

**Temple Carrig School
Support for Learning (SFL) Department Policy**



“Believe in your infinite potential. Your only limitations are those you set upon yourself.”

— Roy T. Bennett

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Appendix: Special ASD Class Policy

1 Introduction

Formerly known as the SEN Department, the Support for Learning (SFL) Department plays a crucial role in Temple Carrig School. Temple Carrig School welcomes pupils with additional educational needs (hereafter AEN), in accordance with our Statement of Ethos which emphasises the school's responsibility "to respond to the academic, intellectual, cultural and spiritual needs of students with a wide range of abilities and interests." This support is extended in conformity with the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Act (2000), the Education Welfare Act (2000), and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004). The SFL Department will endeavour to provide the best service possible contingent on prevailing circumstances and the level of resource provided by the Department of Education.

2 Aims and Objectives

The SFL Department aims to establish clear guidelines for:

- The identification of students with Additional Educational Needs
- Procedures to be followed once students are identified.
- The training and support of staff in their work with SFL students

The objectives of the SFL Department are to ensure that students who are identified with AEN:

- Are provided with as much support as resources allow in an inclusive environment throughout their time in the school.
- Receive the appropriate tuition within the setting of the mainstream class, in small groups or individually for students with more particular or complex needs.
- Are assessed in a way appropriate to their needs.
- Are monitored and reviewed regularly to establish their changing needs which is documented in their student support file.

3 Identification of Students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

Students will be identified in the following ways:

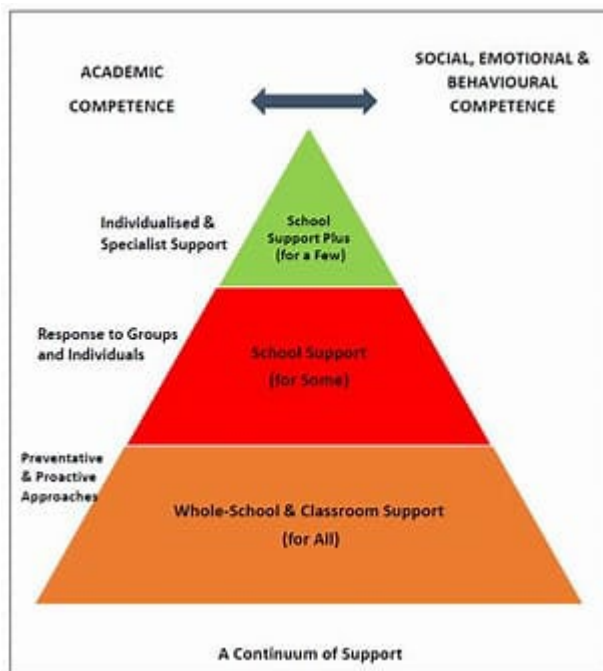
- By parents/guardians who contact the school directly. Parents/guardians of a student with AEN are requested to provide all educational/psychological/medical reports at the earliest opportunity prior to the date of enrolment (to allow the school time to apply to the DES for appropriate resources.)
- From information gathered by the Guidance Counsellors and the SFL Coordinator.
- Following the confirmation of a student's enrolment the SFL Coordinator will request the student's Primary School Report Card and Student Support File. This should include assessment results, standardised test results, targets, interventions and any other relevant information on the student.
- By subject teachers, Form Tutors and Year Heads once the student is in the school. These emerging needs may be social, emotional, behavioural, learning or other.
- By recommendation as a result of professional referrals and reports.

4 The Organisation of Additional Support for SFL Students

- Small group or individual withdrawal as appropriate to the student's needs.
- An Irish Exemption does not automatically confer a right to withdrawal for additional learning support as it is recognised that some students who have an exemption may not necessarily require support. In these situations, the student may be facilitated to study either within the Irish class or be provided with access to a supervised study area.
- Access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) as deemed appropriate by the SFL Coordinator and School Principal (see Role of an SNA).
- Occasionally, the provision of a reduced timetable and/or a restricted range of subjects may be necessary in support of an individual student with complex needs. This is arranged in consultation with the student, parents, school management and is notified to any relevant outside agencies in accordance with DES guidelines.
- Use of iPads, laptops, C-Pens and other Assistive Technology appropriate to the students' needs and in keeping with what is likely to be approved as a State Exam Accommodation.
- Differentiated materials within subject departments and individual classes where necessary.
- Provision of reasonable accommodations (RACE) during Christmas and Summer Examinations. However, due to staffing and accommodation constraints, it is not always possible to replicate exactly the ratios as provided in a State Exam. Priority for the allocation of in-house exam accommodations is provided on a need's basis.

5 Provision of Learning Support and other Resources

- The school will do all that it reasonably can to comply with DES guidelines and to meet the needs of individual students. The school will maintain regular contact with the regional Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) in the interests of SFL students.
- Management will work to ensure that there are sufficient staff to meet the needs identified by the SFL Coordinator.
- Learning support provision is seen in the context of a whole school approach. Class or subject teachers have the primary responsibility for the educational progress of all students in their classes. This includes students with AEN.
- Teachers aim to develop the individual student to their full potential, and this may involve varying teaching strategies, differentiation, approaches and expectations for different students.
- Additional support will build on, and complement support given by, the class teacher in the mainstream classroom situation. This additional support may be delivered via co-teaching, smaller group work and one-to-one withdrawal. It may be the case that students access support through short-term interventions or for longer periods of time.
- The individual needs of the student are taken into consideration when organising support. The level of support may change as a student moves through the school and may reduce over time as the student progresses and develops. The 'Continuum of Support' pyramid below highlights this approach:



“Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers, 2007”

6 The Role of the Support for Learning Team (SFLT)

The Support for Learning Team comprises of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), Support for Learning Teachers (hereafter SFLT) and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The school’s Chaplaincy and Guidance Department also supports the SFLT. The coordinator is responsible for managing and organising support for learning under the direction of the Principal.

