



Admissions and Participation Policy

This policy has been formulated by Greystones Educate Together National School (GET NS) to assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision in relation to child enrolment and to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.

School Details

Name: Greystones Educate Together National School (GET NS)
School Address: Blacklion
Greystones
Co. Wicklow

Telephone: + 353 (0)86 175 2510/ + 353 (0)1 2871817
Email: admissions@greystoneset.ie
Roll Number: 20300A
Principal: Catherine Sadlier

The school day runs from 9.10am until 1.50pm for Junior and Senior Infants, and from 9.10am until 2.50pm for all other classes.



Contents

Admissions and Participation Policy	1
School Details.....	1
General Information	3
Legislation	4
Eligibility Criteria	4
Admissions Procedures.....	5
Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs into Mainstream Classes.....	8
Enrolment of Children with Autism into Special Classes	9
Criteria.....	9
Pre-Enrolment Stages	9
Special Setting Format	10
Integration	10
Health Board Input.....	11
Discharge.....	11
Code of Behaviour.....	11
Appeals Procedure	11
Additional Information.....	11
Revision History	12
Ratification	12



General Information

This policy has been set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998) and provides for equality of access and participation in the school for all children in our society whatever their social, religious, cultural and racial background and whether or not they have a disability or special educational needs.

GETNS opened in September 2008 with an enrolment of 49 children. Its enrolment by September 2014 was 401. The school is still developing and the building plan for the new Greystones Educate Together N.S. building incorporated an area within the school referred to as the Special Needs Unit (SNU). Such spaces are included to facilitate special provision in the form of one or more classes of children with Autism, where the need for such provision is identified in the locality.

The new building was opened in October 2013 and the first Special Class was established in the SNU for September 2014, with the approval of the Board of management and the local Special Educational Needs Officer (S.E.N.O.) who, on behalf of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), sanctions the resources for such classes. Special classes are funded by the Department of education and Skills.

GET NS is under the patronage of Educate Together, and as such is committed to operating according to the four key principles below.

- Multi-denominational: All children have equal access to the school. Children of all social and cultural groups, and of all religious and non-religious backgrounds, are equally respected.
- Co-educational: All children in the school are encouraged to fulfill their potential and explore their full range of abilities and opportunities, irrespective of gender.
- Child-centered: The school promotes a child-centred approach to the curriculum in which the teacher guides and facilitates the child's learning through both formal and informal methods, while encouraging the child to be an active participant. Each child's individual needs are considered and the child is encouraged to learn at an appropriate pace.
- Democratically run: The school embraces active participation by parents/guardians in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers. Input from parents, teachers, children and supporters is sought in order to enable the highest level of partnership.

GET NS also supports the principles of inclusiveness, diversity, equality and respect throughout the school community.



Assessing the learning needs and the potential of the individual student is of paramount importance. School is an educational setting for the student and not a childcare placement. It is expected that children should be using the toilet independently when they start school, otherwise the school would have to be informed in advance that a child has a medical condition or a 'care need' so that applications for special needs resources could be applied for.

The school delivers the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and the *Learn Together* ethical programme designed by Educate Together. Parents/guardians are advised to familiarise themselves with the Educate Together ethos prior to enrolling their child in the school.

GET NS is a national school operating in accordance within the Rules for National Schools and dependent on such grants and teachers' resources as are provided by the DES. All school policies must have regard to the resources and funding provided.

Legislation

The school operates in full compliance with the Education Act (1998); the Education Welfare Act (2000); the Educations for Persons with Special Educations Needs Act (2004); and all relevant equality legislation, Departmental circulars and Educate Together primary school principles and policies.

Eligibility Criteria

Under the Education Act (1998), a child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a primary school before the 4th anniversary of his/her birth. In GET NS children must be 4 years old on or before May 31st of the year of admission into Junior Infant classes.

All places in mainstream classes are allocated on a first come, first served basis. The eligibility criteria for places in the Special Classes are listed on Page 9.

Due to the high level of applications for schools in the Greystones area, and the fact that parents sometimes – and understandably - apply to several schools, it is necessary for the local schools to crosscheck applications with one another each year. This ensures that a realistic overall enrolment figure can be forwarded to the DES by the schools in the Greystones area for planning and resourcing purposes.

Your submission of an application to GET NS is your agreement for the school to share your application data with other schools in the Greystones region.

In determining admissions the Board of Management shall take account of DES Regulations in relation to staffing, class size and class average. The Board of Management shall also have regard to issues such as physical space, multi-grade classes, and the presence of children with special educational and/or behavioural needs.

