

Tír na nÓg

Clocha Rince NS

**Enrolment & Procedures Policy
for the Autistic Spectrum Disorder
(ASD) Unit (Tír na nÓg)**

Background

This policy was developed in 2011 in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Disabilities Act 2002. The Policy was reviewed in June 2011 by Principal Colm Byrne, Shannon Eidman (Behavioural Consultant), Ms. Fealy, Ms. Mhic Sheoin, Ms. H. Murphy, Allison O Connor SNA, Ger Finley-Mulligan SNA, Vanessa Cullinan SNA, Anne Mulraney SNA. The policy was presented to parents of pupils in Tír na nÓg. It was further developed and ratified by the Board of Management on 5th July 2011.

General Information

This enrolment policy is being set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998). The Board of Management trusts that by so doing parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The chairperson of the Board of Management and the principal teacher will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

This enrolment policy will be applied precisely to all admissions in the school as they arise [Education(Welfare) Act 2000, s. 19 (1)]

School Name:	Clocha Rince NS
School Address:	Clogherinkoe, Broadford, Moyvalley, Co. Kildare
Status:	Mainstream Vertical Mixed with ASD Unit (2 classrooms)
Telephone No.:	046 9553428
Website:	www.clocharince.ie
Denominational Character:	Roman Catholic
Name of Patron:	Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin
Total Number of Teachers in the School:	12 Part-time LS/RT teacher

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school 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; and
- respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Our School Mission Statement is appended to this document.

Please see our school 'Welcome Booklet' for further general information about our school.

Autistic Spectrum Unit - Tír na nÓg

The Special Autism Unit named Tír na nÓg was established in September 2007. The Unit is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Science.

HSE Support Services

Clinical support and services are provided to 6 pupils by Beechpark Services (Co. Kildare) under the HSE to children who satisfy their criteria. The school will support the provision of HSE support services that are providing services to pupils from outside Co. Kildare. The school will aim to enact all recommendations made by HSE qualified professionals, in regard to an individual pupil, through the IEP process, with due regard to the resources available to the school.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the unit is to provide a supportive, caring, learning environment which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential. The pursuit of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. With a team of dedicated teachers and special needs assistants, the school provides individual programmes in small classes of 6 children catering for the uniqueness of each pupil's condition, personality and needs. The Principal, teachers, support staff and parents are partners in their children's education with co operation and communication between home and school being of vital importance in the educational process.

Our primary objectives are -

- To provide the highest quality, appropriate educational service to each child in Tír na nÓg in a caring and supportive environment within the requirements of all recent legislation pertaining to Special Needs Education.
- To strive towards the integration of children in Tír na nÓg into mainstream education, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability for such integration.
- To enhance the communicative and social skills of the children in Tír na nÓg.
- To continue to develop Tír na nÓg as a centre of excellence for the delivery of an educational service to pupils with autism.

Routines and General Information:

1. The school day for the Special Autism Classes runs from 9.15 to 2.00pm for those children with less than two full years completed at primary school or who have not yet reached 7 years of age. After this, the school day runs from 9.15 to 3.00pm. These times are governed by the Department of Education and Skills' 'Rules for National Schools' having been fully agreed with the Department's Inspectorate.
2. Children are not permitted to enter the school building before 9:05am.
3. There is a 15 minute break at 10:55am and lunch is from 12.20pm – 1pm. Pupils in the Unit may be provided with a 'buddy' from one of the senior classes. Buddies are given general training by an ASD teacher regarding their behaviour with their pupil.
4. The children are dismissed at either 2.00pm or 3.00pm depending on (1) above.

Pupils should be collected from the school front lobby. Tír na nÓg staff will escort pupils outside and formally hand over to the parent at the designated area. Pupils who avail of DES transport will be escorted to the bus by a member of Tír na nÓg staff.

5. A synopsis of the child's daily activities / attainments is communicated in writing to parents every afternoon by means of a Communication Copy. Regular home/school communication is an essential element of the education of a pupil with autism. Parents should check the pupil's Communication Copy every evening and report all applicable useful information in the copy to the teacher. It can occur that a circumstance may arise in which the teacher is unable to communicate via the copy on a particular afternoon. In such an event, where the teacher deems the information to be critical, this information will be communicated on the day via other media.
6. All Clocha Rince NS policy applies to Tír na nÓg unit unless otherwise indicated.
7. All Clocha Rince NS circulars apply to Tír na nÓg unless otherwise indicated.
8. As per mainstream schooling, parents are expected to contribute towards the cost of school books, stationery and extra- curricular activities as they arise.
9. Parents/Guardians of pupils in Tír na nÓg are welcome to meet in the school staff room every Tuesday morning from 9:15am – 10:45am for coffee and a chat. The school is committed to continuing the positive open relationship with all parents. This coffee morning will be used by the Principal to occasionally meet with parents. It is also an opportunity for parents to network, support each other and plan further opportunities and activities for our pupils in Tír na nÓg. This is not a forum to discuss individual issues specific to any pupil in Tír na nÓg. Parents wishing to discuss a specific issues relating to their child should do so with their child's class teacher.

