



ADMISSIONS

POLICY



Admission Policy of Jonah Special School

Old V.E.C. Building, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny

Roll number: 20380B

School Patron: Autism Ireland

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school Patron and with parents of children attending the school.

Jonah Special School was established on 1st March 2011, funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills. This school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

The policy was initially approved by the school Patron on 15th September 2020. It is published on the school's website and Facebook page and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Jonah Special School's admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Annual Admission Notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it. This form must be completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian.

2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the School

Jonah Special School is a co-educational Special School for students with Autism and Complex Needs under the patronage of Autism Ireland. The students range in ages from 4 – 18 years. Our mission is to create opportunities through education, in an environment that is caring, safe, supportive and joyful, improving the lives of children and young adults with autism and the lives of their families. Taking into account the Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act, the funding available, our ethos is based on the following principles –

- Provision of evidence based appropriate education which is child centred and individualised to each student and takes account of the autism specific nature of provision.



- The provision of autism specific education using evidence based data driven interventions including Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Social Stories, Lámh, Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEAACH) and by appropriately qualified professional staff.
- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special education need.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- Co-educational and commitment to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities.
- Democratically run with active participation by parents in the life of the school, whilst positively acknowledging and affirming the professional role of all staff.

3. Admission Statement

Jonah Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) The gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (b) The civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (c) The family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (d) The sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (e) The religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (f) The disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (g) The ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (h) The Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) The ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs.

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Jonah Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the special educational needs of these students as specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Jonah Special School will co-operate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council. Jonah Special school will comply with any direction served on the Patron or the Board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the Board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.



4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the School/Special class

Jonah Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Complex Needs.

Definition of an ASD Diagnosis: Assessment and classification of Autism or Autistic Spectrum Disorder by a Psychiatrist or Clinical Psychologist using DSM-IV, V or ICD-10 and /or multidisciplinary assessment of same by a professional team (including a Clinical Psychologist/Educational Psychologist).

Definition of Complex Needs: Individuals with a primary diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum of Pervasive Developmental Delay/Autism (Asperger, autism, PDD - NOS) with one or more associated difficulties in terms of: environmental/social disadvantage, cognitive or language impairment, emotional or behavioural problems.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) The school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details).
- b) A parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.
- c) The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and/or the NCSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
- d) The student has previously been expelled from Jonah Special School or any other school in circumstances where the Board of Management feels that placement in Jonah Special School would not be appropriate for the child.

Jonah Special School provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and Complex Needs and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

Applicants must be at least 4 years of age and not yet 18 years of age on 1st September of the year in which they are applying for admission.

Applicants are required to submit a psychological report that confirms a primary diagnosis of Autism as per DSM 5/ICD-10, provided by a qualified professional with a recommendation for placement in an **Autism Specific Special School**.

Applicants are required to submit a letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for an Autism Specific Special School.

School Admission Form, incorporating family details and medical history must be completed correctly and fully for each child. (Appendix 1). This will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principals office. (Appendix 2).

Compliance Note – Submission of all required documents by the admissions closing date is mandatory. Applications will not be reviewed prior to the closing date. Responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of the application and all supporting documentation rests solely with the applicant. The school assumes no responsibility for reviewing, verifying, or notifying applicants of missing or incomplete documentation. Applications that fail to include all required documentation do not meet admission requirements and will **not be considered**.



6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice –

The maximum class size is six students. If the number of children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply –

- Brothers and sisters of existing students.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply –

The names of all eligible applicants will be entered into a lottery.

In the event that there is more than one place available, and these places are in different classes, a separate lottery will be conducted for each class that is oversubscribed.

Only children whose date of birth matches the age profile of the class in question will be entered into the lottery for that class.

The lottery will be performed by the Principal and witnessed by a parent nominee/the chairperson/a representative of the Board of Management and a/Community Guard/Peace Commissioner.

For each lottery, the name of each eligible applicant will be placed in a drum. The Principal will draw names from the drum, one by one, until the drum is empty. The order in which the names are drawn from the drum will be recorded on a numbered list. The place or places available will be offered to the applicants in the order in which they appear on the list. If an applicant refuses the offer of a place, the place will be offered to the next candidate on the list, and so on until all places have been accepted.

7. What will not be Considered or Taken into Account

In accordance with section 62(7) (e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school –

- A student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service.
- The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to – admission to a special school insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents.
- A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.



This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting list (up until the end of the current school year).

8. Decisions on Applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Jonah Special School will be based on the following –

- Our school's Admission Policy.
- The school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable).
- The information provided the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications.

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying Applicants of Decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the students ranking against the selection criteria and details of the students place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an Offer of a Place by an Applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Jonah Special School you must indicate –

- (i) Whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) Whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Jonah Special School where –

- (i) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) An application does not contain the consent of a parent or legal guardian.
- (iii) An applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school.



- (iv) The parent/guardian of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (v) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

12. Sharing of Data with other Schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

13. Waiting List in the Event of Oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Jonah Special School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Jonah Special School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than six weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows

-

Applications for enrolment are considered subject to school policy and available space in the appropriate class.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows -



- A waiting list of students whose applications for enrolment were unsuccessful due to oversubscription will be compiled and will be valid for the duration of the school year in which enrolment was sought.
- Allocation of any places which become available will be in line with school policy and available space in the appropriate class.