Admissions Procedures

1. Parents/guardians wishing to apply for a place for their child must complete and return a pre-enrolment form by post or email. This form can be obtained by contacting the school office, or may be downloaded from the school website. This form requires the parent/guardian to give the school certain information regarding their child.
2. Parents of a child with a diagnosis of autism wishing to pre-enrol for the Special Classes must meet the criteria specific to this i.e. Professional Report giving a clear diagnosis of Autism (which must be made by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist indicating that the diagnosis is in accordance with DSM V or ICD-10. A diagnosis made following assessment by a multi-disciplinary team which has a clinical psychologist or a consultant pediatrician as part of the team and referencing DSM IV or ICD10 is also acceptable).
3. On receipt of a completed application form, a pre-enrolment number will be allocated to each applicant. If more than one application form is received on a particular day, these numbers will be awarded in the order of recorded time of receipt. If the recorded time of receipt is the same, pre-enrolment numbers will be awarded one after the other in alphabetical order of surnames.
4. No guarantees of places will be given or implied by pre-enrolment.
5. Each child will be placed on the admissions list according to the pre-enrolment number. If parents/guardians have twins, triplets, etc. then the children will be put on the list one after the other in alphabetical order of the child's first name. Parents wishing to enrol a recently adopted or fostered child in Junior Infants may do so according to the Date of Birth of the child. So the pre-enrolment number/ place on the waiting list will be relative to the Date of Birth of the child, rather than the 'date received' as is the procedure for all other children.
6. Three separate lists will be kept for each year, a Junior Infant and a non-Junior Infant list and a Special Class list. Children will be listed in order of pre-enrolment number.

7. Pre-enrolment lists will be stored on computer and in hard copy form. Any personal data relating to children and/or their parents/guardians will be gathered, used, stored and destroyed in accordance with current data protection legislation.
8. Pre-enrolment applications will be acknowledged by post or email. This acknowledgement is not an offer of a place in the school.
9. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school promptly of any change of address, telephone number or other relevant circumstances.
10. Children will be offered places strictly by order of pre- enrolment number on the admissions list. Siblings are not given priority.
11. Letters of offer for Mainstream classes will be sent out by post to the current address on file, starting in October/November of the year prior to that for which the child is being offered a place. Offers will be made for Special Classes as soon as the pre-enrolment stages have been met and reports and eligibility criteria have all been assessed. Parents/guardians must reply by post or email to confirm an offered place within 14 days. Failure to respond within 14 days will result in the place being forfeited.
12. If a child is not offered a place and parents/guardians wish their child's name to be put on the waiting list for the following year (either for Junior Infants or for another class), they must inform the school in writing by the 30th September of the year for which the original place was sought. Children will be put on the waiting list in order of their existing pre-enrolment number. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make such a request in writing by the above deadline, otherwise the application will be removed from the school's admissions list.
13. Applications will be accepted for children to join a junior infant class during the school year, provided they are transferring from another school and all other admission criteria are met.
14. Pupils may transfer into the school's mainstream classes at any time subject to school policy, available space, the provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000), and in some cases the approval of the DES.
15. Parents/guardians who are offered a place for their child in Junior Infants may defer the child's place for one year, providing the child is under 6 by the first of September of the year in which he/she starts school. This means that the child will be placed on the list for the following year according to their existing pre-enrolment number. Deferral does not



guarantee a place the following year. Parents/guardians of children for classes other than Junior Infants cannot defer a place, but may submit a new application.

16. If parents/guardians need to defer a child's place due to medical or other unavoidable exceptional reasons, this must be communicated in writing (detailing the particular circumstances) to the Chair of the Board of Management at the time of deferral. The Board of Management reserves the right to subsequently offer the child a place irrespective of pre-enrolment number. Additional information or documentation may be sought by the Board of Management from parents/guardians as part of this process. Under these circumstances, the decision to offer a place must be made unanimously by the Board of Management.
17. On acceptance of a place, parents/guardians must provide the child's birth certificate to the school. A copy will be made, and the original returned. The child's PPSN number should also be provided.
18. Parents/guardians who accept a place for their child, but subsequently decide not to take up this place, are requested to inform the school in writing at the earliest possible opportunity. This will allow another child to be offered a place in the school. Any monies (e.g. book fees) paid to the school prior to this time will be non-refundable.



Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs into Mainstream Classes

GET NS endeavours at all times to practise the school policy of inclusion and welcomes applications from children with special educational needs. Such applications are subject to the first come, first served principle and applicants with special educational needs will not be advantaged or disadvantaged over other children in terms of the priority afforded their application. In order to assist the school in establishing the educational and physical needs of the child relevant to his/her ability or special needs, and to profile the support services required, the school requests that the parent/guardian of the child:

- Informs the school of any special needs as early as possible in the pre-enrolment /enrolment process.
- Ensures that copies of the child's medical and /or psychological report(s) are provided to GET NS as soon as they are available. This information will be treated as confidential.

Where such a report is not available, the school will request that the parent/guardian has the child assessed as soon as possible. Following receipt of these report(s) the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified therein. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will request the SENO and/or the HSE to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report.

The Principal may meet with the parents/guardians of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs.

Enrolment of Children with Autism into Special Classes

Criteria

If the school finds that the number of children on the list of applicants for the Special Classes fulfilling the requirements to enrol, exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply, beginning with number one;

1. Pupils who previously attended the Special Classes in GETNS and, following a period of full integration in the mainstream classes, have been re-assessed and have a recommendation of re-enrolment in the Special classes, with priority being given to the oldest of such children and cognisance given to their age appropriateness for the class (it may be the case that such a child may require to access only certain aspects of the Special Class)
2. Pupils who are currently enrolled in GETNS who have had a recent diagnosis, (which must be documented with evidence of professional reports as in point 2 of Admission Procedures) and whose needs can no longer be met in mainstream. Priority would be given to the oldest of such applicants and cognisance would be given to their age appropriateness for the class.
3. Pupils who are on the admissions waiting list who have fulfilled the medical diagnosis and made all relevant reports available to the school.