7 Role of the SFL Coordinator

- To provide support for students with AEN needs through comprehensive liaison with management, parents, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Subject Teachers, SNAs, Office Staff, SENCO, NEPS and other relevant professionals.
- To screen and assess First Year Students and liaise with Form Tutors, Year Heads and Subject Teachers to ensure the needs of the individual student are met.
- To proactively work towards the early identification of students who may have additional needs and to work in conjunction with SFLT) and subject teachers to provide appropriate and targeted interventions.
- To assess the strengths and needs of SFL students.
- To implement appropriate learning and, where necessary, behaviour plans.
- To assess and analyse the results of psychometric testing and advise students and parents re RACE applications.
- To work with the Examinations Aid in organising RACE for in-house and external exams.
- To advise management regarding applications for any exemption from the study of Irish.
- To make applications for Assistive Technology and SNAs.
- To attend ongoing and regular CPD relevant to SFL.
- To highlight or arrange CPD available for SNA, SFLT) and subject teachers.
- To research and access resource materials including ICT materials.

- To timetable the provision of support for learning classes.
- To keep student SFL files in a secure area and to ensure this information is accessed appropriately and in a confidential manner.
- To provide subject teachers with a summary of student's individual needs and to suggest strategies and techniques in support of the individual student.
- To develop Student Support Files and review them annually.
- To assist and collaborate with Guidance Counsellors in the completion of DARE, applications for NUI Exemption Certificates, Senior Level subject choices etc.
- To attend weekly Pastoral Care Team meetings.

8 Role of the Support for Learning Teacher (SFLT)

- The SFLT provides direct teaching to a student with AEN either to reinforce the teaching that takes place in the classroom or to improve upon the core skills that may be necessary to successfully access the curriculum.
- The role of the SFLT is to support the literacy and/or numeracy needs of a student.
- The SFLT has a very good insight into a student's needs and when appropriate can provide advice to subject teachers as to the teaching methodologies best suited to that student.
- The SFLT monitors how a student has progressed and decides (in collaboration with other relevant parties) how a student could be best supported.
- SFLT and subject teachers work in partnership thus ensuring that students are supported as effectively as possible.
- To regularly update Student Support Files to keep track of, and to monitor targets, interventions and assessments.
- To complete SFL weekly/fortnightly/term class planners in collaboration with the SFL Coordinator.
- To facilitate and complete the end of term Student Feedback Forms.
- To assist in any additional work which may be identified by the SFL Department, or which might be determined by the needs of the group which they teach.

9 Role of an SNA

- To assist assigned students in accessing as much of the curriculum as possible.
- To assist the subject teacher in implementing the curriculum by following their guidance and instruction to reinforce learning.
- To assist the subject teacher or SFL Coordinator/s in the preparation of appropriate resources to supplement learning or to assist with executive functioning.
- To help students carry out and complete assigned tasks, for example assisting with notetaking, explicit recap of instructions provided by the class teacher etc.
- To help students learn and adopt new skills to progress learning and to develop self-efficacy.
- To empower students to use their strengths and individual learning style to reach their potential.
- To praise, support and encourage students and to be a positive influence in the class.
- To be cognisant that each lesson is the student's own individual experience of learning and to provide them and their peers the space in which to do so.
- To facilitate periods of time-out/regulation breaks for students where appropriate.
- To aid students who have been granted accommodations in school examinations and if necessary, in State Examinations for e.g. Scribe, Reader, Helper (practical subjects).
- To encourage and support students to be as independent as possible through the use and practice of the principles of least to most guidance.
- To foster co-operative learning and facilitate development of friendships amongst peers.

- To liaise with the SFL Coordinator/s regarding the inclusion, behaviour, learning, social or emotional difficulties of all SFL students.
- To assist in any additional work which may be identified by the SFL Team, or which might be determined by the needs of the individual student.
- To assist in the development and implementation of Student Support Files.
- To assist and support the SFL Department in the completion of day-to-day administrative duties relevant to the department and in support of students.
- To participate in ongoing CPD in areas that will benefit both students and the SFL Team.
- To carry out duties in a caring, professional and confidential manner. Information on SFL students shall only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis to the relevant people and under the guidance of the SFL Coordinator/s.
- To always maintain a professional relationship with parents/guardians and always in consultation and collaboration with the SFL Coordinator/s.
- To make Management and/or the SFL Coordinator aware of any instances where a conflict of, or personal interest might arise.
- While supporting the student's development in ways that will foster security and confidence, SNAs have a professional responsibility to immediately share any information or concerns with school management to safeguard the children in our care.

10 Role of the Form Teacher

- Each Form Tutor has a responsibility for their class group and is responsible for dealing with individual pupil issues within their group. They are the first point of contact and when issues occur with a student they must liaise with the relevant people.

11 Role of the Year Head

- To track the progress of students in their Year Group.
- Oversee the SFL students' engagement with school life through pastoral care, extra-curricular and other activities.
- To monitor the social interaction of students and relationships with peers.
- To liaise with the SFL Coordinator regarding the general progress and/or any issues of concern with a particular student.
- To review student progress within the year group and query with, or feedback to, the SFL Coordinator should any concerns be raised about a student who may not previously have been flagged.