Communication/Meetings with Parents of Tír na nÓg

Consistent and regular communication between home and school is viewed as essential in the effective delivery of a quality educational experience to every pupil in Tír na nÓg.

- Staff and parents should use the Communication Copy every day to report pupil specific issues home and to the school.
- The school will communicate all applicable items to parents/guardians as per school's policy on 'Communication with Parents' through the use of newsletters, circulars, notes, school texting system and the school website.
- Each parent/guardian will meet with the pupil's class teacher by the end of September and at the beginning of February to develop or review the pupil's IEP/Behavioural Plan. Other IEP meetings may be arranged as required. Before the IEP meeting parents/Guardians will complete a pre IEP form to establish an

agenda for the meeting which will ensure that parents/guardians can contribute to the agenda and allow the teacher prepare a contribution to the issue raised.

- The teacher/parent/guardian may request a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child's development.
- Multi-disciplinary team meetings will be organised where applicable and will be attended by the principal or a person delegated to represent the principal and teacher. SNAs may be requested to attend such meetings.
- Parents should make an appointment with their child's class teacher if there is a requirement to discuss any issues relating to their child's development. Any applicable information will be communicated to the Principal at the monthly team meetings (see below) or earlier if required.

Tír na nÓg Team Meetings

Tír na nÓg team meetings will take place once per month. The principal will meet with some or all of the ASD Unit staff to discuss issues regarding procedure and organisation of the unit. IEP's will also be reviewed on a regular basis at these meetings to ensure the plans are being implemented effectively and to discuss all issues arising. Other members of staff may be invited to attend these meetings as appropriate. Outside service providers may also be invited to attend the team meetings if required.

School Attendance

Under the Education Welfare Act each child is obliged by law to attend school every day on which the school is in operation. The school authorities are obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board when a child is absent for more than 20 days or if a reasonable excuse has not been provided for an absence by the child's parents. Please see the school's 'Attendance Policy'.

Absences

Parents/ Guardians are asked to ring the school if their child is absent. This should be followed by a separate note confirming same or by a note written in the child's home/school diary. If a child needs to leave early a written note must be sent to the class teacher or the school should be informed by phone.

Personal Care.

Everybody works best when they feel clean and comfortable. Hygiene is a whole school issue. With this in mind we encourage parents to –

1. Keep children's nails short.
2. Check hair regularly for lice.
3. Send in a change of clothes and any personal hygiene items necessary.

Illness

Every child's health is important to us. In order to ensure the highest standard of medical care, the following procedures have been agreed –

1. Home is the best place for a sick child.

2. Wounds should be properly dressed.
3. Please notify us of any medication that your child may be taking.
4. As a rule, teachers and SNAs are unable to administer medication. Please contact the Principal for arrangements in this regard.

Independence/Living skills

As promoting independence is a primary aim in Tír na nÓg, social outings and tasks to work on areas such as dressing and eating are a priority. Children are encouraged to participate in the process of preparing food as well as tasting new things. Staff will not assist children in tasks where it is known that they can perform independently, such as putting on shoes etc. Children who have not yet learned these skills will be encouraged to develop them as a priority. Parents/Guardians will be asked to cover the costs of such outings, if applicable.

Washing/Dressing/Toileting

At times it may be necessary to assist a child with washing, dressing or toileting needs. In these circumstances, two members of staff will assist. Where it is only possible for one member of staff to be present, the door will remain open.

Homework

Children are expected to do a reasonable amount of homework every night except on Fridays. This homework should be signed either at home or by the carers at Respite, where applicable. In most circumstances this will involve giving some time to hearing reading, checking spellings and handwriting and helping with drawing or sums.

Information and Communication Technology

All the children have access to computers whether in the Autism Unit, Mainstream classroom or the school's computer room. The school will also consider the need for assistive technology if it arises and if resources allow. Applications for assistive technology are dealt with by the area Special Education Needs Organiser.