PLEASE NOTE: it is the school's policy to have a similar age profile in all classes

Pre-Enrolment Stages

- The Principal and /or Special Educational Needs (SEN) co-ordinator will meet with the child's parents/guardians to share information about Greystones ETNS. Information about mainstream classes and the special class will be provided.
- The Principal and / or SEN co-ordinator will discuss the child's reports with the parents /guardians and get an understanding of the child's profile from the parents /guardians.
- Part of the discussion may relate to why Greystones ETNS is being chosen. Other possible options may be discussed such as mainstream and special school.
- With parent/guardian consent, the SEN staff will arrange to visit the child's current setting to observe the child in his/her pre-school or Early Intervention setting and discuss his/her strengths and needs with those who work with him/her.
- The Principal may consult with the school's psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist regarding the child's reports. If professional reports are shared they will be anonymised. The Principal may also, with parental/guardian consent, contact the professionals who prepared the child's reports.
- If the parents/guardians choose to proceed with the application, the Principal will then make a report to the BoM, with whom the final decision on enrolment rests. The Principal may also recommend that the decision be deferred, pending the receipt of further information.

Special Setting Format

- The Department of Education and Skills states a ratio of 6 pupils to 1 teacher so each Special class will have a maximum of six places. Each Special class will be staffed by a registered teacher and by special needs Assistants (SNAs) In the case of the maximum sized class, two SNAs will be appointed. If the class has less than 6 pupils, SNAs are appointed on a pro-rata basis. All staff will have experience of, or an interest in, working with children with Autism. The teacher will receive ongoing specialist training through the Special Educational Support Service (SESS), as necessary.
- The children will access a curriculum based on the Primary School Curriculum that is matched to their needs and capacities, through carefully planned Individual Learning Activities and through the use of differentiation.
- The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCSE)'s Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Learning Disabilities will be used to augment the implementation of the curriculum. A range of teaching approaches and methodologies will be employed, based on the individual needs of the students e.g. TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped children) PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis), Social stories, Floortime, and intensive interaction and relationship development.
- The children in Special Classes may have their starting time and finishing time staggered in the initial 'settling in' period in the school, but it is hoped that they will comply with the school's regular starting and finishing times by November of the year (according to individual needs) they are registered in the school.

Integration

The Board of Management's approach to integration is also framed by the Educate Together 'children of the school' model : i.e. *'the school is a collective organisation that strives to address the individual needs of every child. However, any school must balance these needs with the general interests of all the children.'* It is the objective of the BoM that integration will take place, as far as possible, with typically developing peers in inclusive mainstream classroom settings.

It is hoped that the children entering our Special Classes will not require this provision for the duration of their primary school education and that, through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents, this is gradually phased in.

The nature of all integration (reverse) will be determined by the teaching staff, following reviews at appropriate intervals and consultation with the child's parents/guardians. Partial integration will take the form of contact during specific situations or curriculum areas, where particular skills and interests / learning can be advanced e.g. music lessons, projects, drama, SPHE lessons, school trips, the minimum level being some lunchtimes, some group activities and some playground breaks.

Health Board Input

Essential services are to be provided by the Health Service. These include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational therapy and Sensory Activities.

Discharge

It is school practice to facilitate the discharge/transition of pupils from the Special Classes once they have reached the age of twelve.

- Once the enrolment has been approved, in principle, by the BoM, the school will involve the family in planning for the child's enrolment by the way of a Transition Programme. A pupil profile will be developed based on the child's needs and strengths.
- When a place is officially offered to the parent/guardian of the child, a further meeting will be held before registration during which the parent will be informed of the school's code of behaviour, child protection policy, anti-bullying policy and other school details.

The child's parent/guardian will be notified in writing if the school cannot offer a place to their child. Places will be offered on a first –come first served basis.

Code of Behaviour

Children enrolled in GET NS are required to co-operate with the school's Code of Behaviour and other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children co-operate with these policies in an age appropriate way. Due regard will be given to children with Special needs in the implementing of this policy.

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision may appeal in writing to the school Board of Management. The letter of appeal must be addressed to the Board of Management stating the grounds of appeal and it should be lodged within 10 days of receiving the refusal.

Parents/guardians who are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal may appeal to the DES on foot of Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) on the official form provided by the DES.

Additional Information

GET NS endeavours to provide the highest standards of care for its pupils. In order to achieve this objective successfully, it is vital that the school be informed of any relevant information regarding health, bereavement, domestic circumstances etc. Any such information should be provided to the school Principal and shall be treated in strictest confidence.



Revision History

Version	Date	Comment
1.0	20 January 2015	Revised to take account of admissions to Special Classes

Ratification

Ratified by Board of Management on

10 February 2015

Signed by:

Liam Friel
(Chairperson)

Date:

10 February 2015