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of Jonah Special School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of –

- (a) An application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) The admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Jonah Special School is of non-denominational ethos and children of all or no faith are welcome to apply for enrolment.

Religious instruction can be provided to students as part of their Individual Education Plan if parents request this.

18. Reviews/Appeals

Review of Decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998. The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note – Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.



Right of Appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission. An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management).

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management).

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Policy Review

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy will be amended and updated as required.

Jonah Special School

Admissions and Enrolment Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Principal

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Next Review Period: *September 2028*

The contents of this policy have been approved by Jacinta Walsh, acting on behalf of the Patron.



Application for Admission of New Student

Please return this form to the above address, together with a Birth Certificate and

A copy of the child's medical and/or psychological reports.
(These will be copied and the original returned to you)

Child's full name	
Usual version of child's name (If different from above)	
Irish version of child's name (Otherwise school will translate)	
Playschool attended (if any)	
Date of Birth	
P.P.S. Number	
Religion (Optional)	
Father/Guardian's Name	Father/Guardian's Occupation
Father/Guardian's Telephone Number	Father/Guardian's Email Address
Mother/Guardian's Name	Mother/Guardian's Occupation
Mother/Guardian's Telephone Number	Mother/Guardian's Email Address
Home Address	
Name of previous school(s) attended	Class
Does any legal order under family law exist that the school should know about? (The school should be made aware of any court order, which affects the child's welfare and also the name of any person into whose custody the child should <u>not</u> be given.)	

The Education Welfare Act 2000

Once a pupil is absent for 20 days or more, the school is obliged to inform the National Education Welfare Board.



Additional Information Sheet

Names and contact numbers (other than mother and father) who have permission to collect _____ from school:

Any medical conditions: _____

Any allergies: _____

Doctors name, address and contact no:

Dietary issues (e.g. glute free): _____

Any other relevant information:

Note – Should your child be placed on a waiting list for a place in our school, their personal data may be shared with the National Council for Special Education for the purpose of planning for provision of Special Education Placements.



Appendix 2

Privacy Notice for Parents/Guardians

Your Personal Data: What the School Needs –

Jonah Special School is what is known as the 'Controller' of the personal data you provide to it. We take your privacy seriously and will only use personal information about you and your child to provide services you have requested from us and administer your account.

We collect a variety of personal data to be able to deliver the service requested by you. Most of the data is captured on an enrolment form or on the forms required to obtain government funded fees (where applicable).

The enrolment form includes your name, address, work details, details of your child including date of birth, ppsn, plus further detail on any specific medical and other relevant health-care details, and history necessary to allow us to ensure the welfare and safety of our child. Because of the sensitive nature of this information, you will be asked to confirm your consent for us to collect and hold the information.

In addition to this, Jonah Special School will, at your request and again with your consent, gather additional information on your nationality, religion, and ethnic origin, if you believe this to be an important factor in providing the appropriate education, care and support for your child.

The enrolment form also collects the contact details and phone numbers of your child's emergency contacts and authorised collectors. You are required to ensure these persons agree to their information being stored and you will be asked to confirm this.

The funding and grant forms may collect personal data including your ppsn, your child's ppsn and your social welfare statuses. This is only collected to allow us process funding and grant applications on your behalf to allow you access to education grants for your child (where eligible and applicable).

Why Jonah Special School Needs Data/Purpose of the Processing

Jonah Special School needs your basic personal data to provide you with its services in line with this overall contract. The school will not collect any personal data from you if it does not need to provide and oversee this service to you.

What Jonah Special School Does with Data/Disclosure

All personal data is processed by the Principal and the Management Team or staff designated by the Principal. To deliver our services effectively, we may need to exchange your details with –

- Department of Education.
- Regulators such as TUSLA.
- Department of Transport.
- Inspectors (TUSLA, Departments of Education).
- HSE – Multidisciplinary Teams – Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Psychologist, SENO etc.

Jonah Special School has a Data Protection Policy in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.



How Long Jonah Special School Keeps Data/Retention Period and Criteria Used

Jonah Special School will keep your and your child's personal data for as long as he or she remains in the school, and for the period afterwards required by the relevant statutory and legislative guidelines that apply. More information on the schools retention policies can be found by contacting the Principal directly at the address below or by checking the school website.

What are your Rights?

If you wish to see what information the school holds on you or your child, simply contact the Principal either by post or email and we will endeavour to respond to you within 30 days of receipt of your request.

If at any point you believe the information the school processes on you is incorrect, you may request to have it corrected. You can contact the Principal at the address shown below. If you wish to raise a complaint on how the school has handled your personal data, you can also contact the Principal.

Data Controller: Jonah Special School

Principal: Caitríona Barry

Data Protection Officer: Caitríona Barry

Old V.E.C. Building, Slieverue, Kilkenny via Waterford.

051 – 833269

thejonahproject@hotmail.com

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe the school is not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain directly to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner at –

Email –

infor@dataprotection.ie

Postal Address –

Data Protection Commissioner,

Canal House,

Station Road,

Portarlinton,

Co. Laois.



March 2026

I confirm that I have received a copy of Jonah Special School **Privacy Notice for Parents/Guardians** and confirm my consent for the school to collect and hold data on my child and my family (where applicable).

Signed –

Parent(s) Name: _____.

Child's Name: _____.