The pupils also have access to the visiting computer teacher upon payment of the appropriate annual fee.

The school is extremely proactive in developing resources in digital and interactive education. Our objective is to equip Tír na nÓg, financial resources depending, with interactive and digital technological devices which will benefit pupil's educational experience.

July Education Provision

The pupils in the Autism Unit can avail of a special July Programme under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills. Parents are invited to allow their children participate in this programme which commences immediately after the school year concludes. Participation in this programme is not mandatory and the same level of care and attention is provided as during the normal school year.

The school will make every effort to provide this programme to parents. The provision or non-provision of the JEP is entirely a matter for the Board of Management.

It is optional for the school staff to partake in the programme. Where there are staffing deficits the school will employ the services of other qualified teachers/SNAs. The

employment of staff with experience of working with pupils with autism will be a priority. The appointment of outside staff for the JEP is a matter for the Board of Management.

The JEP programme is an extension of the school year. The pupils will experience a normal school week. However there will be two trips per week outside the school. Parents will be asked to meet the costs of these trips as is normal procedure throughout the school year.

Intervention Methods

There are many different educational interventions for children with autism. The primary methods that we draw on within Tir na nÓg are:

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children) (Schopler and Mesibov, 1995)
- Intensive Interaction (Nind and Hewett, 1994; Hewett and Nind, 1998)
- Floor Time (Greenspan)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) (Bondy and Frost, 1994)
- Sensory Integration
- Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)
- Social Stories
- Marte Meo
- Music Interaction

TEACCH

This approach is based on the principals of structured teaching that aims to use the child's visual strengths to help them understand what required (Schopler & Mesibov, 1995) is

The main strategies are:

Physical structure - how the environment is organised;

Applied to our classroom, this means dividing the room into definite areas where specific activities take place e.g.

“I work independently at my workstation”

“I work with teacher at the 1:1 table”

“I take part in group activities at the group spaces”

“I play in the play area”

Daily schedules: which support the child's understanding of what they are supposed to be doing now and what they will be doing next.

Work systems: which visually explain what has to be done, how much has to be done and what will happen next.

Visual instructions: that communicate the job to be done within any given task (Jones 2002, Jones & Jordan 2000)

Intensive Interaction/Floor Time

This programme is based on typical early childhood interaction techniques as used naturally between the parent and child which affirms the concept that two way interaction can be rewarding and fun. It involves following the child's lead and affording meaning by imitating the child's chosen activity and building turn-taking routines around it (Cumine et al 2000; Nind and Newitt 1994, cited in Nind 1999). Joining in, rather than interrupting an activity like lining up objects can afford the child and the adult some quality sharing that can be built into turn-taking thereby enhancing the relationship and affirming the adult as an accomplice in the difficult world of communication. Greenspan claims that the key to enhancing communication and socialisation lies in fostering meaningful and mutually beneficial interactions based on the natural motivations of the child. The experience for the child in having shared control of the interaction with staff, who pitch the activity at his/her individual developmental level, can lead the way to the necessary social precursors to early communication i.e. eye contact, shared focus, reciprocal turn-taking, imitation and timing.

“The problem may be identified as speech, language or communication disorder or delay, but the underlying issue is often a need to develop relationships with people.

Consequently the major question is not ‘How do children learn language?’ but ‘How do they develop relationships that will support the social use of language?’ (Mc Donald, 2004)

Hence it is a priority here in Tir na nÓg to maintain open channels of communication and to build strong trusting relationships between staff and children through broad use of play. It is perhaps these very relationships that will enable meaningful learning now and in the future education of these children.

PECS

PECS teaches children to communicate through picture exchange as opposed to verbal exchange that we are all used to. The programme is individually assessed and built around the preferred activities of the individual child in order to facilitate spontaneity and a desire to communicate (Jones and Jordan 2000) It initially involves the exchange of a symbol card for the desired item and once the system is understood, it can progress to the construction of sentences and the use of these for commenting e.g. *I see ...* It is important not to over prompt and to avoid questions like ‘*what do you want?*’ which go against the intrinsic element of spontaneity (Baker & Webb 2001).

At any given time, there could be several children in Tir na nÓg using PECS each at their individual level of ability/progress.

Phase 1: teaches that upon seeing a highly preferred item, the child will pick up a picture card of that item, reach toward the trainer and release the card into the trainer’s hand.

Phase 2: teaches the child to take the picture card of a board or book and take it to the trainer to request something.

Phase 3: teaches the child to select one picture card from a choice.

Phase 4: teaches the child to form sentences using pictures starting with ‘I want...’