12 Role of the Subject Teacher

- To have primary responsibility for the progress of all students in her/his class.
- At the start of every academic year, it is of the utmost importance to read the SEN tab on Vsware regarding any student who has additional needs in their classroom. Any additional information can be found on their Student Support File or by contacting the SFL Coordinator.
- To endeavour to provide a differentiated learning experience for students in an inclusive school environment.
- To collaborate with the SFL Coordinator in identifying students who may display specific learning difficulties.
- To collaborate with the SFL Coordinator in identifying students who may require short-term

supportive intervention either in-class or through withdrawal.

- To develop individual programmes or differentiation in the classroom for SFL students and forward these to the SFL Coordinator.
- To differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all students within the class.
- To provide learning activities and materials that will ensure success and progress for all students at their own level.
- To regularly update Student Support Files to keep track of, and to monitor targets, interventions and assessments.

13 Role of Principal/Deputy Principal

- To take overall responsibility for the SFL Programme and the provision of resources for students with AEN.
- To work with the Board of Management, staff, students and parents/guardians in the development of a whole school plan for supporting SFL students.
- To monitor the implementation of the SFL programme and the selection of students for supplementary teaching.
- To provide for continuing professional development to increase teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching methodologies.
- To attend weekly Pastoral Care Team Meetings.

14 Role of the Pastoral Care Team

- The pastoral care team comprises of a Deputy Principal, Year Heads, members of the Guidance and Chaplaincy Team and the SFL Co-ordinator who meet weekly to identify and support the differing needs of students. This weekly meeting further supports the delivery of care to all.

15 Role of the Board of Management

- To oversee the development of the SFL Policy.
- To provide continuing professional development for teachers in supporting students with AEN.
- To ensure adequate accommodation and resources.
- To provide secure facility for storage of records.

16 Role of the Chaplaincy and Guidance Department

- To provide pastoral care and support to SFL students, to deal with emotional, personal and social issues which may affect them.
- To provide pastoral care and support to parents of SFL students in need of this support.
- To apply to the DARE Scheme for eligible students.

17 Role of the Library

- To provide curriculum support for teachers and students by:
- Acquiring curriculum material that is age and interest appropriate and suitable for the required reading levels.

- Making the Library available for use by SFL students and their teachers.
- To promote reading for pleasure and information by:
- Acquiring material that is age and interest appropriate and suitable for all reading levels.
- To ensure that the physical layout and signage within the library is welcoming and effective for all Library users.

18 Role of Parents/ Guardians

- The school recognises the right of parents/guardians of students with AEN to be involved in and consulted about the programme of education available to their child. All parents are involved in the creation of their son/daughter's Student Support File.
- Parents/ guardians are requested to support the work of the school by providing all relevant information as soon as it is available, ensuring regular attendance, encouraging and supporting their child to participate positively in learning and all school activities.
- The school recognises the right of appeal of parents/guardians as set out in the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

19 Role of Students in the SFL Department

- The school welcomes the involvement of students with AEN in planning for their own learning. They will be consulted and involved in the development of their Student Support File.
- They should provide information about their own learning, talents, abilities, skills, interests, wishes and concerns through the pupil interview/student feedback sessions. The school requires that all students participate actively and positively in the development of their own learning. This means attending school regularly, bringing the correct textbooks/iPad and equipment, participating positively in classroom activities and completing appropriate homework and assignments.

20 Record Keeping

- All records relating to assessments of individual students will be kept in a secure location.
- Individual psychological assessments will be kept on file and the student's right to confidentiality will be respected.
- Assessment records will be kept on file for seven years after the student has left the school.

21 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation of the support programme for students with AEN will be conducted on an on-going basis throughout the year by the Principal, Deputy Principal and the SFL Coordinator.
- Weekly meetings will be held for the purpose of the ongoing review of SFL matters. These will be attended by Principal, SFL Coordinator and SFL Teaching Staff (where possible).

22 Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)

- The scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE) facilitates access to the certificate examinations by candidates who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical, visual,

hearing and/or learning difficulty. The scheme assists candidates who have AEN to demonstrate what they know and can do in certificate examinations, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The focus of the scheme is on removing barriers to access, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying skills and competencies as are assessed for all other candidates, and to apply the same standards of achievement as apply to all other candidates. The scheme provides accommodations for candidates with a variety of complex AEN including learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural or other conditions. Details in relation to the RACE scheme, eligibility and the types of accommodations facilitated by the State Examinations Committee can be found at www.examinations.ie. Please note that SEC guidelines in relation to RACE are updated every autumn.

RACE Application Process

- Applications for RACE are made by Temple Carrig School to the SEC, usually between October and December of the relevant exam year. To qualify for reasonable accommodations, a pupil must meet a strict set of criteria as outlined by the State Examination Commission. The school is unable to apply for accommodations unless all criteria relevant to the accommodations being sought are met. Supporting reports may be necessary for certain accommodations. If a student qualifies for RACE the School SENCO will contact a pupil and their parent/s to discuss the eligibility and explain the process of application. Leaving Certificate applications are normally submitted in late October of 6th year and Junior Cycle applications in mid to late December of 3rd Year. While applications for RACE are prepared by the school, all decisions in relation to the granting of reasonable accommodations are made solely by the State Examination Commission.

23 SFL in TY

- SFL is an integral part of TY.
- A review of learning support available to students up to their Junior Cert will be carried out at the beginning of Transition Year and the SFL Department, in consultation with subject teachers, will determine which students will continue to receive support during TY. This review will analyse information from the following sources: Assessment Tests, NGRT, Junior Cert and class progress.
- Due to the open nature of the TY programme, it is an ideal opportunity to focus on specific areas of development as deemed necessary by the SFL Coordinator in collaboration with the TY team and Subject Teachers.
- The SFL Coordinator will liaise with Guidance to assess and review Aptitude Tests and together they will work with the student and parents to inform and guide Senior Level subject choices.

