

## **Enrolment/Admission Policy Statement**

### **School:**

St Mary's Special School  
Drumcar  
Dunleer  
Co Louth

**Tel**      041 – 6862666

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**School Day:** 9.00 a.m. to 2.45 p.m.

### **Philosophy**

The Board of Management of St Mary's Special School is setting out its policy on the enrolment procedures in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, and trusts that by doing so Parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. Furthermore, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, Teresa Mallon and the Principal Teacher, Mr Kevin Toale, will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

### **Mission Statements**

St Mary's Special School is situated in the grounds of St John of God, Drumcar. The school now operates under the Trusteeship of St. John of God Services. Our mission is one of caring and supportive service where respect for the dignity and welfare of each of our pupils is paramount; where responding to the changing needs of each individual person is the required duty for us all. While we have a Catholic ethos in St Mary's Special School, no Pupil is discriminated against because of religious beliefs.

St Mary's Special School is dedicated to providing the highest quality, care and education of pupils under our instruction. In partnership with the Parents/Guardians, Families and/or Residential Personnel of our Pupils as well as our Trustees, we seek to promote individual intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development. The dignity of each child is maintained at a premium, thus ensuring equality of provision. We believe that each child is entitled to an appropriate educational provision, regardless of individual levels of attainment and functioning. While enabling each pupil to develop his/her potential to the full, we also want our pupils to be happy in school and to enjoy their time in our care.

**St Mary's Special School** is funded by the Department of Education and Science. While IQ scores are only one factor taken into consideration in considering a child for enrolment in St. Mary's Special School, ***the school is a special school for pupils from 4 – 18 years of age (In accordance with "The Rules for National Schools") assessed to have a moderate or a severe / profound General Learning Disability \* or children with Autism assessed to have a Borderline Moderate/Mild or Moderate or Severe/Profound General Learning Disability.*** Classes in ST. MARY'S SPECIAL SCHOOL funded by the Department of Education & Science are intended to cater for children and young persons with special educational needs from 4 years of age until the end of the school year in which they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> year. Some Pupils are entitled to avail of the July Education Programme (JEP) and consequently, the school year is extended for 20 days for such Pupils if the BOM chooses to make the JEP available to qualifying Pupils.

Within the intellectual categories detailed above, the school caters for the educational needs of Pupils with varying disabilities and varying circumstances e.g.

- Pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder spectrum (Pupils assessed to have a Borderline Moderate/Mild or Moderate or Severe/Profound General Learning Disability and who are assessed to be on the Autistic Spectrum may also be enrolled in the School if the Psychological Report specifies that they would benefit from the services in St Mary's Special School.)
- Pupils with Rett Syndrome.
- Pupils exhibiting Challenging Behaviour.
- Pupils who have completed Primary School can avail of our facilities and Educational Programmes up to 18 years of age.
- Parents of Pupils assessed to be in the Mild Range of General Learning Disability, whose additional problems may prevent them from benefiting from services in other schools are welcome to come and view our facilities with a view to enrolment.
- Pupils who are Sensorily Impaired.
- Pupils with a Severe Language Disorder.
- Pupils with a Physical Disability.

*This list is by no means exhaustive and the main criterion for enrolment in St Mary's Special School is to have a moderate or severe / profound general learning disability.*

*Moderate	: IQ level 35-40 to 50-55
Severe	: IQ level 20-25 to 35-40
Profound	: IQ level below 20-25

(Source: Adapted from DSM IV- American Psychiatric Association)

## **Funding**

The Department of Education and Science provides funding for the School and no Pupils will be accepted in St Mary's Special School unless funding is provided by the D.E.S. in relation to those Pupils as regards Staffing, capitation and transport.

## **Current Organisation of Classes (September 2014)**

At present we have 11 classes:

- 3 classes for Pupils with a severe / profound general learning disability
- 1 specific class for Pupils on the autistic spectrum
- 6 classes for Pupils with a moderate learning disability
- 1 class for Children presenting with Challenging Behaviours.

## **Admission Procedures**

1. All initial enquiries for enrolment should be addressed to the School Principal either in writing or by telephone. The Principal will act as an Agent on behalf of the Board of Management.

2. Further to the conclusion of initial informal inquiries, all formal applications for enrolment should be supported by a psychological profile outlining the ascertained level of functioning of the individual child.

3. The School Principal may attend preliminary case conferences as a representative of the Board of The Board of Management.

4. A consultative process involving the Board of Management, the School Principal and the potential Class Teacher, in partnership with Parents, the Pupil, the School Inspector, the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) and other relevant Professional Personnel will determine the eligibility and suitability of enrolment. The School Principal will be responsible for the co-ordination and development of this process on behalf of The Board of Management. It may be necessary for the Board of Management to defer enrolment pending the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Science to meet the needs specified in the psychological and/or medical reports.

5. The Board of Management will require the following key information from Parents:

- Pupil's name, age and address.
- Names and addresses of Pupil's Parents/Guardians.
- Contact telephone numbers.
- Contact telephone numbers in case of emergency.
- Details of any medical conditions.
- Religion.
- Previous schools attended,- if any, and reason for transfer if applicable.
- Any other relevant information (including any such information as may be prescribed under the Education Welfare Act, 2000.)

- A copy of the Enrolment Form is available for viewing in the Principal's office and is completed by Parents/Guardians prior to enrolment in the School.

6. In so far as is practicable, the Board of Management, having regard to the School's Enrolment Policy, will enroll children on application, provided that there is space available. The Board will have regard to any relevant Department of Education and Science Guidelines in relation to class size or staffing provisions and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children. The Board is bound by the Department of Education and Science's Rules for National Schools which provides that Pupils may only be enrolled from the age of four years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of six.

### **Pupils Transferring**

- The Board of Management acknowledges that Pupils may transfer to the School at any time, subject to school policy, availability of space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Science.
- In deference to the Education Welfare Act (2000), information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools.