

HEYWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Admissions Policy

Autism Spectrum Disorder Centre

'The Ryan Centre'

2024/2025 Version

(Adopted 2021/2022)

School Address: Heywood Community School,
Ballinakill, Co. Laois.

Roll number: 91427C

School Patron/s: The Salesians of Don Bosco Ireland &
Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

1.Introduction

The Board of Management of Heywood Community School has developed this policy for the A.S.D. Centre in conjunction with the overall policy of the school. All relevant sections of the main policy are therefore applicable to the policy for the Autistic Spectrum classes. Parents are therefore advised to read the Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the school, the Admissions Statement and other relevant sections.

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education for Persons with a Special Educational Needs Act, 2000 (EPSEN Act, 2000), the Education for Persons with a Special Education Needs Act, 2004, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Education Welfare Act 2002. The Board of Management trusts that by doing so parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters and that furthermore, the Chairperson of the BOM, and the Principal teacher for the school, will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

The policy was approved by the school patrons on the 9th of March 2021. 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 Heywood Community School's 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

In general, this policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned. The admissions notice for special classes for the school year 2021/2022 did not run in conjunction with mainstream admissions but will do so in future years.

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.

2. Admission Statement -Special Education Classes.

Schools with special education class(es).

Heywood Community School is a school which has established an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) centre with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

From 2021/2022, the ASD centre within Heywood Community School will accept students in liaison with the advice of the NCSE (National Council for Special Education) and the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser).

The board will prioritise applications initially as follows:

- Students currently enrolled in the school who meet the criteria for education in a Special Class designated for students with Autism attached to a mainstream school.
- Siblings who meet the criteria for education in a Special Class designated for students with Autism attached to a mainstream school.
- Applicants who are currently living in the catchment area of Heywood Community School and are currently enrolled in a Special Class that is designated for students with Autism in one of the Listed Primary Schools.
- When making an application to the ASD class, it is understood and accepted that the parent/applicant understands that they are applying for a special designated class only.

3. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached

Heywood Community School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a centre attached to the mainstream school to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- **All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder and have a formal recommendation for a post Primary special class setting at the time of their application.**
- **The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10.**
- **All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist.**
- **The psychologist must outline the complex needs of the student in the report. A clear statement in support of student's enrolment in a Special Class placement at post primary level is necessary also.**

A prospective student for the ASD Centre must have a recent professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class in an ASD Centre. Professional recommendations must be supplied by parent(s)/guardian(s) with each application for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management.

Failure to fulfil the requirements or present evidence of a formal recommendation for a post-primary special class and a formal diagnosis of autism will result in the refusal of an application.

4. Admission of Students

Heywood Community School serves the educational needs of the community of Abbeyleix, Durrow and Ballinakill and the surrounding areas. More specifically this school normally but

not exclusively caters for students from the following national schools and the A.S.D. centres attached to these schools.

Scoil Mhuire, Abbeyleix; South School, Abbeyleix; St. Pius N.S., Ballacolla; Ballinakill N.S.; Ballyroan Boys N.S.; Ballyroan Girls N.S.; Clough N.S.; Cullohill N.S.; Our Lady's Meadow N.S., (Durrow) Knock N.S.; Tobar an Léinn, Raheen; Shanahoe N.S.; Swan N.S.; Lisdowney N.S.; Ballyragget Girls N.S. and Ballyragget Boys N.S

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) 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.
- c) The special class attached to Heywood Community School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.
- d) Any form of communication i.e. phone call, conversation with members of the Resource Department, discussion with Special Education Needs Officer (SENO), meeting with any member of staff, visit to the school, or recommendation from any external agency or person does not equate to “a reasonable expectation” that a place in our ASD class will be offered to an applicant. Such scenarios do not equate to an application to the school.

5. Curriculum.

Heywood Community School operates within the parameters of DES regulations and programmes, the rights of the patrons as set out in the Education Act 1998 and the funding and resources available. ‘HCS A.S.D. Centre’ supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

‘HCS A.S.D. Centre’ will use the National Curriculum for Post Primary Schools as the teaching framework prescribed by the DES for all students in the class. This may be amended from time to time, in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). Where appropriate the following areas will be considered:

- Behaviour management,
- Independent task completion,
- Social and communication skills.

All students will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) drawn up, subsequent to a period of observation, to address their specific educational needs and subject to review at the end of term. Parents will be required to be involved in this process.

Core subjects (including literacy and numeracy) will be differentiated to suit the education needs of each student. Language/communication skills development and social skills development will be addressed as part of the education plan and will be subject to the individual student's needs. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have published draft guidelines for a range of curriculum areas to cater for a range of ability levels. Reference will be made to these guidelines.

A period of observation and baseline assessment (eg. dynamic, cognitive, adaptive, etc.) will follow placement in the class, coordinated by the NEPS psychologist.

Instruction will be given on a one-to-one basis where appropriate and specific teaching methods will be implemented.

The selected goals will be communicated to parents through the communication channels in place.

Educational Arrangements.

Whilst registered in the ASD class, it is the school's educational approach to integrate students into mainstream classes where appropriate.

Students registered in the ASD class subject to fulfilling the application criteria may apply for the optional Transition Year Programme. This Transition Year Programme is within the mainstream school and not part of the ASD class programme.