24 Exemptions from the Study of Irish

Exemptions from the Study of Irish Circular 0055/2022 sets out the exceptional circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting a student an exemption from the study of Irish. Parents/guardians wishing to apply for such should refer to the guidelines before considering making an application and should apply in writing to the school indicating the exceptional circumstances. Please note the school's Policy on Irish Exemptions available on the school website.

25 External SEN Support Agencies

In some cases, external agencies such as NCSE, NEPS, CAMHS, HSE, and Visiting Teacher Service may be involved in the assessment of a pupil with AEN and may contribute to the development of a Student Support File. Apart from providing general advice and support to school staff, agencies are often consulted about individual pupils. The agency may gather information about a pupil, their skills, and abilities, and may plan a programme of support. This information and support are communicated by means of phone calls, texts, emails, receipt of reports and meetings. All information collected and shared is managed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements.

The Role of NEPS

The agency which TCG engages with on a frequent basis is called the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). NEPS psychologists work with management and the SFL Department and are concerned with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. NEPS psychologists work in partnership with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example, supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research.

Temple Carrig School

Special ASD Class Policy

1. Introduction

From September 2021, Temple Carrig School will host a special ASD class. For the purposes of distinguishing this classroom and group from other students in a way that avoid any sort of negative connotations, this class has been christened “the Harbour”.

Each year, the decision to provide an ASD class facility in Temple Carrig School will rest with the Board of Management of the school. The Board will, in turn, be influenced by advice and resource allocations from the local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Department of Education & Skills (DES).

The Harbour is intended for students who can function within a mainstream secondary school setting, but who may need a little extra support to do so. The primary mission and characteristic spirit of the Harbour is to include and integrate students in the life of the school and to enable them to thrive in the wider community. The Harbour seeks to be a safe, consistent, happy and nurturing environment in which students are guided and supported and where their sensory needs can be met.

Our target is that students with ASD will leave Temple Carrig School with the skills necessary to participate, to the best of their ability, in an inclusive and meaningful way in society and to live independent and fulfilling lives.

2. Enrolment to the Harbour ASD Classes

The maximum number of children enrolled in the Harbour facility will not exceed six in total in each class in any given year as per Department of Education & Skills guidelines. In the 2021/2022 academic year, there will be one ASD class in the Harbour.

Students can only be enrolled in the Harbour if a place is available. Priority in granting a place in the Harbour will be given to students already admitted to Temple Carrig School, and then to other applicants to the School in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Parents/Guardians should note that Temple Carrig School is a mainstream school and it is intended that students who are enrolled in the Harbour must be suitable for inclusion in some mainstream classes or activities with their peer group. It is important to emphasise that the Harbour facility isn't a panacea for every difficulty a student might face. Students who apply must have learning needs of not less than mild general learning disability in order to be considered for enrolment in the Harbour and will be enrolled subject to the suitability of the Harbour to meet their needs.

Some students on the ASD spectrum may be more suited to mainstream altogether and may not need, or wish, to access the services of the Harbour. Similarly, just because a student has a diagnosis of ASD, it doesn't mean that they will necessarily require the services of a specialist ASD class like the Harbour.

Parents/Guardians should note that the allocation of a place in the Harbour class does not guarantee a place in the mainstream post-primary classes for any siblings.

APPLICATIONS FOR ENROLMENT

Applicants for places in the Harbour ASD classes will be subject to the terms and conditions of the Temple Carrig School Admissions Policy and must apply for, and achieve, admission to the School as outlined in the School's Admissions Policy.

Applicants must also complete a separate Application Form for enrolment to the Harbour ASD classes. This form will be available from the School Office or on the School website (templecarrigschool.ie). For the 2021/2022 academic year, the Application process for enrolment in the Harbour will open on Thursday 1st April and the closing date for applications will be Friday 21st May.

To be eligible for consideration for a place in the Harbour, the student must have a current (within last two years) Psychological Report which clearly specifies a diagnosis of ASD and a recommendation for enrolment in a Special Class. The diagnosis must be determined by the DSM V criteria. The report must also outline the complex needs facing the student. The Psychological Assessment must have been completed with a post-primary mainstream educational setting in mind¹.

Applicants should also submit copies of all other relevant reports and assessments. These could include the following:

- A Cognitive Assessment which includes an estimation of Global Cognitive Function
- A Speech and Language Assessment (within last two years)
- An Occupational Therapy report (within last two years)
- A Social Worker Assessment outlining the family's needs, strengths and resources
- A Psychiatric Report (if such exists)
- All reports and information from Lucena Clinic, HSE or similar support services.

If necessary, applicants may be asked to supply further information including any additional documentation relevant to the student needs which would have an impact on educational planning. Applicants will be required to grant permission for Temple Carrig School to contact any previous school(s) for records, paperwork and transfer information.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY REVIEW PANEL

All applicants for the facility will be reviewed by a Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel which may consist of the following members as necessary, and as determined by the School:

- Temple Carrig School Principal or Deputy Principal
- Temple Carrig School Autism Class Coordinator
- Temple Carrig School Support for Learning Department Coordinator
- Representative(s) from the Health Services
- NEPS Representative(s)
- Local area SENO designated to Temple Carrig School

The Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel reserves the right to appoint other members to the panel as necessary and to seek the advice of external experts if required.

