**Enrolment Policy and General Guidelines for Enrolment in “Bellair” Special Class**

***St. Ciaran’s and St. Manchan’s N.S.***

**Enrolment Policy and General Guidelines for Enrolment in “Bellair” Special Class for pupils with Autism in St. Ciaran and St. Manchan’s Mixed N.S :**

**Introduction;**

The Board of Management of St. Ciaran & St. Manchan’s N.S. has set out this policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act of 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Disabilities Act 2005 and The Epson Act 2004.

**Rationale;**

The Board trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment, and it will also provide clarity for the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the Principal, staff and parents in relation to enrolment into the Special Class (to be referred to as the “Bellair Class” forthwith.)

**Mission Statement**;

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s National School is a co-educational, Catholic Primary School, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, mental and cultural needs of our pupils are identified and addressed.

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s National School is a school with a Catholic ethos, while having due recognition to all other Religions.

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s N.S. will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s N.S. will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts, and through their involvement in our Parent Association.

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in our school community and to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property, and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

St. Ciaran’s & St. Manchan’s N.S. will promote gender equity amongst their staff and pupils.

**History of Bellair Class;**

Established in September 2017 under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills, St. Ciaran and St. Manchan’s Mixed N.S.’s Bellair Class offers a specialised educational service to children who have been fully diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.)

Bellair Class strives to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil.

With a team of dedicated teachers and supporting Special Needs Assistants, the school provides individual attention in a small class and caters for the uniqueness of each pupil’s personality and needs.

Families of students are encouraged to participate in the development of their child’s learning, to enable the child to attain their educational potential and to fulfil their role in society.

Aims and Objectives of Bellair Class;

* To establish criteria under which applications for enrolment in our Bellair Class shall be considered.
* To enable applications for admission to Bellair Class to be handled in an open, transparent manner.
* To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application for enrolment.
* To ensure, in accordance with our Mission Statement, that each pupil will grow to his/her full potential and to prepare them for life to the best of his/her ability.
* To provide a high quality, appropriate educational service to all the children in Bellair, within the requirements of all recent legislation pertaining to Special Needs Education.
* To enhance the communicative and social skills of each child in the Bellair Class.
* To strive towards the integration of children in Bellair into mainstream education, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability of such integration.
* To be open to using an eclectic approach to teaching our pupils in order to find an approach that best suits the needs of each individual.

Enrolment Procedure and Admissions Process;

1. A referral from the H.S.E. Early Intervention Team and H.S.E. 5-18 School Age Team, NEPS or a telephone call or visit in person from the parent.
2. Completion of Pre-Enrolment Form for Bellair Class, accompanied by an up to date Diagnosis from a psychiatrist, psychologist or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team that has assessed and classified the child as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria, and a recommendation for placement in a special class within a mainstream school.
3. Fully completed applications are then recorded and filed in the School Enrolment File.
4. All the above information will be forwarded to the Special Needs Officer, (SENO) as part of the admissions process.
5. All applications to the class may be assessed before admission by a multi-disciplinary team which may consist of the following members; Principal of St. Ciaran and St. Manchan’s N.S., Class teacher, NEPS Representative, HSE representatives – members of the Early Intervention Team/School Age Team, SENO.
6. Places are offered on a needs basis; and not on a first-come-first-served basis.
7. The school will inform all applicants in writing if they have or have not been offered a place.
8. Confirmation of acceptance **must be received within 7 days of receiving an offer,** of a place, complete with required documentation.
9. Failure to do so **will result in the forfeiting of the place**and a new application must be made to reinstate the child on the list of applicants for placement in subsequent years.
10. Once the place has been offered and accepted in writing the following documentation must be completed;
* A standard school enrolment form which includes information for the Primary Online Database (POD)
* NCSE Special Class Enrolment form
* School Transport Application Form (where a parent requires access to school transport to be completed and returned by end of April)
* Psychological Assessment Reports and Assessments from other relevant professional eg. Speech and Language/Occupational Therapy/Birth and Baptismal Certificates
1. Admission to the class remains the responsibility of the Board of Management of St. Ciaran and St. Manchan’s N.S.

**Enrolment Criteria;**

The maximum class size is six pupils. If the number of applicants enrolling exceeds this the following criteria will apply;

* Priority will be given to pupils already enrolled in the school who have been recommended for a place in Bellair Class.
* Siblings of existing pupils.
* Children living in the parish, but not included above.
* Children from outside the parish who have been recommended for a place.
* If spaces are still available, they will be allocated as per waiting list, once an assessment has been made by the admissions team.
* Allocation of a place in Bellair Class does not guarantee a place in the mainstream classes for any siblings.
* The Board of Management will not refuse a child enrolment on the basis of; ethnicity, disability, (i.e. severity of Autism diagnosis), traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria.

Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if;

* Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available.
* Sufficient classroom space is not available.
* The Admissions Team decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child.

**Routines and General Information;**

* The school day in Bellair Class runs from 9:10 am to 1:50pm for those pupils with less than two full years completed at primary school or who have not yet reached their 7th After this the school day runs from 9:10am to 2:50pm.
* Children must only enter Bellair Classroom when accompanied by a Special Needs Assistant. (SNA). The SNA will meet your child at an arranged pick-up point in the school yard from 9:00 -9:10am.
* There is a 10 minute break at 11:00am -11:10am.

Lunch break  !2:30pm – 1:00pm

* At end of day pupils will be brought to the pre-arranged pick-up/drop-off point, where they will be met by either their parent/guardian or bus escort.
* As per mainstream school, parents are expected to contribute towards the cost of school books, stationery and other extra-curricular activities as they arise.

**School Attendance;**

Each child to whom the Education Welfare Act is obliged by law to attend school every day on which school is in operation, unless there is a reasonable excuse for not attending. 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/guardians.

**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 note written in the child’s home/school diary. If a child needs to leave early, a written note must be sent to the teacher and a named adult must sign the child out in the School Day Book on collection.

**Communication with School;**

Parents are always welcome to visit the school to discuss their child’s progress. However, it is impossible for teachers or other staff members to talk to parents or to deal with their queries satisfactorily if they arrive unexpectedly. In order for meaningful communications to take place, **please ring the school secretary and make an appointment to see the teacher/principal.** Parent/Teacher meetings are held annually, usually in the month of November.

Constant communication and monitoring of progress is achieved through the school/home diary and the use of on-line forum eg Seesaw, WhatsApp, Zoom or Skype. Parental permission will be required for use of on-line forum.

The diary remains the property of the school at all times. The home/school diary contains a brief note about each activity during the day and is updated by all staff in Bellair Class. It is regularly reviewed by the class teacher.

**Information we need;**

In order for us to provide the best care for your child and to interact with them meaningfully, we request the following information;

* Emergency contact numbers. Please inform us immediately of any change of phone number or contact details.
* Information on allergies.
* Medical needs.
* Hygiene needs.
* Information on family composition eg siblings, etc.
* Extended family and friends.
* Any other information which you may consider relevant or helpful for us to get to know your child and his/her needs.

Note; Changes in family circumstances, eg. The arrival of a new baby, moving home, the death of a grandparent/relative etc. can have an effect on your child. You may wish to notify the class teacher of any such event. All details will be treated in confidence and will be shared with your child’s carers on a need to know basis only.

**Dress/Clothing/Belongings.**

A large part of our school programme is dedicated towards the development of your child’s independence. We want them to be able to manage and look after their own clothes and belongings.

You can help us by;

* Choosing clothes and shoes that make life easier for your child, eg. elastic waistbands and Velcro shoes/runners are simplest.
* Ensuring your child’s name is on everything that is worn or brought to school.
* Ensuring that a change of clothes is available in the school for your child.
* Ensuring that all money sent into school should be in an envelope and is clearly labelled.
* A money collection system, DebaPay, is in use in the school and is highly recommended. Further details on enrolment.

**Personal Care/Illness**

Everybody works best when they feel clean and comfortable. Hygiene is a whole school issue. As such we encourage parents to;

* Keep children’s nails short.
* Check your child’s hair regularly.
* Send in change of clothes, nappies if necessary and any other hygiene requirements.
* Home is the best place for a sick child.
* Keep wounds properly dressed.
* Notify teacher/B.O.M. to make arrangements for administration of medication.
* Never send medication to school with your child. It should always be handed from adult *to*

**Suitable Snacks for School;**

Our school operates a Healthy Eating Policy for all of our pupils.

A hot lunch is provided daily in our school.

While we respect the dietary difficulties faced by some of our children, we encourage healthy, balanced diets. Suitable snacks include fruit, yoghurts, crackers, cheese and sandwiches. Please inform the school if your child has a special dietary requirement or allergies.

**Discharge Policy;**

It is our school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from Bellair Class once they have reached the age of twelve. Pupils who reach the age of twelve after the 30th September in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year.

Discharge may also be recommended if the Admissions Team, after consultation with the parents/guardians, feel that the placement is not appropriate.

Discharge from Bellair Class may also happen if a mainstream placement would better suit the needs of the pupil.