



St. Teresa's Special School

Admissions Policy

Admission Policy of St. Teresa's Special School

School Address: Creagh Road, Ballinasloe, County Galway

Roll number: 20328W

School Patron: Ability West

Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of St. Teresa's Special School has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on [date]. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Teresa's Special School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

- **Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

This section must be completed by all schools.

St. Teresa's School is a Special School in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

Education is provided for pupils aged 4 to 18 whose primary assessed disability is a severe to profound general learning disability. The school also caters for children with moderate multiple diagnosis, moderate general learning disability and an additional diagnosis e.g. Autism or Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. There is an Early Intervention class for children from 3 to 6 years old with a diagnosis of Autism.

As a Department of Education School, a full educational curriculum delivered by Teachers and supported by Special Needs Assistants.



St. Teresa's School operates under the patronage of Ability West. Ability West provides us with the additional support of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals who assist the children to access their curriculum and with all other aspects of their development. Ability West also employ a full-time nurse to be on-site in the school to assist with the children's medical needs.

At St. Teresa's Special School, staff are trained in and implement a variety of approaches to assist the children in their development. These include, PECS, TEACCH and Lámh. We also offer door to door escorted transport provided by Bus Éireann and hot meals are provided daily.

• Admission Statement

St. Teresa's Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Special school

St. Teresa's Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.



- **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

Special school

St. Teresa's Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, and provides an education to those pupils who are within the designation of the school. (Appendix 1). The school also has an ASD preschool class. There is a maximum of six students in each class

For the purposes of this policy our Intake Classes are:

- Class 1 for children with a diagnosis of Autism between the ages of 3 - 5 years of age and
- Class 2 Pupils with a Diagnosis of Autism between ages of 5-7 years with global developmental delay or other criteria which meet our designation
- Class 3 for students ages 4 and over with a moderate multiple diagnosis or severe and profound intellectual disability
- Class 4: Students with a moderate multiple diagnosis or severe and profound intellectual disability
- Class 5: Senior class for pupils with a Diagnosis of Autism with moderate-severe intellectual disability, with or without complex needs

- **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

Special School

St. Teresa's Special School provides an education exclusively for students with moderate multiple or severe and profound intellectual disability and for preschool pupils with a diagnosis of ASD. St. Teresa's Special School may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school

- **Over subscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)**



In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

- **Insert selection criteria here**

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process St. Teresa's Special School will apply a random lottery to assign any available spaces to applications for places in the school, in the appropriate classroom, or on the waiting list whichever is relevant. (spaces are contingent on the places available – (e.g., We cannot place a 12 child into an ASD preschool or into junior class for 4–7-year-olds)

- **In the case of twins applying for enrolment and one space being available a lottery system will apply**

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

Insert details of the school's arrangements here :

- **The applicant that matches the class in which there is space will be offered the place. However in the event that two applicants apply for the same class the above criteria will be applied**
- ***A past pupil who was in early intervention and left and later required a placement will be considered***
- 3 **The Applicant who is within the local catchment area (as defined by the NCSE in relation to special schools) will be considered**

In the case of an lottery the following procedure will take place

An independent person, selected by the Board of Management, will pull the names out of a hat

The first name to be called will be offered the place

The principal/and, or a member of the Board will be in attendance to observe the lottery.

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In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain



the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not: **(admission to schools) act 2018**

- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to:
- admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act
- the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

- **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Teresa's Special School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

- **Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision.



- **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Teresa's Special School, you must indicate—

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

- **Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn**

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Teresa's Special School where—

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

St. Teresa's Special School may share information with other Special Schools and ASD class in the catchment area in relation to admission of new students.

- **Waiting list in the event of oversubscription**

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Teresa's Special School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Teresa's Special School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.



14 Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

- **Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

For students hoping to transition to St. Teresa's Special School from another school the Application Process for enrolment in all classes follow the same process as new admissions:

The selection process is as follows:

- Date of application - the application with the earliest date of return of their Application Form for Admission will be considered first
- Class availability - the application will match the class group when the space(s) is available (i.e. cannot offer a space to a 14 year old student if the space available is in Class 2)
- Location/Address - the applicant that is within the catchment area of the school (as outlined by the SENO)
- Past Pupils - an applicant who was previously enrolled in the Early Intervention Class in St. Teresa's Special School and is now returning to enrol in the main school

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

If there is availability for the child in the class to which they wish to be enrolled, and they meet the criteria in relation to the designation of the school, they will be enrolled in compliance with normal admission procedures.