The remit of the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel is:

- To facilitate decisions regarding the most appropriate placement option for each referral.
- To review all applications for a place in the facility based on the reports outlined above
- To meet with the student and their parents/guardians where considered necessary
- To make recommendations based on these findings to the Board of Management, Temple Carrig School. (The final decisions in respect of all admissions in Temple Carrig School are made by the Board of Management.)

Decisions of the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel may be appealed to the Board of Management.

¹ These are criteria which must be met for the NCSE to accept enrolment in a Special ASD Class

PRIORITISATION OF APPLICANTS

In deciding enrolments to the Harbour, the School shall prioritise applications according to the following categories:

- Priority Level 1: Students who are already enrolled in Temple Carrig School and who will be in Second to Sixth Year in September 2021
- Priority Level 2: Students who are already enrolled in Temple Carrig School and who will be in First Year in September 2021
- Priority Level 3: Students who are NOT currently enrolled in Temple Carrig School, who would be regarded as a Category One applicant under the main Temple Carrig School Admissions Policy and who will be in Second to Sixth Year in September 2021
- Priority Level 4: Students who are NOT currently enrolled in Temple Carrig School, who would be regarded as a Category One applicant under the main Temple Carrig School Admissions Policy and who will be in First Year in September 2021
- Priority Level 5: Students who are NOT currently enrolled in Temple Carrig School, who would NOT be regarded as a Category One applicant under the main Temple Carrig School Admissions Policy and who will be in Second to Sixth Year in September 2021
- Priority Level 6: Students who are NOT currently enrolled in Temple Carrig School, who NOT would be regarded as a Category One applicant under the main Temple Carrig School Admissions Policy and who will be in First Year in September 2021

Applicants who fail to submit current reports to prove that they meet the criteria for enrolment will not be granted any priority level.

ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Priority will be afforded first to children in Priority Level 1 and then sequentially to each subsequent priority level. Where there is an excess of applicants within a priority level, the places available shall be offered based on the decision of the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel.

Where there is an excess of applicants, students who meet the criteria, but are not offered a place, will be placed on an unranked Waiting List. Although they won't have a formal enrolment in the Harbour, ALL students on this Waiting List from Priority Levels 1 and 2 will be able to access some of the services of, the Harbour throughout the academic year. If a vacancy should arise during the academic year, the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel will meet to fill this place based on the criteria above.

Parents/guardians of applicant students will be informed of the outcome of their application within ten working days of relevant meeting of the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel, who review each application to ensure adherence to this policy.

Parents/guardians of students offered a place in the Harbour must inform Temple Carrig School of their decision to accept or turn down a place in the programme within ten working days of the offer letter date.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF ENROLMENT

As learning needs may change over time, a student's enrolment in the Harbour programme will be kept under continual review by the school to ensure that the class continues to be the most suitable placement option available to the student. This review will be on an ongoing basis (but at a minimum, a review will take place once a year) and will include a careful examination of the student's progress in achieving her learning targets.

This review process will consider the student's progress and the Harbour programme's ability to meet the student's needs and deliver the most beneficial educational programme. It may apply to ASD students who aren't formally enrolled in the Harbour as well as those who are – in order to determine whether their need for a place in the Harbour has increased significantly.

The review will include regular assessing of:

- The academic, social and behavioural benefits of the student being enrolled in the Harbour
- The level and quality of mainstream participation.
- Students' progression through IEPs.

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 the professional opinion of the Harbour staff team that a student is not benefitting from their place in the Harbour this will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel to assess suitability for continuance on the programme. It may also be referred to the relevant ASD service for review.

Following a decision by the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel, it may be recommended that the Harbour is no longer the most appropriate placement for the student or that the child's needs cannot be met by Temple Carrig School. In such a case the student may move to:

- a mainstream class in Temple Carrig School
- a mainstream class in another school
- a different category of special class
- a special school setting

Where the change involves a move to a different school (mainstream or special school), Temple Carrig School will help support the student's transition to the more suitable placement.

DECISIONS NOT TO ENROL OR TO WITHDRAW ENROLMENT

The Board of Management require that Parents/Guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the Harbour class.

Enrolment may be refused to the Harbour if:

- Students are deemed by the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel to be an unacceptable risk to themselves, to other students, to school staff or to school property. Any decision of this nature by the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel is non-negotiable.
- Enrolment would have a detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's needs are such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and the HSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.

Should the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel refuse enrolment to the Harbour, parents will be advised of their right to appeal this decision to the Board of Management and will be given information on how to do so.

As already indicated above the Parents/Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Temple Carrig School Code of Conduct and the terms of this policy. Children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Support File. However, all students, including those with special educational needs, are subject to the Code of Conduct as well as the terms of the Temple Carrig School Health and Safety Policy. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the Harbour or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their health, safety, welfare or constitutional right to an education are being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents/Guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child and, if necessary, to permanently exclude the student from the school.

In cases where the attendance of a student enrolled in the Harbour is of a nature that causes the staff to be significantly concerned about their commitment and engagement to the programme, the impact on the attendance/non-attendance on the progress of the other students enrolled on the programme, and the possibility that a place is being denied to a more suitable applicant, the case for the student's removal from the programme will be referred to the Multi-Disciplinary Review Panel after consultation with the parents/guardians.

The Board of Management at Temple Carrig School further reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of the School's Admissions Policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to Temple Carrig School will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

3. Operation of the ASD Class

The Harbour will cater for the students from 8.00am until 3.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 8.00am until 12.40pm on Wednesdays and during these times there will be a constant staff presence. There will always be a listening ear to help solve problems or simply talk things over.