The HCS A.S.D. centre will offer all or some of the following tailored to individual need:

- Access to the National Curriculum.
- Differentiation in pace, style and content of the curriculum required.
- Whilst registered in the ASD class, it is the school's educational approach to integrate students into mainstream classes where appropriate.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) which defines teaching objectives relating to the national curriculum and social interaction, communication and lack of flexibility in thinking.
- A teaching group no greater than 6 students.
- Opportunities for inclusion with age-appropriate peers or class group in relation to functional/social activities,
- Strategies for management of behaviour.
- Process and frequency of reviewing and evaluation.
- A consistent and structured approach to classroom management and opportunities to participate in all school activities.
- Pastoral support.
- Access to multi-agency advice (when/where available) on designing specific IEP strategies to meet objectives,
- Regular home school liaison in the form of a communication copybook.
- A consistent approach from all staff in the class and the school as a whole.

6. Oversubscription.

Entry Requirements

Enrolment is open to all students who satisfy the following criteria.

1. Age: Students considered must be not older than 18 years.
2. Primary education must be completed.
3. Acceptance of our school's "Code of Behaviour." All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage any defiant or oppositional behaviour using strategies and through the implementation of a student's Individual Educational Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management.
4. All students where possible undertake to follow the prescribed curriculum. Science is a compulsory subject for all mainstream Junior Level classes. For health and safety reasons – Science class groups will not exceed twenty-four (24) students. The maximum number of students in any one Junior Year will be determined by the number of Science classes of 24 in that year. There are no compulsory classes for students in special classes but participation in mainstream classes if applicable.

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection 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:

Preference will be given to students where home address is within the school's designated transport catchment area. (i.e., Primary schools listed above).

Any remaining places will be allocated to:

- Siblings of current students where all the older members of the family have attended or are attending our school.
- Children of staff of Heywood C.S. and or of B.O.M. of Heywood C.S.
- Other Schools by tradition:
Wolfhill N.S., Ratheniska N.S., Timahoe N.S., Cosby N.S. – applicants from these schools must reside within the immediate vicinity of Heywood Community School.
- Children of past pupils.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

- Students living in closest proximity to the school will be accepted first.

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:

- (a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude will only be considered for admission to 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
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than siblings of current students where all the older members of the family have attended, or are attending our school.

In relation to parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the remaining spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

- (f) 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Heywood Community School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy and the Education Welfare Act, 2000.
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable).
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form for a place in a special class.

The centre when fully open will have two classes of six (twelve places), but it is the Board's intention to open only one of the of the two sanctioned classes, (six students) for the school year 2021/2022. In the event that applications for enrolment exceeds/is expected to exceed the number of places available, the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) will be notified with a view to facilitating the provision of places elsewhere.

At no time will the class size in the 'A.S.D. Centre' exceed six in either class. All other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children, will be kept under continuous review.

Following receipt of an application for enrolment to the 'A.S.D. Centre' with accompanying reports, the BOM will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Resources may include, for example access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following:

- Visiting teacher service
- Special needs assistant
- Specialised equipment or furniture
- Transport services
- Additional teaching hours
- Additional supervision hours
- Other

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 for enrolment in the A.S.D. centre.

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, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 16 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Heywood Community School, you must indicate the following;

(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.

(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.

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 Heywood Community School where;

- (i) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) 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.

- (iii) 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
- (iv) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in section 10 above.

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.

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 Heywood Community 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 Heywood Community School is in the order of priority assigned to the students’ applications 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.

15. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of management of Heywood Community School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

16. 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.

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.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

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.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

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. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

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. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

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.

Conclusion

The Board of Management of Heywood Community School, in devising this “Admissions Policy”, is determined to ensure that this co-educational school serves students of all abilities in a healthy, safe, positive, challenging and rewarding learning environment. The Board would like to emphasise to parents/guardians the necessity for the school and the home to work together, and in partnership, to develop fully the range of talents, abilities and personalities of its students, so that they can, both individually and collectively, contribute confidently and productively to the local and global communities.

This Policy applies to all applications to the ‘HCS ASD Centre’ of Heywood Community School for the year 2024-2025 subject to review.

Checklist for Parents –Application for Admission to ASD Centre.

Heywood Community School.

Please include the following forms/documents.

Application Forms and Reports.

- 1. A Fully Completed Application Form for ASD Centre in Heywood Community School.** The closing date for receipt of such completed applications is the 10th November 2023 See Admissions Notice on School Website: www.heywood.ie.
- 2. Original Birth Certificate of the applicant.**
- 3. Two of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area must accompany the application for enrolment-** Electricity Bill, Gas Bill, Landline telephone bill or Television supplier bill.
- 4. An Assessed Primary Diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder.** The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable. 5.
- 5. A prospective student for the ASD Centre must have a recent professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class in an ASD Centre.** Professional recommendations must be supplied by parent(s)/guardian(s) with each application for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management.
- 6. School Reports** and relevant documented information from other school(s) attended (if applicable).
- 7. Details of any Medications** that the applicant may be in receipt of either at home or during the course of the day.

Parents/Guardians should note:

Parents /Guardians of a child being offered a place in the ASD Centre will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child. Any further information requested by the Parent/Guardian may be provided at this meeting.

Admissions Policy approved and ratified by Board of Management.

Date: 09/03/2021.

Signed by Chairperson on behalf of the Board of Management

Signature: Don Carroll

Amended by Board of Management on Date: 09/03/2021.

Proposed By:	Fr. Dan Carroll
Seconded By:	Ms. Joyce Byrne
Signature of Chairperson:	<u>Don Carroll</u>
Date:	09/03/2021