



St. Mary's Primary School,
St. Mary's Road, Edenderry,
Co. Offaly R45 DA33

EMAIL: info@stmaryspsedenderry.ie

TEL: 046 9731424

MOB: 086 7714240

WEB: stmaryspsedenderry.ie

@StMarysPS1

@stmaryspsedenderry

Early Intervention ASD Pre-School Enrolment Policy

We in St. Mary's P.S. want to give the highest quality of pre-school education to our children. We want the individual to grow to his/her full potential. Our aim is that this education will prepare each child for continued and appropriate schooling to the best of his/her ability. We recognise and value the role of parents as the primary educator of their children; together we can provide the skills for a loving approach to learning. We take an eclectic approach to teaching our pupils. We don't subscribe exclusively to any one approach to the education of children with Autism. However, we employ an ethos that is based upon the TEACCH method. Our pre-school is managed by the Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. however our pre-school and St. Mary's P.S. are considered separate entities for the purpose of enrolment/ admission.

Aim of Our Early Intervention ASD Pre-school

The aim of the pre-school is to provide a caring learning environment which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. The Principal, teachers, support staff and parents are partners in their children's education with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same purpose - the care and wellbeing of the children in our care. Each child's placement in the pre-school may be reviewed after one year following input from the multi-disciplinary team. Our pre-school endorses the principle that a child be in a setting appropriate to their needs.

Mission Statement

Established in 2021 under the auspices of the NCSE and following consultation with our Special Educational Needs Organiser our pre-school offers specialist educational service to children who have been fully diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (a diagnosis of Autism as per D.S.M.IV & V or I.C.D.10).

We aim to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil.

With a team of dedicated teachers and special needs assistants, the school provides individual attention in small classes catering for the uniqueness of each pupil's personality.

Families of students are encouraged to participate in the development of their child's learning.

The aim is to provide quality preschool education to the children so they are enabled to attain their educational potential when they leave our pre-school.

Admission to the Early Intervention ASD Pre-school

The Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. has set out this policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, and Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004.

The pre-school was established in 2021, funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Science. This school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

The Board of Management reserves the right of admission within the terms of this policy.

The Board of Management will not, however, refuse a child based on:

1. Ethnicity
2. Disability (Severity of Diagnosis)
3. Traveller status
4. Political beliefs
5. Family or social circumstances.

All the children must fulfill the enrolment criteria.

Enrolment Procedure

The process of enrolment begins with

1. A referral from the Autism team or a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
2. A completed application form submitted to the school by parent(s)/guardian(s). All applications must be accompanied by an up-to-date educational psychological assessment and diagnostic report which confirms diagnosis of ASD in line with current Department of Education criteria (a diagnosis of Autism as per D.S.M.IV & V or I.C.D.10).
3. Fully completed applications are then recorded in the applications file.
4. Entry into this file secures a place on the list of pre-admissions applicants.
5. Each fully completed application will be dated and placed in the Early Intervention Pre-school admissions file.
6. All applications are reviewed after the closing date as per the school's annual admissions notice and places are offered as per criteria outlined below. Relevant NCSE forms are then submitted to the SENO for approval. All offers are subject to confirmation by the SENO on submission of NCSE forms.

Please note the following:

- The relevant dates and timelines for St. Mary's P.S. Edenderry admissions process are set out in the school's annual admissions notice which is published annually and the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admissions process for the school year concerned. Any applications received after that date will only be considered if places are available.
- All the above information will be forwarded to the Special Educational Needs Organiser as part of the admissions process.

Criteria for enrolment/ admission

* Each child attending our pre-school must have a definite diagnosis of Autism; the diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological procedure. (a diagnosis of Autism as per D.S.M.IV & V or I.C.D.10)

In addition to this, a recommendation that the student should be placed within an Early Intervention ASD class attached to a mainstream school is also required.

The complex needs of the student must be outlined in the report.

* The child must be between the age of three and five years upon enrolment/ admission. A child who turns six during the academic school year should not be in a preschool setting and therefore will not be considered for enrolment/admission in our pre-school.

* A child may normally be enrolled in the pre-school for either one or two academic school year(s). The option of a third year in the unit is possible once the child is age appropriate.

* Following this period, they shall advance to their local mainstream school or to an ASD class attached to a mainstream school.

* We consider the pre-school to be a feeder school to ASD classes attached to mainstream schools or children's local mainstream school where appropriate.

* Enrolment/ Admission to our pre-school does not ensure automatic admission to St. Mary's P.S. mainstream school.

Whilst both the pre-school and St. Mary's P.S. are run by the Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. they have separate enrolment/ admissions procedures and criteria.

Should there be excess demand for places the Board of Management will follow the following criteria:

1. **The oldest child as per date of birth on the child's Birth Certificate.***
2. **Children who have a sibling currently attending the school.**
3. **Children of parents who are past pupils of the school. (Up to 25% of the numbers in the school admissions notice).**
4. **Children who live in closest proximity to the school in kilometres as per Google Maps (as identified by the shortest driving route between the two identified locations as per Google Maps and building Eircodes).**

***Where two children have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the child with the earliest time of birth on the date as per the child's Birth Certificate.**

Role of the SENO

The Special Educational Needs Organiser has a very important role within the operation of the pre-school. She/He can act as liaison person between the HSE and the pre-school. She/he may attend to provide advice, clarity in relation to NCSE guidelines or background information pertinent to each case.

All applications for supports for children attending the pre-school will be processed by the SENO in line with Department of Education & Skills and NCSE guidelines.

Please note that the fulfilling of the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:

1. Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
2. Sufficient preschool places are not available.

The Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. This consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the pre-school.

All admissions/ enrolments for September of any academic school year should be completed as per date on admissions notice as published on website *stmaryspsedenderry.ie* and or

relevant NCSE deadlines. Parents of successful applicants will be contacted by phone and post and must return a form accepting a place in the pre-school. This must take place within the deadlines outlined in the school's admissions notice. Deferral of enrolment is not currently facilitated. Should parents decide not to accept a place in the pre-school that place will be offered to another child.

A pupil teacher ratio of no greater than six to one will be strictly adhered to in the pre-school.

Discharge of Pupils from the Pre-school

The number of places available in the pre-school will be ascertained based on the number of pupils eligible and wanting to do a further year in the pre-school. A review of all children attending the preschool will take place and will result in one of the following:

- Onward progression to an ASD class attached to a mainstream primary school.
- Onward progression to the child's local mainstream primary school.
- Retention in the pre-school for a further academic school year. This will not be possible if the child is turning 6 years old in the academic school year following the multi-disciplinary team meeting i.e. a child should not turn six in preschool.

This policy is subject to ongoing review.

Policy Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. on November 14th, 2024.

Signed: Oliver Hickey

Oliver Hickey

Date: 14/11/24

Chairperson Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S.