Students will have freedom to use the Harbour area during break and lunchtimes - this is a choice for each student and most like the atmosphere in the area, but they will also be encouraged to participate in the mainstream school setting during breaktimes to the extent that they can.

Students will have access to storage facilities and individual work station in the support room. These "berths" are a focal point for the students and each student's individual needs will be catered for here. Individual timetables and schedules aim to support the student at their unique level, so as to maximise their potential and experience within Temple Carrig School.

STAFF IN THE HARBOUR

The teachers and SNAs assigned to the Harbour undergo continuous professional development in their subject area in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Harbour Class Teachers

The role of Harbour Class Teacher is to support the delivery of the mainstream curriculum in a way that meets the needs of students with ASD and to provide access to an extended curriculum, which will include Social Communications training, Life Skills training, Sensory Programme, Stress Management strategies etc.

The Harbour Class Teachers will also be involved in:

- Assessing and recording students' needs and progress.
- Devising individual visual timetables.
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each student.
- Direct teaching of the students on a one to one basis or group setting within the Harbour Class.
- Collaborating with mainstream class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of I.T. and a range of other related matters.
- Monitoring and managing students' behaviour and progress.
- Meeting with relevant professionals, in the student's interest such as psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists.
- Co-ordination of the timetable and programme for SNA's.
- Organising and facilitating a range of structured lunchtime activities.
- Weekly Progress Meeting with SNA's.
- Meeting and regular communication with parents/guardians.

Mainstream Teachers

Each mainstream teacher will be aware of the ASD students in their class room and can access the SEN files of the students. Each teacher will also be given access to the Student Support File (SSF) of the ASD students in order to best accommodate and promote inclusivity.

General guidelines for the teaching of students with ASD are given to teachers who teach a student with ASD (See Appendix 3). Also, the SNA's establish a contact with each of their student's teachers and frequently check progress with them.

Where a student in the Harbour group feels the need to do so, they will be permitted (within limits) to leave mainstream classes to return to the Harbour.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Each ASD classroom has access to 2 Special Needs Assistants. These are shared amongst the 6 students in the room and not assigned to one student. SNAs give general assistance with duties of a non-teaching nature and are also intrinsically involved in the actual teaching of ASD students.

SNAs are someone with whom a child can feel comfortable and develop a bond over time. Their role is modified to support the particular needs of each student concerned, but they are there to help the students overcome whatever challenges that school life has for them. The SNA is someone who can really focus on the specific challenges facing each child. The SNA overtime can learn what the child is able to cope with and what stresses them out. This is of major importance as it means that there is someone in the classroom who understands where a child with ASD may be majorly anxious or at risk of getting very angry or upset. It also means there is someone there who can ensure that a child with ASD is not put into a situation which they find particularly hard to cope with.

Children with Autism may need space and often find it very difficult to cope if someone overcrowds them. Therefore, the SNA has a difficult task, which will vary from child to child, in establishing the balance between supporting them in their work and allowing them space. The SNA is someone who can withdraw a child from a circumstance and allow the issue to be addressed at a later stage when they have recovered.

The SNA plays an important role in enabling a child with ASD to become more independent. Establishing the balance between gently pushing them on and considering their limits, once the child with Autism gets to know an SNA and trust that they will be there if things get too much for them, it can really boost their confidence.

The SNA can be a great support in helping to socialise a child with Autism, encouraging them to engage with other children in the class as much as they are able or can tolerate. Equally, they can play a great role in ensuring other children are kind and inclusive of the child.

SNAs play a major role in ensuring that a child with Autism gets the maximum out of class time and concentrates and applies themselves to a task as much as they can. SNAs can help the child to stay focused and doesn't miss out on anything the teacher says due to distraction, problems with following instruction or in grasping what they are being asked to do.

As the SNA is someone who the child with Autism generally grows to trust the SNA can be a kind but firm voice who can help the child to realise what behaviours are acceptable or unacceptable in the school setting.

Parents and Guardians

Partnership with parents and guardians plays a crucial role in enabling students who attend the ASD Class to achieve their potential. Although not directly employed as staff of the Harbour, parents and guardians are regarded as the primary educators of their child and their input and involvement at every stage of their child's education is encouraged and valued.

Communication with parents and guardians is ongoing and meetings are held at least twice yearly (more often where necessary) to review progress and plan future targets. Parents and guardians are encouraged to support the school in working with their child with ASD.

INDUCTION

It is the objective of the Harbour and its staff to facilitate the successful transfer of students with ASD into the Harbour programme and into Temple Carrig School.

Where an existing Temple Carrig School student is coming to work in the Harbour for the first time, sufficient time will be given to ensuring the student is comfortable with the new arrangement and supports.

Where students with ASD are coming to Temple Carrig School for the first time, a Harbour Class Teacher or the Support for Learning Department Co-ordinator may visit the students in their previous school and also meet with the students' class teacher and/or resource teacher. The student with ASD and their parents/guardians will visit the Harbour and receive a tour of the school prior to commencement of new school year. In as much as is possible, we encourage new ASD students to undertake the annual "July Tuition" scheme in the school so that they are familiar and comfortable with the setting and so that a bond and understanding has already developed between them and various

Temple Carrig School staff before the school year starts. This applies to all students with ASD in the school and not just those with a formal enrolment in the Harbour.

STUDENT SUPPORT FILES (SSFs)

After a period of time observing, assessing and inter-acting with the student, an Student Support File will be developed following consultation with parents and guardians and with other relevant professional staff as deemed appropriate (e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Teacher(s) in the Support for Learning Department, Occupational Therapist, School Principal/Deputy Principal, etc).

