



The Good Shepherd National School

Admissions Policy to the Early Intervention Class for Children with Autism

INTRODUCTION

The Good Shepherd N.S. Early Intervention class for children with Autism (EI Autism Class) caters for the needs of children diagnosed with Autism. Children who attend our Early Intervention Class may also have developmental delays in the mild range. The class does not have the resources or specialised equipment to support students whose primary challenges involve moderate, severe, or profound intellectual and/or physical/sensory disabilities. These students generally require and are better served by alternative educational environments.

Referrals for EI Autism Class placement are made by a parent. The EI Autism Class's application form (Appendix A) must be completed with a copy of all necessary reports and eligibility confirmation before mid-January of the year prior to entry (see admission notice on www.goodshepherd.ie to check for the specific date for the year in question).

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

Entry to the EI Autism Class must comply with Department of Education policy.

Therefore, children

- Children who attend an EI Autism Class must be at least 3 years of age on entry.
- Children who attend an EI Autism Class must be under 6 years of age / cannot turn 6 years of age during the final placement academic year.
- A psychological report must be provided on the child which confirms a diagnosis of Autism as per DSM-1V, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria.
- This report should confirm that the child's needs would be best met in an Early Intervention Autism Class placement.



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (NCSE) CRITERIA:

To apply for our EI Autism Class, parents must first complete the NCSE "Parents Notify" procedure and receive a letter confirming their eligibility for the class from the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). This mandatory step, which must be completed in the Autumn of the year prior to proposed admission, is a prerequisite for our school's application process. Specific deadlines can be found on the NCSE website (www.ncse.ie). The school's application process can only begin after a child's eligibility for the class has been confirmed in writing by the SENO.

GOOD SHEPHERD NATIONAL SCHOOL (GSNS) CRITERIA:

Upon receiving the eligibility letter for admission to our EI Autism Class from the SENO, parents can begin the application process by completing the application form below and also available in the Admissions Section of www.goodshepherd.ie. A copy of the child's psychological reports and any other relevant reports must be submitted with this completed application form.

- Application opening and closing dates are set out annually in the Admission Notice on the school's website www.goodshepherd.ie
- Completed application forms must be accompanied by, at a minimum, an Autism diagnosis and a psychological report with a written recommendation for an EI Autism Class placement. The report must confirm a diagnosis of Autism as per the DSM-1V, DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria.

If the above criteria for EI Autism class placement are met, the application then goes forward for discussion, ranking and selection at the annual EI Autism Class Admissions Meeting. Members of the Admissions/Management Committee advise the Board of Management to allocate places available in the class based on the following agreed criteria:

- Age and readiness of the child
- The degree to which the Autism diagnosis impacts on child's academic performance and social skills
- Suitability of class placement for the child at that time.



Please note** Referral does not guarantee that a child will secure a place. There is a maximum limit of 6 places in our EI Autism class at any time, and each child referred is usually one of many to be considered. As children may avail of 1 / 2-year placements the number of places available annually can vary.

Parents are reminded that:

- GSNS is a school with a Catholic ethos where we strive to develop a spiritual and good moral foundation.
- No child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, language, gender, asylum seeker or refugee status or religious or political beliefs, family or social circumstances or being a member of the traveller community.
- While recognising the right of parents to seek to enrol their child with an autism diagnosis in GSNS, the Board of Management has a duty of care to the existing school community. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. The BOM reserves the right not to admit a child unless it believes it can meet the needs of the child seeking enrolment.
- If GSNS cannot meet a child's medical needs safely, the child cannot be enrolled.
- The school prioritises the health and safety of its pupils and staff. Therefore, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any child whose history of violent or out-of-control behaviours presents an unacceptable safety risk.

This class is specifically designed to support children with Autism and is not resourced or an appropriate placement for children with EBD/SEBD.



SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Notification of a successful application will be sent to parents as per the date specified set out annually in the Admission Notice on the school's website (www.goodshepherd.ie). Parents will also be invited to attend a Welcome Afternoon in the school in late Term 3 of the year immediately prior to enrolment. The school handbook and any other relevant information will be given to parents during this meeting, to help parents assist their child's transition into the EI Autism Class.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The BOM of the Good Shepherd National School recognises and upholds a parent's right to appeal a refusal to enrol through the Appeal Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Upon receiving the BOM's decision parents/guardians will be informed by the BOM of the procedure and timeframe involved for an appeal.

The procedures under Section 29 cannot be invoked until all procedures at local level have been exhausted.

This Admissions Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16th October 2025. It will be reviewed in October 2026.

Signed: Brian Swan
Brian Swan
Chairperson

Signed: Órlaith Veale
Órlaith Veale
Principal



APPENDICES for the ADMISSION POLICY for Early Intervention Class for children on the Autism Spectrum

Appendix A link to NCSE website Parents Notify procedure

<https://ncse.ie/notify-ncse-special-class-special-school>

Appendix B Link to GSNS Application Form

https://www.goodshepherd.ie/web/application_forms/649857



El Autism Class Application Form

Academic Year: _____

**Completed forms to be returned to the school office
(accompanied by a copy of the NCSE letter confirming
eligibility for the class, the child's Birth Certificate, and all
relevant psychological and professional assessment reports)**

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Child's First Name: _____ Gender: _____

Surname: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Home Address: _____

PPS. No: _____ Nationality: _____

Language spoken at home: _____ Religion: _____

Mother's Name: _____ Work No: _____

Occupation: _____ Mobile: _____

Email address: _____

Father's Name: _____ Work No: _____

Occupation: _____ Mobile: _____

Email address: _____

If applicable please give name of previous Early Years setting:

Name: _____



SECTION B: SCHOOL INFORMATION

Number of children in family: _____

Position of child: _____

If you have other children attending this school, please state:

Name : _____ Class _____

Name: _____ Class _____

SECTION C: LEARNING NEEDS

1. Which of the following agencies/services has your child attended?

Please mark **X** in the box.

Assessment of need	☐	Speech therapist	☐
Occupational therapist	☐	Psychologist	☐
Lucena Clinic	☐	Psychiatrist	☐
Other	☐	Primary Care	☐

Outline briefly any therapies your child has received to date:

2. Is your child toilet trained? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Does your child use a Communications Device? Yes ☐ No ☐



SECTION D: SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Will your child require school transport to/from school? Yes ☐ No ☐

Parents offered a place for their child will be asked to complete the necessary **NCSE** special class enrolment forms (and transport forms if required).

I confirm that all details given above are correct.

Parent/Guardian

[Date _____]

All information given will be treated confidentially