



Grange Community College

Autism Class Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

Grange Community College is a multi-denominational College serving the local community of Donaghmede and the surrounding area. The school operates under Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The Department of Education and Skills recognises the challenges posed by students diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Thus, Grange Community College has a special support class within its school to cater for students on the Autistic Spectrum who can participate with support in a mainstream school. For the purpose of clarity, the term Autism Class will be used in this document. However, in practice, this class is called the Gareth Suite in our school.

One class will have the capacity to cater for a maximum of six students who:

- Are secondary aged pupils (as per Department of Education and Science Guidelines).
- Have a diagnosis of ASD (DSM-IV).
- Have the potential to be part of a mainstream secondary school.
- Grange Community College provides a support class that is an open, inclusive and unrestricted environment and setting. This class is not a high dependent unit.
- Have the potential to access the mainstream curriculum or part of the mainstream curriculum with the aid of the support class. Students who are enrolled in this class will follow a Junior and Senior Programme (6 years). In addition, students with ASD can access high-quality

support for learning and Junior Certificate Level 2 Learning Programmes, if appropriate. Students will be registered with their relevant year/class group.

- Have completed primary school education or equivalent.
- Are attending Holy Trinity Primary School, Scoil Naomh Colmcille, Belmayne Educate Together National School and St. Francis of Assisi Primary School Belmayne.

As per DES Guidelines, the school will not exceed the maximum number of six students per Autism Class.

At present, the school has one class. To ensure that we provide a mainstream education to all students, there is a maximum of two students with an ASD diagnosis per class group.

The main aims of the Autism Class are:

- To meet the educational needs of the students.
- To provide academic support in the areas of literacy and numeracy skills.
- To support the participation of students in mainstream activities, as appropriate.
- To enhance the social and communication skills of the students.
- To develop organisational skills and strategies to enable the students to cope with everyday life.

The Autism Class will facilitate a transfer programme for new students. The model of inclusion will underpin the work of the Autism class.

2. Admissions Team

A specially appointed admissions team will review applications and apply the admissions criteria. The admissions team will consist of the principal of Grange Community College, the coordinator of the ASD class and Deputy Principal. The role of the admissions team is:

- To consider each individual application in the context of the entry criteria, as outlined in this policy.
- To determine if the individual application meets the entry criteria.
- To ensure a fair and consistent procedure is used when deciding on individual applications to the special class at Grange Community College. The following criteria will apply: places will be allocated to (a) siblings of existing students, (b) students attending National Schools (Holy Trinity Primary School, Scoil Naomh Colmcille, Belmayne Educate Together National School and St. Francis of Assisi Primary School Belmayne. (c) schools in the following catchment area (CAPP, Central Application for Post-Primary). Students not in the above categories will be considered in order of receipt of an initial letter of application, as per mailing list.
- To assess the applicant's needs and the capacity of the support class to meet these needs.

Enrolment in this class shall be done in consultation with school management, parents, Resource Centre personnel, and where appropriate, with other professionals. Students are admitted to the class subject to availability of places and resources. The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases, such as the school cannot meet the special needs of the student and/or cannot provide the student with an appropriate education, even with additional resources from the DES.

In accordance with the DDLETB Admissions Policy, admission to a particular course/activity is subject to places being available and is governed by three principles:

- That in the professional judgment of the School Authority (the term 'School Authority' as in these regulations, indicates the Chief Executive Officer or an officer delegated to act on his behalf), and following an interview (if deemed appropriate) the student/participant is suitable for the course/activity.
- That in the professional judgement of the School Authority, the student/participant, because of previous education, training or experience, is considered likely to benefit from attendance.
- That participation will contribute positively to the course/activity and in no way infringe upon the opportunities or rights of other students or staff.

3. Criteria

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide all relevant information on applying to the school. All medical, psychological and other relevant reports must be presented e.g. reports from a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, Physiotherapist.

3.1 Enrolment Application

An Enrolment Application from the ASD Classroom provided by the school should be fully completed by the parents on behalf of the students.

3.2 Transfers

Grange Community College does not accept transfers from other special classrooms into its ASD classroom.

3.3 Incoming First Years

Priority will be given to Incoming First Year student applicants.

3.4 Professional Report

A psychological report or multi-disciplinary team report is required.

A multi-disciplinary team can consist of a Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, Physiotherapist etc. Both private and public professional reports are acceptable.

3.5 Diagnosis

A diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM-IV) specified by a psychologist or multi-disciplinary team is required.

Where an individual has multiple/co-occurring disabilities, Autism/ASD should be the primary need/disability.

3.6 Recommendation

A recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is required. This recommendation must be made by the professional and indicated in the report.

3.7 Up-to-date Assessments/Reports

All assessments should preferably be dated within twelve months of the application deadline and should refer to the pupil's transition to second level education. Reports must be submitted with the application. If deemed necessary by the school, further assessment may be requested prior to enrolment.

Written parental consent will be sought prior to any report being read by members of the Admissions Team.

All reports and documentation will be stored confidentially and locked in a secure filing cabinet.

Parental permission to access the applicant's primary school/previous educational records will be sought, including copies of the most recent IEP and records of academic attainment.

It is desirable that the SEN teacher of the support class speak to the previous school/educational setting personnel to determine the applicant's level of academic achievement.

Failure to disclose all relevant information will render this application invalid.

4. Procedure for Admissions

Please note the closing date for applications is listed at the bottom of the application form. Applications after this date cannot be processed.

The Parent/Guardian makes an application for a place for their son/daughter in the special class to Grange Community College. The application process comprises:

- Completion of an application form with criteria documentation/reports as outlined above.
- Contact with or visit the primary school/previous educational setting by the coordinator.
- Confirmation from parents/guardians that they wish to continue with their application for their son/daughter.
- An interview with parent/guardian and student. If necessary, a case conference involving all parties may be convened. This conference may include parents, principal, class teacher,

psychologist or other interested parties as appropriate.

- Notification to the parents of the admissions team's decision is in February.
- A transfer programme for students who have been allocated a place in the special class will then commence. Following this, students will begin their first-year programme.

The closing date for applications is from the first week in February.