Contents of the SSF include;

1. The nature and degree of the student's additional needs.
2. The nature and degree of the student's abilities, skills and talents.
3. The special education provision provided to the student.
4. The present level of educational performance of the student.
5. The targets for the student, in which achievement will be attempted, will take place over a period not exceeding twelve months.

A copy of the SSF is given to and signed by the parents/guardians. It will be available upon request to the SENO and other relevant professionals.

CURRICULUM

All students attending the Harbour in Temple Carrig School will attend mainstream classes as much as possible. The Harbour will provide the relevant supports for students with ASDs to enable them to integrate into the mainstream classes, so as they can be taught alongside their peers with the majority of their learning taking place there.

However, ASD students will have access to an extended curriculum in the Harbour (either individually or in a small group setting) where they will receive social and life skills training, a sensory programme and stress management strategies. Students will also benefit from pre and/or post tutoring of mainstream subjects within the Temple Carrig School Learning Support programme.

Students in the Harbour will operate from a modified, individualised timetable. The number of academic subjects undertaken is wholly dependent on their needs and abilities. Activities in the Harbour are also individualised. Each student's timetable is constantly under review and changes can be made throughout the academic year.

CATERING FOR BREAKTIMES

Students in the Harbour will be provided with structured lunchtime activities, which will be supervised by a teacher/SNA. Many of these activities will be open to non-ASD students, thereby enabling students in the Harbour to socialise and get to know their peers in a structured, yet informal setting. There will also be the option for ASD students to take their lunch on their own in a quiet area.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Students in the Harbour will be able to avail of a Homework Club option if they wish to. This enables them to get all work done in school so that home life is undisturbed and failure to complete homework is never a problem for them.

EXAMS

Reasonable accommodations will be put in place in an effort to negate the stress that is associated with class tests and exams for students with ASD.

Mainstream teachers are asked to give adequate notice of all class tests. Where necessary, ASD students will have the option of completing class tests in the Harbour with the Harbour Class Teacher or SNA. Students are given extra time (if required) to complete exams and may also be provided with appropriate reasonable accommodations if deemed necessary by the State Examinations Commission.

This process is continued up to and including the Leaving Certificate exams where reasonable accommodations, if deemed necessary, are made for students with ASD under the direction of the NCSE, SEC and DES and in consultation with students/parents/mainstream teachers.

LEVEL 2 JUNIOR CYCLE and LEAVING CERT APPLIED (LCA)

It is envisaged that the majority of ASD students in Temple Carrig School will be more than able to take the standard curriculum. For those students who are not able to take the existing Junior Certificate, the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) have been designed for a small minority of students with special educational needs. These programmes are a new and welcome addition to help to continue to provide meaningful learning and learning experiences for students who have general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories. The Support for Learning Department is also actively investigating the possibility of offering the Leaving Cert Applied programme in Transition, Fifth and Sixth Year.

Appendix One Understanding Autism and Aspergers

Autism is not me. Autism is just an information processing problem that controls who I am.

Donna Williams, author of *Nobody, Nowhere & Somebody, Somewhere* Jessica Kingsley: London (1998)

Students with ASDs are described as sharing a triad of impairments that affects their ability to understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication, understand social behaviour which affects their ability to interact with other students and adults – and think and behave flexibly, which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities. This triad may be described as a tripartite cluster of specific abnormal patterns of social, communicative and thought behaviours. It has been suggested that an additional dimension related to difficulties in processing sensory information might also be added to the triad.

Impairments in communication refer to verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal difficulties may include a delay in the development of language, comprehension difficulties, literalness, poorly modulated intonation and delivery of speech, echolalia (echoing speech), unusual vocabulary and repetitive use of language.

Non-verbal difficulties include difficulty in empathising with others and in appropriately interpreting social cues, body language and facial expressions. Gestures are often stiff, stilted or overexaggerated. Students demonstrate a lack of flexibility of thinking and behaviour and one may notice poor social imagination, resistance to change, restricted and/or repetitive activities and routines, and an obsessional and narrow range of interests.

Symbolic play and joint attention skills are also impaired in students with ASDs. A lack of 'shared attention' or difficulty participating in the activities or enjoyment of others has been highlighted as a particular challenge to teachers as it affects the student's ability to share interests, have varied interests, adapt behaviour according to the situation, accept changes in rules and routines, engage in imaginative play with others, accept others' points of view and generalise learning.

Furthermore students with ASDs may engage in hand flapping ("stimming"), rocking or spinning; demonstrate heightened sensitivity to noise, smell, taste, touch or visual stimuli; experience erratic sleep patterns; display unusual eating habits; engage in self-injurious or aggressive or hyperactive behaviour; exhibit an unusual posture or gait and possess irrational fears or phobias. Since the 1980s the idea has emerged of a spectrum which acknowledges the impact of both the range of general learning disability and level of ASDs for the student's learning and teaching programmes.

Asperger's Syndrome

There is no right type of Asperger's. People with Asperger's are as varied as Norwegians and trombone players.

Mark Haddon, author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Vintage: London (2004)

Asperger's syndrome is thought to fall within the spectrum of autism, but with enough distinct features to warrant its own label. It is characterised by subtle impairments in three areas of development: social communication, social interaction and social imagination. There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in language acquisition. However, students with Asperger's syndrome have communication difficulties and may speak in a monotonous or exaggerated tone and at great length about a topic that is of particular interest to them irrespective of the reaction of the listener.