If the class is full, they will be placed on a waiting list.



- **Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of St. Teresa's Special School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions as a condition of-

- an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

- **Reviews/appeals**

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)



Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed: _____ Signed _____
Chairperson Board of Management Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____



Appendix 1

HOW TO ENROL YOUR CHILD IN ST. TERESA'S SPECIAL SCHOOL

How do parents first contact the school regarding placement:

- Parents may have heard of the school through word of mouth
- Parents may have been advised to contact the school by Family Support, Early Intervention team or GP
- There is usually an “Open Day” which may be advertised in the local paper. However this may will always be held if referrals and applications are high, the school may deem that this is not necessary in any given year. (CAN I PUT THIS IN)

To apply for a place for a child in St. Teresa’s Special School:

- There will be an Admission Application form posted on the website from October
The Admission form is also available upon request from the school directly
- Parents are welcome to phone the school to talk to the Principal
- Parents may wish to visit the school to see if the school meets of their child
 - Parents must submit an Admission Form (available upon request or on the on the website)
- The admission form will be held and a decision will be made at an Admission Meeting using the criteria in this policy on admittance of a child to the school
This is usually about three weeks after the close of admissions.
- Parents will be informed if their child has a place after this meeting.
- Parents must inform the school if they will be taking up a place within three weeks of the invitation to accept a place for their child in St. Teresa’s Special School
- If there are no places, the child’s name will be put on a waiting list

Once a student has been offered a place in St. Teresa’s Special School, the parents must provide the following information and documentation to the school



- The Enrolment Form (Admission for will have been sent to the school at this stage)
- Signed acceptance of rules and regulations laid out in the Code of Behaviour
- Reports from appropriate Multi-Disciplinary personnel. The most important of these will be the Psychology report. Other relevant reports may include:
 - Physiotherapy Report
 - Speech and Language Report
 - Occupational Therapy Report
 - Medication reports (if applicable)
 - Report from the Visual or Hearing team member as appropriate
 - Behavioural Therapy report if appropriate.
 - Handover report from one Multi-Disciplinary Team to another
 - Name and address of GP
 - If the child has an IEP or other school reports it will help the school and the teacher if these were made available to the school as these will help to set the learning target both in the short and long term

GDPR

All Schools are now required to submit relevant information to the Department of Education (e.g. PPS, date of birth and other relevant information). The form (which is simple to fill out), will be given to the parent to fill on enrolment . We will need parents to fill in a “Permission Form” concerning your child’s personal information

- The following information will be required by the school:-
 - Pupils name, age, address
 - PPS number (for the purposes of ordering equipment for the child)
 - Names and addresses of pupil’s parents/guardians
 - Contact telephone numbers
 - Details of any medical condition
 - Name, Address and Telephone number of GP
 - Details of medical personnel involved with the pupil
 - Details of medications and signed Indemnity Form (appendix E)



- Prescription for any medications which the child must have or may require during the school day. The child cannot attend without the school having received the prescription as we cannot give any medication without it.
- Results of x-ray for Atlanto Axial Dislocation (Down's Syndrome only)
- Record of immunisations
- Details of allergies
- Permission for school related activities
- Permission for use of pupil's photograph in publications/newsletters, papers, website. (as mentioned above)
- Any other relevant information including any such information as may be presented under the Education and Welfare act
- Any relevant information which will help us settle in and /or care for your child during the school year

For Pupil Safety it is of the utmost importance that phone numbers are provided that can be used to reach the parent immediately if required, while their child is in school. This is for the health and safety of the child.

- Annual Review meetings (Individual Education Planning meeting IEP) will be held each year for each student, at which progress is reviewed and Priority Learning Goals agreed by parents and staff. For students who are reaching six years of age, this meeting will also consider future suitability of placement.
- The School can only guarantee the provision of specialist health and education equipment for the children when the monetary provisions or resources are available from the HSE or Department of Education to purchase such special equipment

Policies which will be given to parents:

Admission Policy

Code of Behaviour Policy (must be signed and returned)

Data Protection Policy

Child Protection Policy

- A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour policy will be given to parents/guardians on their child's admission to St Teresa's Special School. Parents will be required to sign a copy to indicate their understanding of and support for these policies



All other school policies including the Health and Safety statement are available to view, upon request.

