



ASD UNIT ADMISSIONS POLICY

Cashel Community School

2022



This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Student Admissions Policy for Cashel Community School.

The ASD Unit is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The Board of Management of the school has the responsibility for the ongoing management of the ASD Unit, having regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

The aim of Cashel Community School is to offer a positive meaningful educational experience to the student that allows her/him to develop to their full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and inter-acting with the student, an Individual Education Plan will be developed following consultation with Parents/Guardians and with other relevant professional staff (e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Teacher(s) of Special Educational Needs, Occupational Therapist, School Principal/Deputy Principal, etc.) as deemed appropriate.

The aim of the ASD Unit is to offer a specific learning environment with a mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

Parents/Guardians should note that the allocation of a place in the ASD Unit does not guarantee a place in the mainstream post-primary classes for any siblings.

External Support Services

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Cashel Community School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible.

Furthermore, Cashel Community School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. Cashel Community

School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for the Parents/Guardians alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

Pre-enrolment

All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable.

A prospective student for the ASD Unit must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class in an ASD Unit. All applications in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management. The withholding of such reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents/Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the ASD Unit at Cashel Community School is a maximum of 12 students. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the ASD Unit.

The Board of Management require that Parents/Guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the ASD Unit.

The Parents/Guardians of the applicant must accept and agree to Cashel Community School Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of this policy.

The ASD Unit at Cashel Community School will only cater for children that are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question.

Enrolment

All applications for enrolment in the ASD Class will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy.

Priority will be given to applicant's resident within the defined school Catchment Area (see General Students Admission Policy) and (1) attending the local feeder National Schools, or (2) not attending these feeder schools but for whom this ASD unit would be nearest facility.

Applications to enrol a student in the ASD Unit will only be considered in the year of entry of the applicant to Cashel Community School.

Application Process

The process begins with a referral from an external agency or a telephone call or a visit in person to Cashel Community School by a Parent/Guardian.

An enrolment application form, a copy of which is available from the school, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent/guardian on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is the same as Cashel Community School Admissions Policy.

This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the applicant and accompanied by all the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessment(s) and diagnostic report (s). The Enrolment Application form must also be accompanied by School Reports and relevant documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended.

There must be signed consent from the Parents/Guardians granting the Board of Management of Cashel Community School permission to access and share any other reports relevant to the application.

Fully completed Enrolment Application Forms are then recorded in the school applications file. Entry on to Cashel Community School applications file secures a place on the list of applicants only. Only applications that then meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

Two of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area must accompany the application for enrolment – ESB (or alternative provider) bill, Gas bill, Landline telephone bill or Television supplier bill.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the decision-making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the ASD Unit at Cashel Community School.

It is important that Parents/Guardians note that Cashel Community School may in certain clarified circumstances and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that (i) the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare or security grounds to themselves and/or other, or (ii) admission of the applicant will make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the education provision by Cashel Community School as an educational establishment of its services to other.

All recommendations will then be considered by the Board of Management of Cashel Community School who make the final school decisions on all applications to enrol.

Where the number of applicants on the applications file exceeds the number of places available, the following ranked criteria will then apply to all applications received:

1. Applicants attending the feeder schools
2. Applicants with siblings already enrolled in Cashel Community School
3. Applicants not attending the feeder schools but for whom this ASD unit would be the nearest facility to their home residence.

Parents/Guardians should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria numbered above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, then the date of birth of the applicant will be considered with priority being given to the oldest applicant within that criteria level, and continuing thus forth until all places are filled. If two or more applicants share the same date of birth, then places will be allocated on the basis of the date that fully completed Student Application Forms were recorded (date wise) in the applications file.

Parents/Guardians should note;

1. a) The Parents/Guardians of a child being offered a place in the ASD Unit will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child. Any information requested by the Parent/Guardian will be provided at this meeting.
2. b) The Parents/Guardians may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff at Cashel Community School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation. Staff will also meet with the principal and any relevant personnel involved in the student's education to that point.
3. c) The Parents/ Guardians will be invited to accompany their child to visit Cashel Community School ASD Unit and meet staff.
4. d) The Parents/ Guardians are also invited, after the acceptance and placement of their child in the ASD Unit, to be consulted about the Education Plan for their child.
5. e) The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Education Plan.
6. f) A child may be phased gradually into the special class in the ASD Unit through a mutually agreed process between Parents/Guardians and the Management of the school.
7. g) Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the ASD Unit will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purpose by school management.

Students that are currently enrolled in an ASD Unit in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer enrolment at Cashel Community School ASD Unit during the course of the school academic year.

Students enrolled in an ASD Unit in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer enrolment at Cashel Community School ASD Unit at the end of a school academic year unless the family have moved residence into the catchment area of Cashel Community School.

Parents/Guardians must note Cashel Community School respects the right of the existing school community and the students already enrolled therein, and this consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the ASD Unit.

The placement of every student within an ASD Unit will be subject to regular review by the school staff and where appropriate the professional services external to the school, following which decisions will (i) continue within the ASD Unit at Cashel Community School (ii) integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary, or (iii) seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student as Cashel Community School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student. In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff at Cashel Community School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

Behaviour

As already indicated above the Parents/Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Cashel Community School Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of this policy.

Children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Individual Educational Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management at the school. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the ASD Unit or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents/Guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child.

The Board of Management at Cashel Community School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to Cashel Community School will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

The Board of Management will not, however, refuse to enrol a student on the basis of;

1. Ethnicity,
2. Disability (severity of diagnosis),
3. Traveller status,
4. Political beliefs, or
5. Family or Social Status.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management of Cashel Community School.