Phase 5: teaches the child to respond to the question ‘What do you want?’

Phase 6: teaches the child to use ‘I want...’ ‘I see....’ and ‘I have....’ (Baker & Webb 2001)

Sensory Integration

Sensory integration exercises are integrated throughout daily schedule to promote healthy sensory processing. This supports efficient:

Intake of sensory messages from our bodies and surroundings

Interpretation of these messages in the central nervous system

Organisation of our purposeful responses.

General activities include: swinging, squashing, gross and fine motor movements, pulling, pushing, rocking, rolling, deep pressure exercises, chewing, sucking, oral motor activities, listening to music etc. Sensory integration is also an integral part of the child’s sensory diets as devised by the Occupational Therapist based on individual assessments.

Music Interaction

Singing running commentary songs, which acknowledge and label what the child is doing, plays a part in our approach to language acquisition (providing the individual child likes music!). Gradually progressing to leaving out key words and phrases giving the child opportunity to fill in the gap and express him/herself at his/her own level also supports meaningful language development.

For example:

Hello

Bye bye

Wash, wash, wash your hands gently all the day

Jumping, jumping, jumping up and down.....

Yummy, yummy, yummy _____ has _____ in his tummy....

Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)

Our approach has many behavioural elements including functional behaviour assessment, task analysis, teaching in small steps and rewarding appropriate responses and behaviours. However ABA is not used as a single intense approach and instead is incorporated into a range of other intervention methods.

Marte Meo

The Marte Meo programme for ASD is a developmental support programme which can be used in daily interaction moments. The central focus is to encourage the child to 'use their own strength' to advance and stimulate developmental process. Elements of this approach are key to our practise. These include labelling the child's actions i.e 'You're looking at' 'You're jumping up and down', thereby ensuring that language modelling is attached to real and meaningful experiences and emotions of the child.

Social Stories

Personalised social stories are used to help teach a required behaviour, prepare children for new situations and applaud achievement. Staff consider the perspective of the child with ASD and develop a story describing a situation, skill or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives and common responses.

Curriculum

As in the mainstream school, The Revised Primary School Curriculum 1999 is the curriculum used in Tir na nOg. This is adapted to suit the individual child and children may work on different subjects from different year groups depending on their developmental level. In addition to this, areas from the ABBS and VB-MAPP curriculum guides are targeted as appropriate to include some or all of the following:

VB-MAPP	ABBS
Manding	Cooperation and Reinforcer
Tacting	effectiveness
Listener responding	Visual performance
Visual perception skills	Receptive language
Independent play	Imitation
Social behaviour and social play	Vocal imitation
Motor imitation	Requesting
Echoic	Labelling
Spontaneous vocal behaviour	Intra-verbal
Intraverbal	Play and leisure skills
Classroom routines and group skills	Social interactions
Linguistic structure	Group instruction
	Following classroom routines
	Gross motor skills
	Fine motor skills

Assessment

Informal assessment in Tir na nÓg is ongoing and can include observation, teacher designed tasks as well as communicative and social interactions with the children. A number of formal assessments specific to children with ASD are used as appropriate depending on the needs of the individual child and may include ABBS, VB-MAPP, PEP3 along with observation profiles on the triad of impairments, social skills, behaviour, sensory processing and communication. As the children progress through the school, they may also be assessed formally in curricular areas along with the mainstream children using tests such as MICRA-T and SIGMA-T among others.

IEP Process

Individual Education Plans are developed for each child in consultation with parents and the clinical team, where appropriate. This will be done before the end of September and at the beginning of February. Targets are set at the developmental level of the individual child under the headings of curricular subjects, speech and language, occupational therapy, social and behaviour.

These are reviewed on an ongoing basis through informal consultation with parents and the clinical team and the more formal format of IEP review meetings. There will be a review meeting at the end of the school year.

Integration and Inclusion of pupils from Tír na nÓg into a Mainstream Class

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act) states;

‘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 of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with-

- (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
- (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

The school promotes a policy of integration with age appropriate peers on a social level and ability appropriate on a curriculum level. It may not always be possible to integrate children in their age equivalent class due to the age profile of the children in the unit. It is however, envisaged that the children will make their Holy Communion and Confirmation with their age appropriate peers.

The amount of integration/ reverse integration that each child receives in Clocha Rince NS is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. teachers (both special education teachers and mainstream), the principal and support staff. The views of other interested parties such as Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational therapists will be taken into account. Parents will be consulted on an ongoing basis and their feedback will play an integral part in deciding upon the appropriate level of integration which ultimately will be the decision of the Board of Management.

Curricular Integration

Having adjusted on a social level, the child from Tír na nÓg will, on a phased basis, be introduced to areas of the curriculum appropriate to ability level. Initial opportunities for integration will be based on individual pupils strengths and interests.

The children from Tír na nÓg are also fully included in the school sports day and drama and faith formation ceremonies.

Ultimately, we aim to gradually integrate pupils in mainstream classes without the need for an SNA to be present.

Reverse Integration

A policy of reverse integration extends to all classes. This involves:

1. The child from the Autism unit being integrated for core curriculum subjects such as Maths and English initially through reverse integration whereby 3-4 children from the mainstream class are withdrawn to join the child in their own environment. It is hoped that this will in the long term lead to conventional integration in the mainstream class.
2. **The level of integration into a mainstream class for a core curriculum subject will be on an individual basis only and will differ from child to child. The school will retain discretion as to the particular children who should avail of core curriculum mainstream integration.**

3. A timetabled buddy system involving the children from Tír na nÓg and children from 5th & 6th class is operational for all playtimes throughout the year. 'Buddies' will receive training by a Tír na nÓg teacher regarding autism and how to be a good 'buddy'.
4. Children in the Unit will integrate into mainstream classes on the basis of ability rather than age appropriateness.

Staff Roles:

Principal:

With reference to the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2005, the role of the principal entails;

1. Direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole school approach to special needs education within the school.
2. Ensuring proper and effective classroom planning exists.
3. Ensuring effective IEP's are developed and implemented in their entirety.
4. Responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resourcing.
5. Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustments following consultation.
6. Liaising with outside agencies, where applicable to the role.
7. Chair the monthly Tír na nÓg team meetings and SNA meetings.

Tír na nÓg Teachers:

1. Will identify the appropriate curriculum area the child in the Autism Unit should experience.
2. Directing the work of the SNAs.
3. Liasing with the parents and outside agencies.
4. Collaborate and consult with mainstream teachers and the Learning Support team in setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant short term and long term targets.
5. Assume responsibility for an ongoing IEP in consultation with the relevant support services, parents and the principal. The teacher will formulate an IEP before the end of September. Normally, this IEP will last until the end of January. An IEP meeting will also be held in early February to develop another IEP. The teacher is responsible for arranging IEP meetings with parents
6. Assume responsibility for arranging review meetings as required.
7. Assume responsibility for arranging an End of Year review/debriefing meeting with parents which must be held within the last two weeks of the normal school year.
8. Attend the monthly Tír na nÓg team meetings on the first Tuesday of every month from 3pm – 4pm.

Class Teachers:

1. Will differentiate teaching programmes to meet the needs of the child from the Tír na nÓg.
2. Provide a suitable seating arrangement in a mainstream setting.
3. Collaborate with the Tír na nÓg teacher and the S.N.A.
4. Provide feedback on progress.
5. Contribute to the IEP.

Special Needs Assistants/ Care Assistants.

Each class will be allocated a number of S.N.A's by the area SENO. Generally, the S.N.A'S are allocated to the school and employed by the Department of Education. They are not assigned to any one child and there is great scope in their job specification to move between classes when needs arise.

1. Assist the class teacher with the specific goals and targets set down in the child's IEP.
2. Provide for the care needs of the child in an inclusive setting where access to the curriculum is prioritised.
3. Attend the monthly Tír na nÓg team meetings when requested.

Staff Development:

In-service staff development will be provided at least once a year by a suitably qualified practitioner or by personnel from the Special Education Support Service (SESS).

The ongoing professional development of Tír na nÓg staff is an integral factor in developing Tír na nÓg as a centre of excellence.

In order to facilitate the delivery of this training, it will be necessary on some occasions to end classes earlier in the day. Parents will be informed in plenty of time of any change to the school day.

Staff Allocation

Staff will be allocated to Tír na nÓg as per the school's 'Staff Allocation Policy'. Teachers allocated to Tír na nÓg will spend a minimum term of 2 years as per this policy. Teachers allocated to a class in Tír na nÓg will be provided with the appropriate training and support.

Staff Absences

In the event that a member of Tír na nÓg staff is absent a substitute will be employed. It is policy to make every effort to employ a regular teacher/SNA substitute who will become familiar to the pupils in the unit and vice versa. However we are also aware that this will not always be possible. In the event that a new substitute is employed a current member of staff will mentor the substitute.