Students find it difficult to interpret social signals and interact with others. They often excel at memorising facts and figures but exhibit difficulty thinking in the abstract ways required for subjects such as English and Religious Education. Students may have additional motor co-ordination and organisational problems such as a tendency to compartmentalise thinking (e.g. completion of a task may be perceived as unrelated to the presentation of the task), difficulties in managing time and completing work, eating, drinking and sleeping irregularities, an inability to block out distractions affecting attention span, inappropriate eye contact, and sensory and perceptual sensitivities. Asperger's syndrome affects students in the average to above average ability range.

Appendix Two Relevant Legislation, Guidelines and External Agencies

This policy has been established in accordance with, and the Harbour class will endeavour to comply with, the following legislation and guidelines:

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- The Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Comhairle Act, 2000
- The Disability Act, 2005
- The Education for Persons with Special Education (EPSEN) Act, 2004
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process, 2006
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Guidelines for Setting Up and Organising Special Classes, 2016
- The National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities 2007
- Department of Education & Science Guidelines on Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs - Post Primary 2007

The Harbour, as part of the Support for Learning Department in Temple Carrig School has established links with the following agencies:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Special Education Support Service (SESS)
- Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
- National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)
- The Lucena Clinic
- Enable Ireland
- Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Psychology Services provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Temple Carrig School has no function in accessing these services, but can act as a conduit for their provision, where available and possible. It is a matter for the Parents/Guardians to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Temple Carrig School's Admissions Policy, Annual Admissions Notice, Code of Conduct and Support for Learning Policy.

Appendix Three Tips for Mainstream Teachers when Teaching Students with ASD

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are neurological disorders that are characterised by difficulties with social communication, with social interaction, and with social imagination and flexible thinking. An additional impairment, related to processing sensory information, has been suggested as a further dimension of ASD.

Impairments in Language and Social Communication

Atypical patterns of social communication can be verbal and non-verbal. Verbal difficulties may include a delay in the development of language, comprehension difficulties, literal thinking and speech, poorly modulated intonation and delivery of speech, echolalia (echoing speech), unusual vocabulary, and repetitive use of language. Non-verbal difficulties include difficulty in empathising with others and in appropriately interpreting social cues, body language and facial expressions. Gestures are often stiff, stilted or over-exaggerated.

Strategies for Impairments in Language and Communication:

- Students require support in understanding the purpose and value of communication.
- Attention needs to be directed to teaching social aspects of language such as turn taking and timing (some turn taking activities may include board games, hitting a balloon back and forth, telephone conversations, bouncing a ball back and forth, etc).
- Directly teach gestures, facial expressions, emotions, vocal intonation and body language.
- Use visual material and/or signing to support and facilitate students' communicative initiations and responses.
- Provide precise instructions for students to follow.
- Always refer to the student by name as they may not realise that 'everyone' includes them.
- Do not expect eye contact and never turn the student's face towards you.
- Keep verbal instructions brief and simple.

Impairments in Social Interaction

Problems with social behaviour will sometimes arise from communication and restrictive behaviours - for example, difficulties in interpreting facial expression. Also, as pupils with ASD tend to be literal thinkers, they will have problems with knowing the rules that govern social behaviour.

Strategies for Impairments in Social Interaction:

- Students with ASDs are literal thinkers.
- Students are confused by the rules that govern social behaviour.
- Students require direct teaching in social skills.
- It is necessary to structure opportunities for students to use social skills in different situations.
- Be aware of the difficulties for students inherent in less structured situations such as break, lunchtime, in the corridor and in transitions between lessons.
- Use stories to teach social communication/interaction.
- Develop a 'Buddy system' with mainstream peers.
- Directly teach jokes, puns and metaphors.

Impairments in Imagination with a Restricted Range of Behaviours, Activities and Interests or Impairments in Social Imagination and Flexible Thinking

In relation to a lack of flexibility of thinking and behaviour, one may notice that the child has limited social imagination, becomes anxious with changes in routine, prefers restricted and/or repetitive activities and routines, and is obsessional with a narrow range of interests. These difficulties can also be reflected in problems with imaginative play and with sharing the attention with others.

Therefore, difficulty with participating in the activities or enjoyment of others is a particular challenge to teachers as it affects the student's ability to share and have varied interests, adapt behaviour according to the situation, accept changes in rules and routines, accept others' points of view, and generalise learning.

Strategies for Impairments in Imagination with a Restricted Range of Behaviours, Activities and Interests:

- Students must be helped to cope with new and/or varying activities.
- Pre-empt the student's anxiety that results from being presented with unstructured or unfamiliar situations without prior warning/explanation.
- Devise and implement a structured play/leisure programme.

The combination of these three features may result in a range of further behavioural difficulties. Students with ASDs, for example, may engage in hand flapping (stimming), rocking or spinning. They may demonstrate heightened sensitivities to noise, smell, taste, touch or visual stimuli. They may also experience erratic sleep patterns, display unusual eating habits, engage in self-injurious or aggressive or hyperactive behaviour, exhibit an unusual posture or gait, and have irrational fears or phobias

Additional Tips for Learning and Teaching

- Adjustments may need to be made to the classroom to address the student's undersensitivity/ oversensitivity to noise, smell, taste, light, touch or movement.
- Consider implementing structured and systematic programmes to develop the student's fine and/or gross-motor skills.
- Elicit relevant information regarding the student's eating, drinking and sleeping irregularities.
- Structure the classroom environment to reduce distractions.
- Secure student's attention prior to issuing instructions/engaging in conversation.
- Provide structures that assist students in understanding the duration of tasks.
- Make the links between different tasks clear to students.
- Use computers to support the student's learning and teaching opportunities.
- Disapprove of inappropriate behaviour and not of the student.