APPENDIX 2

Admission and Enrolment to St. Teresa's Special School during the school year.

To apply for a place for a child in St. Teresa's Special School, Parents must submit an Admission Form (available upon request or on the on the website)

Please note a child will only be admitted to the school if they:

- Meet the schools Designation
- The parents must sign and agreed to the school's Code of Behaviour
- There is a space available in the class being sought for the child.
- Depending of the child's needs or the class situation, the Principal and Board of Management may deem it appropriate to ween in the child in over a period of time this will be called "settling in" time. This is seen as important (where necessary) to allow for a period of adjustment and transition to a new situation for the child in question).

Once a student has been offered a place in St. Teresa's Special School, the parents must provide the following information and documentation to the school

- The Enrolment Form (Admission for will have been sent to the school at this stage)
- Signed acceptance of rules and regulations laid out in the Code of Behaviour
- Reports from appropriate Multi-Disciplinary personnel. The most important of these will be the Psychology report. Other relevant reports may include:
 - Physiotherapy Report
 - Speech and Language Report
 - Occupational Therapy Report
 - Medication reports (if applicable)



- Report from the Visual or Hearing team member as appropriate
 - Behavioural Therapy report if appropriate.
 - Handover report from one Multi-Disciplinary Team to another
 - Name and address of GP
 - If the child has an IEP or other school reports it will help the school and the teacher if these were made available to the school as these will help to set the learning target both in the short and long term
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- Annual Review meetings (Individual Education Planning meeting IEP) will be held each year for each student, at which progress is reviewed and Priority Learning Goals agreed by parents and staff. For students who are reaching six years of age, this meeting will also consider future suitability of placement.
 - The School can only guarantee the provision of specialist health and education equipment for the children when the monetary provisions or resources are available from the HSE or Department of Education to purchase such special equipment

APPENDIX 3

Note regarding Designation

Our Special Needs Co-Ordinator directed us to the [The HYPERLINK "https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The Future Role of Special Schools and Classes in Ireland 4.pdf"](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Future_Role_of_Special_Schools_and_Classes_in_Ireland_4.pdf)
[HYPERLINK "https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The Future Role of Special Schools and Classes in Ireland 4.pdf"](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Future_Role_of_Special_Schools_and_Classes_in_Ireland_4.pdf)
[HYPERLINK "https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The Future Role of Special Schools and Classes in Ireland 4.pdf"](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Future_Role_of_Special_Schools_and_Classes_in_Ireland_4.pdf)
[Future Role of Special Schools and Special Classes in Ireland](#) which has References to the EPSEN Act that may be useful for your school's admissions policy:

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004 states that a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child (p6)

In the future, the pupils enrolled in special schools will be those for whom it has been decided that it is in their best interests to receive their education in a setting separate from children who do not have special educational needs (in accordance with Section 2 of the EPSEN Act, 2004). It is to be expected that pupils in special schools will therefore have complex special educational needs and



that their schools will require teachers with specialist knowledge and skills in order to provide appropriate education for their pupils. Children in special classes will also have needs to the extent that they cannot be educated in mainstream settings for some or all of the day. (p103)

Schools should be allowed to continue to operate informal dual placement arrangements as currently these do not have resource implications for the State. These informal arrangements should be subject to the agreement of parents and pupils and the appropriate planning and monitoring of arrangements until such time as more evidence becomes available concerning the outcomes of dual enrolment for children with special educational needs. (p111)

There is a discussion on pp64-65 of the NCSE publication which acknowledges the expansion of enrolment beyond special schools' original designations to accommodate children who could not be accommodated in mainstream schools. This is reflected in the NCSE's resourcing of Special Schools, which is by diagnosis of the cohort of children rather than by school designation.

Should a parent wish to contact the Special Needs Co-Ordinator, they can do so at this address:

Máire Aherne, Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)

Roscommon A, National Council for Special Education

Government Offices

Convent Road

Roscommon

F42 VX53

Voicemail: 01 603 3221

www.ncse.ie