



# **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 updated policy was approved by the school Board in October 2024. 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 severe/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. CDNT provides us with the 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 employs a full-time nurse in the school, 5 days a week 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 Bús Éireann and hot meals are provided daily.

In accordance with S.15 (2)(b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of St. Teresa's Special School shall uphold and be accountable to the patron for upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, social linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Please see St. Teresa's Special School Mission Statement and General Objectives of the school Below:

Our mission at St. Teresa's Special School is to create a positive and nurturing environment within which, each child is safe and happy while providing access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This is differentiated appropriately to facilitate the needs and abilities of each child, so that in doing so we will strive for each child to reach their full potential.



## Admission Statement

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

- the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- membership of the Traveller community of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.

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.

### **St. Teresa's 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 and disabilities 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.

## **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school**

St. Teresa's Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with severe and profound intellectual disability or moderate multiple intellectual disabilities (i.e. autism plus moderate intellectual disability)

### **For the purposes of this policy our Intakes are:**

1. The ASD preschool class. (for children between age 3-5 years).
2. Those with severe and profound intellectual disability or a moderate multiple diagnosis (for children aged 4 and over).
3. Pupils with an intellectual disability and Autism.
4. Children transitioning from other schools if there are places available.



## St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

There is a maximum of six students in each class.  
The school endeavours to place students in the most suitable class subject to the availability of places.

### 5. 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

### 6. Over subscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

Selection Process criteria:

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 – (ie. 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



School's arrangements :

- 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. However past attendance is no guarantee of enrolment.
- 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 a lottery the following procedure will take place**

A person selected by the Board of Management,(but independent of the Board), will pull the names out of a hat.

The first name to be called will be offered the place. In the event of multiple places, the second named called will be offered the second place, etc.

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

**7. What will not be considered or taken into account:**

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 and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not.

- a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to:
- c) 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
- d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents.
- e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meetings as a condition of admission.



- f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school.
- g) 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.

## **8. 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. (please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to places in years other than the intake group.

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.

## **9. 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.

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

## **10. 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.



St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

### **11. 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.
- In the event that an initial offer for a first-time enrolment has been accepted and the child has not attended school after three weeks of commencement and in the absence of appropriate or suitable medical certification, the Board reserves the right to an immediate withdrawal of the offer in circumstances where there is a waiting list of other children who may be entitled to the place.

### **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.

Section 66 (6) allows a school to provide a Patron or another Board of Management with a list of the students in relation to whom:

1. an application for admission to the school has been received
2. an offer of admission to the school has been made or,
3. an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include:

1. the date on which the application for admission was received by the school
2. the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school
3. the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant
4. a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005)

### **13. 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



St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

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' application 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.

Late applications will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applications will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

#### **15.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 school will advise all parents/guardians that are seeking a place in St. Teresa's Special School for their child, in years other than the schools' intake group, to view our admissions policy and annual admissions notice. The specific and important dates will be included in those documents for the future year's intake.





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.

Admission to St. Teresa's Special School during the school year is only accepted in emergency situations.

The following selection process is as follows:

- The student meets the school designation as set out by the NCSE
- The School's Code of Behaviour is read, accepted and signed by the parents
- 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)
- Depending on the student's needs or the class situation, the Principal and Board of Management will introduce a Phased Transition Period of any new student moving into a new class mid-year. It is essential to allow for a period of adjustment in this situation. This may be over a two-to-four-week period depending on the needs of the student.

## **16. 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.

## **17. 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.



St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

**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.

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.

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.

St. Teresa's Special School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

St. Teresa's special School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

#### Ratification and Communication

The policy was ratified by the Board of management on the in January 22 and February 23.

It was reviewed and signed by the Chair on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Board of Management

Date 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Signed



## 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.

#### 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)



#### St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

- 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.



#### St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

- Results of x-ray for Atlantoaxial 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 on the child's needs or the class situation, the Principal and Board of Management may deem it appropriate to wean 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.



#### St. Teresa's Special School. Admission's Policy

- 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
- 
- 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](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Future_Role_of_Special_Schools_and_Classes_in_Ireland_4.pdf) 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](http://www.ncse.ie)