When a staff member's absence is expected, the staff of Tír na nÓg will prepare the pupils before the substitute is placed. The level of preparation will depend on the class and the substitute teacher being employed. Parents will also be informed in your child's Communication Copy.

Behavioural Management

Please see the 'Tír na nÓg Positive Behaviour Support Procedures', the 'Tír na nÓg Use of Emergency Procedures Policy' and the 'Tír na nÓg Consent for Use of Emergency Procedures'.

Code of Behaviour & Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policy

Please see the Clocha Rince NS Code of Behaviour & Discipline and Anti- Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in Clocha Rince NS which includes the pupils of Tír na nÓg. Due consideration is made of a pupil's special need when applying the code.

Policy on Enrolment

to Tír na nÓg ASD Unit

The Board of Management of Clocha Rince NS 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 the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2005, which has yet to be fully implemented.

This school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available at any given time.

The Board of Management reserve the right of admission.

Enrolment Procedures

Enrolment Criteria

In order for a child to be enrolled in Tír na nÓg, a place must be available and he/she must fully fulfil the following criteria:-

- ❖ Full psychological assessment specifying Autism (*a diagnosis of autism whose level of functioning is mild to moderate on the spectrum*) by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. This should be recent, within the last 24 months.
- ❖ School Application to Enrol Form – fully completed. By choosing Tír na nÓg as the class into which you wish to enrol your child, you are indicating that you wish your child to be enrolled in the ASD unit.
- ❖ Communication and performance levels on cognitive assessment should be within the mild learning disability or average range.
- ❖ The child should be able to use a regular toilet with or without assistance.
- ❖ All relevant reports and assessments must accompany the ‘Application to Enrol Form’ including OT or Speech and Language report, if relevant. Where there is insufficient information provided about a child, the Board of Management may not be able to process the application to enrol until such time as sufficient information, as deemed appropriate by the Board of Management, is made available.
- ❖ Parents/Guardians of prospective candidates must meet the Principal and Class Teacher as part of the application process.
- ❖ The Board of Management reserve the right to take into account any other criteria they deem relevant.

If the number of children who meet the above criteria on the list of applicants to enroll exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order, beginning with number one.

1. Brothers and sisters of existing pupils in Tír na nÓg – priority to eldest applicant
2. Brothers and sisters of existing pupils in Tír na nÓg who have attended Derrinturn ASD Pre-school Unit in the current or previous academic year – priority to eldest applicant
3. Brothers and sisters of existing pupils in Clocha Rince Mainstream who have attended Derrinturn ASD Pre-school Unit in the current or previous academic year – priority to eldest applicant

4. Brothers and sisters of existing pupils in Clocha Rince Mainstream – priority to eldest applicant
5. Children living within the school catchment area who have attended Derrinturn ASD Pre-school Unit in the current or previous academic year – priority to eldest applicant
6. Children living within the school catchment area – priority to eldest applicant
7. Children of staff members where the applicant has attended Derrinturn Pre-school ASD Unit in the current or previous academic year – priority to eldest applicant
8. Children of staff members – priority to eldest applicant
9. Children living outside the school’s catchment area where the applicant has attended Derrinturn ASD Pre-school Unit in the current or previous academic year – priority to the eldest
10. Children living outside the school’s catchment area –priority to the eldest.

Application Procedure

- Parents/Guardians seeking to enrol their child(ren) in Clocha Rince NS ASD Unit (Tír na n-Óg) are requested to return a completed ‘Enrolment Application Form’ (available from school office or from school website; www.clocharince.ie) with an original Birth/Adoption Certificate and Baptismal Certificate (where applicable) to the school.
- ‘Enrolment Application Forms will also have the following policies attached;
 - Welcome Booklet
 - Code of Behaviour & Discipline & Anti-Bullying Policy

Where the ‘Enrolment Application Form’ is downloaded from the website, parents may view these policies online or request a hard-copy from the school.

- All applications are kept on file until a place becomes available. When a place becomes available, all applicants will be contacted to ascertain whether their application is still ‘live’ i.e. the applicant requires the application to be considered. The ‘live’ applications will be considered in the context of the selection criteria listed below.
- **Parents/Guardians should be aware that the length of time since the application was made is not a criterion when processing applications.**
- Parents/Guardians will receive verbal confirmation on the availability of a place in the ASD Unit within 21 days of the application. In the event that there is not a place of enrolment available, the applicant will be informed that their application will be kept on file.
- Incomplete applications will be returned and only marked ‘received’ once all requested documentation is made available.

