

Heywood Community School



Admissions Policy

Autism Spectrum Centre

'The Ryan Centre'

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1.0 Mission Statement

Heywood Community School provides an educational setting in which the person is encouraged to grow at every level – personally, academically, spiritually, socially and culturally

2.0. Summary

The Board of Management of Heywood Community School has developed this policy for the AS Centre in conjunction with the overall admissions policy of the school. All relevant sections of the main admissions 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with our annual admissions policy.

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

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.

3.0 Enrolment Process

Heywood Community School is a school which has established an Autism Spectrum (AS) 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.

3.1 Eligibility for Enrolment

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.

Entry Requirements

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

- Age: Students considered must be not older than 18 years.
- Primary education must be completed.
- 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.
- All students where possible undertake to follow the prescribed curriculum.

- All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism 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 (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)) **within the past two years that strongly recommends placement in an AS Class attached to a mainstream school**. The psychologist must outline the complex needs of the student in the report.
- Applicants must be known to the NCSE and have the relevant NCSE letter confirming their eligibility for the special class

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.

3.2 Mainstream Integration

Integration of students in mainstream is the priority of the AS Classroom/Centre. Although students attached to the support class have their own base in the AS classroom, they will, when appropriate to the students' learning, attend mainstream classes both with and without SNA support. It is essential that a student can have some level of integration into the whole school environment.

Each application requires a report from the primary school outlining the student's academic, social, emotional, behavioural and physical needs. The needs of the students already enrolled in the class will also be taken into consideration when enrolling a new student.

Prior to acceptance, parents/guardians will be asked to attend a meeting with a member or members of the Ryan Centre Enrolment Committee, to ensure that the needs of their child can be met within the resources available to the school.

3.3 Selection Criteria

Places will be offered in the following order:

Category	
Category A	Applications from students already enrolled in Heywood Community School who has received their AS diagnosis after enrolment and have been recommended for a place in an AS classroom and attended a feeder primary school (See section 4.0)
Category B	Applicants who are currently in 6th class in one of our listed Feeder schools in section 4.
Category C	Applicants who have a sibling who is currently in the school
Category D	All other applicants not listed in category A – D.

In the event of oversubscription, places will be offered in the order listed above. 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.

- Places will be determined by a lottery.
- The lottery will take place in Heywood C.S as soon as is practicable after enrolment day.
- The lottery will be overseen by the school Principal and will be witnessed by a Deputy Principal, School Secretary and an independent party.
- Places will be offered in the order in which names were drawn until available places are filled.
- The remaining names will be placed on a Waiting List in the order in which the names were drawn from the drum

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.

This list will remain valid until the commencement of the enrolment process for the following year.

3.4 Initial Term 1 Review

Heywood Community School acknowledges that the transition to Post Primary school for students brings certain challenges. For students who transition to The Ryan Centre it can be difficult to predict the challenges that students encounter. Therefore, there will be a formal review meeting of parents and staff members of the Ryan Centre prior to mid-term break in term 1.

4.0 Feeder Schools

This school normally but not exclusively caters for students from the following national schools and the ASD centres attached to these schools.

- Scoil Mhuire, Abbeylax;
- South School, Abbeylax;
- St. Pius National School, Ballacolla;
- Ballinakill National School
- Scoil Eoin Phoill Naofa, Ballyroan
- Clough National School
- Cullohill National School
- Our Lady's Meadow National School (Durrow)
- Knock National School
- Tobar an Léinn, Raheen;
- Shanahoe National School
- Swan National School
- Lisdowney National School
- Ballyragget National School

- Wolfhill National School
- Ratheniska National School
- Timahoe National School
- Firoda Holycross National School

5.0 Communication, Procedures, and Appeals

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.

5.1 Places Available

The AS centre currently has three classes, In the event that applications for enrolment exceeds 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 'AS. Centre' exceed six in any class. All other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children, will be kept under continuous review.

5.2 Applications Received

Following receipt of an application for enrolment to the AS Centre with accompanying reports, the Board Of Management on advice from the SENCO or AS Class teachers 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

5.3 Decisions on applications

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 AS 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.

5.4 Unsuccessful Applicants

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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.

5.5 Appeals

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.

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

5.6 Withdrawal of Offer

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 this policy

6.0 On going review of students in the Ryan Centre

As learning needs may change over time, a student's enrolment in the Heywood Community School AS Class will be kept under continual review by the school. This review will be on an ongoing basis

(but at a minimum, a review will take place once a year ideally at the end of each academic year) and will include a careful examination of the student's progress in achieving his/her learning targets.

This review process will consider the student's progress and the Heywood Community School AS Class' ability to meet his/her needs and deliver the most beneficial educational programme.

The review will include regular assessing of:

- The academic, social and behavioural benefits of the student being enrolled in the Heywood Community School ASD Class.
- The level and quality of mainstream participation.
- Students' progression through SSF.
- Students level of attendance.

The review will include the student's views and those of parents, teachers and other relevant professionals. The review will look at the suitability of the special class placement and whether the student's needs might be best addressed in a mainstream setting or whether a more supported setting is required (e.g. special school setting).

In cases where it is our professional opinion that a student is not benefitting from his/her place in the Heywood Community School AS Class this will be discussed with parents and referred to the Board of Management to assess suitability for continuance in the class.

Following a decision that the special class is no longer the most appropriate placement; a student may move to:

- a mainstream class in the same school or
- a mainstream class in a school more local to the student's home or
- a different category of special class or
- a special school

Where the change involves a move to a different school, parents should apply to enrol their child in the new school and the student should remain in the existing special class until the new placement is organised. Heywood Community School will help support the student's transition to a more suitable placement e.g. mainstream or special school.

The school should also notify the SENO when a student has left a special class, either to return to mainstream or enrol in another school, as this creates a vacancy in a special class that can be utilised for another student who may need it.

The rules for the maximum period that a student can be educated in a special class are generally the same as those for mainstream post-primary classes.

7.0 Curriculum

'Heywood Community School AS 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 a Student Support File drawn up, after 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.

Students registered in the AS 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 AS class programme.

The AS class will offer a tailored education to each individual need where possible.

8.0 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.

9.0 Checklist

Please include the following forms/documents.

Application Forms and Reports.

1. **A Fully Completed Application Form for AS Centre in Heywood Community School.** The closing date for receipt of such completed applications is highlighted on our Admissions Notice on our 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.** The assessment must be in line with the established Department of Education 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 Department of Education, recommending the applicant as suitable. 5. **(Original Diagnosis)**
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 a mainstream setting. Professional recommendations must be supplied by parent(s)/guardian(s) with each application for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management. **This must be within the last two years at the time of application.**
6. **School Reports including most recent student support file** 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 day accompanied by a specific care plan.
8. A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism. (New requirement from NCSE since November 2024)

Parents/Guardians should note:

Parents /Guardians of a child being offered a place in the AS 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.