

Where the change involves a move to a different school, the Parents/Guardians should apply to enrol their child in the new school and the pupil will remain in his/her existing special class until the new placement is organised.

It is policy of Scoil Mhuire to facilitate the discharge of all remaining pupils from a special class once they have reached the age of twelve. Pupils who reach the age of twelve on or after the day Scoil Mhuire re-opens for pupils at the beginning of a new school year will be permitted to complete that academic year.

Transition Planning

Comprehensive transition planning processes will be put in place by Scoil Mhuire to facilitate a pupil's discharge from a special class and their integration into their new educational setting.

Behaviour

Scoil Mhuire has a duty of care to all its pupils and staff. Our management of challenging and/or violent behaviour is consistent with each pupil's right to be treated with dignity and to be free of abuse. All efforts will be made by school staff to prevent, manage and reduce challenging and/or violent behaviours through positive pupil/teacher/SNA relationships, the use of available therapeutic interventions and the implementation of behaviour plans as part of the pupil's IEP. All pupils are subject to the Scoil Mhuire's Code of Behaviour and Safety Statement. Where a pupil's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other pupils in the special class or on pupils in their integration (mainstream) class to the extent that their right to an education is being interfered with, the pupil's behaviour will be reviewed as per the Annual Review Process detailed above.

Refusal to Enrol or Decision to Exclude in Exceptional Circumstances

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment or to decide to exclude a pupil in exceptional circumstances where a) a child has special needs that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and/or the Department of Health, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education and b) in the opinion of the Board of Management, a child poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

The Parents/Guardians have a statutory entitlement under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) to appeal the decision of the Board of Management to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills.

Support by Outside Agencies

Every effort will be made by Scoil Mhuire to ensure that pupils in a special class are referred to outside agencies, such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), for essential services based on their needs, e.g. occupational therapy, speech and language therapy etc. and will accommodate the provision of such services in the school. Parents/Guardians should also note that a guarantee of support from such outside agencies cannot be guaranteed by Scoil Mhuire and that Parents/Guardians should ensure they avail of all such possible services for their child.

This policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on 7 February 2017 and 5 June 2018. The Board will continue to monitor all aspects of this policy and the policy will be amended and updated as required.

Monsignor Denis Lennon
Chairperson of Board of Management

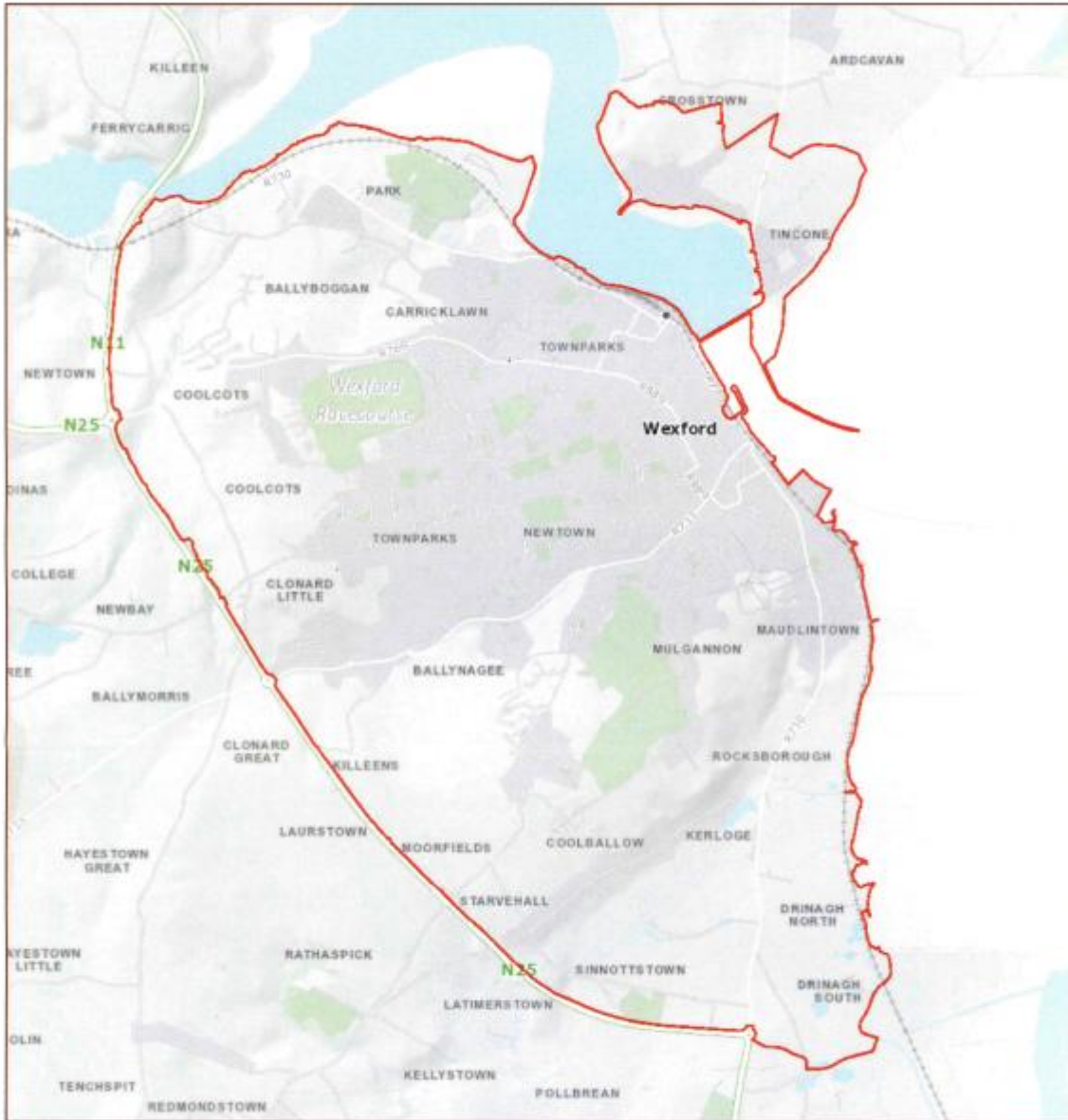
Date: 5 June 2018

Dr Mags Jordan
Principal

Date: 5 June 2018

Appendix 1

Wexford Borough Council Map



February 1, 2018
... Town Councils

