



St. Ita's Special School

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ST.ITA'S ENROLMENT POLICY

Profile

St. Ita's is a co-educational primary school for students who have a mild intellectual disability {also called a general learning disability} A General Learning Disability is defined as a significant sub average general intellectual functioning that is accompanied by significant limitations in adaptive functioning.

Mild General Learning Disability encompasses a wide range of presentations and may be accompanied by additional diagnoses.¹

Accordingly, best practice requires an assessment of a student's intellectual, social and emotional functioning to determine the appropriateness of an educational placement at St. Ita's School.²

The school is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Armagh. We aim to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils: cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people and promotes a Christian philosophy of life.

There are ten full time teachers, including the principal, one ex quota teacher to support autism class and children with multiple disabilities. St. Ita's has five part time special subject teachers and caters for the full range of classes for children 5 years to 18 years.

Children enrolled in St. Ita's, are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way. A copy of the Code of Behaviour will be issued to all parents and each parent will be requested to sign an undertaking to uphold the school code of Behaviour and policy.

The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) and all relevant equality legislation. St. Ita's follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

¹ The following are an example of other specific educational disability needs that cannot be met by Saint Ita's. This does not constitute a complete list, as there are a wide variety of conditions that can affect a child's performance in school:

- Children with moderate to severe emotional and behavioural problems.
- Children with moderate to severe autism
- Children with high medical needs
- Children with moderate to severe intellectual disability.

² In some cases, St. Ita's may accommodate children who fall close to the Mild general Disability {eg. High moderate and low border line}. This depends on the individual child's strengths, educational; attainments and progress in school to date which assists to inform. These cases are carefully considered on an individual basis, depending on the child's overall profile and in line with the policy statement, and the decision making process described here.

Policy Statement

Each child is considered as an individual. The decision as to who benefit from placement at the school is taken following consideration of a wide range of issues including parents views, relevant professional opinions, resources available to the child in their community, additional learning and medical needs, social needs, emotional needs, and so forth.

The following is considered in each application for enrolment:

- The specific needs of the student applicant with regards to their mild intellectual disability and consequent special education needs.
- The capacity of the programmes at St.Ita's to assist the student applicant in meeting their potential.
- The capacity of the programmes to meet the parent's expectations regarding educational and other outcomes for their child.
- The availability of a place for the child in a classroom of peers both cognitively, socially and emotionally
- The resources of the school at the time of application.
- The needs of the whole school/Class specific population at the time of application.
- The health and safety requirements of the present student population.
- The health and safety requirements of the staff.

Application Procedure

The Board of Management will communicate generally to the school community through appropriate channels e.g. newsletter, parish bulletin, parents letters to outline the application for enrolment procedures. Pupils are enrolled on foot of Psychological Assessment referrals, made through N.E.P.S., Early Intervention Team HSE, transfers from other 'mild' schools and other services e.g. St Michael's House.

Parents seeking to enrol their child in St.Ita's should contact the principal to arrange a meeting. If the child falls into the GMLD spectrum as stated by a psychologist (IQ 50-70) whose needs will be best met by a special school ie St. Ita's as recommended by the psychologist and approved by the SENO. If there is a vacancy in the school an offer in writing will be made to the parent/guardian. On receipt of a **written acceptance** of this offer the child may be enrolled in the school. Parents will be asked to produce an original birth/adoption certificate a copy of same will be kept on file.

No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

While recognising the rights of the parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St.Ita's is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all the children.

Category of Student

- Students with mild General Learning Needs
[I.Q.50—70 see Application Procedure]

- Students with a diagnosis of A.S.D.and MGLD
- Students with Moderate General Learning Need, with adaptive functioning in the Mild range whose needs will be best met in St Ita's School as recommended by the psychologist and approved by the S.E.N.O.

- **Application Procedures.**

The following must be supplied.

- Full Psychological Report
- Previous School Reports{if available]
- Other Reports deemed necessary e.g. Psychiatric, Social Workers, Speech Therapy, Medical

Given that St.Ita's provides an education for pupils whose primary needs are in the intellectual disability, it does not have services for:

- Young Offenders
- Students addicted to drugs or substance abuse.
- Students with deviant sexual behavior.
- Students with severe autism.
- Children with moderate to severe cognitive, emotional and behavioural problems.

Suitability for enrolment is continuously under review

Decision making

Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Principal and the Board of Management and sanctioned by the S.E.NO. Parents will be notified of acceptance of their children and as a general principle, children will be enrolled on application provided that there is space available and the child has reached his/her 4th birthday, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the child is six years of age.

To assist the school in such circumstances of over crowding, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions. Other factors that may be considered are:

- Size of and available space in classrooms.
- Educational needs of children of a particular age.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment exceeding the number of places available the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

- A. Brothers and sisters (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled with priority going to the oldest.

- B. In the event of being unable to enrol a child(ren) from category A, in a given class at the beginning of a year, or mid-year, such children will receive priority for the subsequent school year over other children on the class waiting list.

Other pupils may be enrolled during the school year if newly resident in the area. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules for National Schools, Education Welfare Act and school's enrolment policy.

Enrolment Committee

The committee will be

- Chairperson of the B.O.M.
 - The school principal
 - The school deputy principal
- Subject to other professionals relevant to the application

Appeals Procedure

Parents, who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. It must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enroll.

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____
Date:

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management