- Parents/Guardians applying for a place of enrolment should ensure they familiarise themselves with all school policies. Policies are available on the school website. A hard copy of policies may be provided upon request.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be informed in writing that their application has been successful and that a place of enrolment is available for their child/children.

Upon receipt of this written notice parents/guardians must;

- return their ‘Acceptance of Enrolment’ form to the school within 10 days.
- sign the ‘Acceptance of Enrolment’ form which gives an undertaking to support all school policies.
- agree to furnish the school with a copy of their child’s file from their previous school, where applicable.
- agree to furnish the school with all further educational/psychological/multi-disciplinary reports on the pupil.
- inform the school of any family law issues which are relevant to the pupil.
- inform the school of any issues relevant to the full development of their child.
- Inform the school of any contagious infections the pupil may suffer whilst enrolled in Clocha Rince NS.

On acceptance of a placement the parent/guardian must recognise and acknowledge that the Board of Management may terminate a placement should they deem the placement unsuitable and/or consider the continued enrolment of the pupil to be a threat to the health and safety of the pupils in the ASD Unit and/or to the mainstream pupil population and/or the school staff.

Any such decision may be appealed to the Board. Any subsequent Board decision may be further appealed to the Department of Education Appeals Board. The principal will provide a parent/guardian with all information in this regard. (See ‘Appeals’ section in this document)

The successful enrolment of a child in Tír na nÓg does not ensure a place of enrolment in a mainstream class in Clocha Rince NS.

Individual Consideration and Yearly Review

All children with autism present with differing profiles. For this reason all applications to enrol are considered individually.

Each child’s enrolment in the unit is reviewed on an annual basis.

Please note that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if the necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment to ensure an ability by the school to deliver an appropriate education to the pupil are not available.

The Board of Management of Clocha Rince N.S. respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. This consideration must be paramount when assessing applications to Tír na n-Óg and will be a factor when deciding on the result of the application.

Age

The Board is bound by the Department of Education and Science's *Rules for National Schools* which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards. (Pupil must have been 4 on the 1st September of the year of enrolment)

Equality

Equality of access is a key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, language, accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs, family or social circumstances.

Cooperation with School Policy

Children enrolled in our ASD Unit are, in so far as appropriate to their level of autism, required to cooperate with and support the School's 'Code of Behaviour and Discipline & Anti-Bullying Policy' as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. This same support is expected from parents/guardians. The Board of management places responsibility on parents/guardians for ensuring that their child/children co-operate with all school policies.

In accordance with the DES Rules for National Schools and the school's Code of Behaviour & Discipline, a child may be suspended/expelled.

All school policies will be reviewed from time to time.

Refusal To Admit

The Board may refuse the admission of a pupil if

- the class is oversubscribed
- the parents have refused to accept and support school policy
- the pupil does not have a diagnosis of autism by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist with a recommendation of enrolment in a unit for children with autism.
- the pupil does not have a diagnosis of autism by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist with a recommendation of enrolment in a unit for children with autism and whose level of functioning is on the mild learning disability or average category.
- the child is not able to use a regular toilet with or without assistance.
- the Board of Management forms the opinion that the child is a danger to himself/herself and others.

The Board of Management reserves the right to take other factors into account which they deem to be relevant.

Appeals

The Board of Management of a school is also obliged under section 19(3) of the Educational Welfare Act 2000 to make a decision in writing in respect of an application for enrolment within 21 days (whereby all specified and other requested information has been received by the

school and if not 21 days from receipt of same) or, in the case of applications into Junior Infants, 21 days after the deadline for enrolment, and to inform the parents in writing of that decision.

Parents of pupils who have been refused enrolment will be informed by letter of their entitlement to appeal the decision of the Board of Management. They will be informed that they may appeal the decision to the Board of Management if they feel the Board's decision is contrary to the school's enrolment policy. A parent wishing to appeal such a decision should write directly to the chairperson of the Board of Management outlining their grounds for appeal. The case will be discussed by the Board of Management within 8 days and the outcome will be communicated promptly in writing to the parent/s. If the refusal to admit remains the parents will be directed to visit the DES website and consult circular 22/02.

Where a Section 28 appeal to the Board of Management fails, the parent of the student or, where the student has reached 18 years of age, the student himself or herself, following the conclusion of any appeal procedures at school level, has a statutory entitlement under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. A committee is established to hear the appeal with hearings conducted with a minimum of formality. In most cases appeals must be dealt with within 30 days. Where appropriate, the Secretary General may give whatever directions to the Board of Management that are considered necessary to remedy the matter complained of.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007), are available on the Department's website at www.education.ie

In the event that an appeal is investigated by the DES, a response will be prepared by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management. Section 12 of circular 22/02 will be consulted which relates to the Processing of an Appeal.

Discharge Policy

Rationale:

The policy was formulated so that;

1. Teaching staff have well defined guidelines on best practice.
2. Parents are fully aware of these practices.
3. There is consistency throughout the school.
4. Optimum learning experiences are provided for all the children of the school body in an age appropriate environment.

Aims:

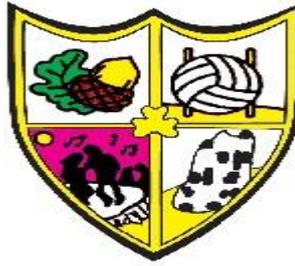
1. To provide a teaching and learning experience that enables pupils with Special Educational Needs to become exposed to learning in a mainstream setting and special class setting.
2. To enable the children in the mainstream classes to observe and interact with children with special needs, encouraging understanding and tolerance.
3. To develop the social skills and self esteem of the children in the Tír na nÓg to enable them transfer seamlessly to an appropriate second level setting

Criteria

1. Pupils who reach the age of 13 on or after September 1st in any school year may complete that particular academic year in the school resulting in a June discharge i.e. all pupils leave on the June after their 13th birthday.
2. Pupils in (1) above may avail of the July Programme for 1 year following June discharge.
3. Pupils who are considered by the school to be fully integrated into mainstream will be discharged.
4. Discharge from the unit may also occur if the school authorities and relevant professionals, in consultation with parents / guardians, feel that the child's placement is not appropriate.

Review

This policy will be reviewed during the 2014/2015 school year or earlier if required.



School Schedule

Clocha Rince NS aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. Clocha Rince models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the catholic faith.

Mission Statement

Clocha Rince NS, is a national school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, for the education of children primarily from the Parish of Balyna and the town of Edenderry and surrounding areas. The school is committed to the aims and principles of the ‘Revised Primary School Curriculum’ (1999). It celebrates the uniqueness of each child as expressed in each child’s personality, intelligence and potential for development. The school seeks to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

Our curriculum aims to enable each child:

- **To live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual.**
- **To develop as a social being, through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.**
- **To prepare for further education and lifelong learning.**

We aim to provide quality-learning experiences that are engaging, enriching and stimulating through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Pupils and school staff do their best, respecting others and the school environment.

Parents/Guardians encourage and positively support their child to behave in this manner. The Principal and teachers continue to make the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained. Whole school policy development in curricular, administrative, organisational and pastoral areas will be central. This will involve regular reviews of policy and practice. Teachers lead the learning experience through good classroom management, the positive application of rules and the encouragement of each child to respect and follow the school’s Code of Behaviour.

All school partners will strive to ensure a happy and safe environment exists for our pupils. Clocha Rince NS will continue to nurture and grow our pupils with a special interest in sport, music and Informational Technology. Information and Communication Technology and Digital Learning will be central to the learning experiences in our school. The pupils will be guided to an awareness and concern for our environment. The Green Schools initiative will be fostered through the school's Green School's Committee and the promotion of our Green Code.

The school views itself as an integral part of the parish and in partnership with parents seeks to nurture the Catholic faith through religious education, preparation for the Sacraments and through the ethos of the school. Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church. Prayer is a feature of the school day and pupils are given opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school. The school models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by Gospel values. Christ, Mary and St. Brigid are a familiar and attractive reality for the pupils and staff and are admired as the exemplars of the values.

Clocha Rince NS seeks to be a warm, welcoming place, respectful and accommodating of the diversity in race, culture, religion, gender and ability. We recognise the dignity and value of each person made in the image and likeness of God. We strive to provide an inclusive environment responsive to the needs of all, including members of the travelling community, refugees, foreign nationals or children with special needs. We aim to promote equity in all areas and to strive to provide extra support for any child with a learning disability or any learning difficulty.

We value most highly our relationship with parents and the local community and seek to continue to work with all school partners in our mission. We strive to foster a sense of community between management, teachers, parents and pupils and a sense of insertion into the wider community of the parish. The pupils are encouraged to participate in appropriate parish activities. We hope that the pupils will gradually acquire a sense of the Universal Church whose concern extends to all peoples.

The school is a learning community. We promote and value lifelong learning for all. We urge all the school partners to work together, in good faith, to reinforce the shared values of home and school.

**Please see home page of our website for the Application to
Enrol Form**



Clocha Rince NS