

# ABBHEY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

## DONEGAL TOWN



**Enrolment Policy for Moderate General Learning Disability Class**  
**June 10th 2019**

## **Enrolment Policy for Moderate General Learning Disability Class**

This policy reflects the Abbey Vocational School's ethos and mission statement, which is committed to the pursuit of excellence, encouraging students to develop their full academic and intellectual potential and to enhancing each student's sense of dignity and self-worth.

This policy covers all matters pertaining to admission to the Moderate General Learning Disability (MGLD) Class.

### **Rationale**

This policy is necessary to:

- 1. Provide a reference point for parents/guardians, students and teachers
- 2. Provide transparency and accountability.
- 3. Clarify procedures.
- 4. Comply with relevant legislation.

### **Goals / Objectives**

This policy aims to state:

- Criteria for admission to the Moderate General Learning Disability Class.
- Procedures for enrolment.

### **Admissions Criteria for the School's Special Class**

**“A special class is defined as a class which has been officially sanctioned by the DES or NCSE, which has a defined pupil teacher ratio and is designated for a particular category of disability” (NCSE, 2011, p.40).**

The designated category of disability for the special class is Moderate General Learning Disability.

The total number of places in the Special Class is 8. If it is oversubscribed, Places will be allocated in accordance with the following priority order:

- Any student currently enrolled in the School in the mainstream setting who meets the entry criteria as outlined in this Policy and who with parental consent wishes to transfer to the special class
- All other applicants who meets the entry criteria as outlined in this Policy.

## **Admission of First Years**

1. Applicants from the local catchment area are prioritised
2. Applicants must, in the first instance, meet all of the following entry criteria and will not be enrolled in the Special class unless all of these entry criteria are met:
  - The applicant must have a diagnosis of Moderate General Learning Difficulties. This diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and the report confirming this must be submitted with the application for admission to the Special Class. To ensure applicants are in the most appropriate placement so that their educational progress can be optimised, applicants who do not have a diagnosis of Moderate General Learning Disability or who have a diagnosis of a more severe learning disability will not be considered for admission.
  - An Educational Psychologist Report, which cannot be dated more than 2 years prior to the application date outlining the student's ability and a recommendation for educational placement in a special class environment under the designated category of Moderate General Learning Disability must be submitted with the application form.
  - The applicant's parents must fully complete, sign and date the admissions application form/Transfer form and supply all specified documentation which must be submitted to the School office on or before the closing date
  - Where an application/transfer form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The parents will be notified that the application will not be considered until a complete application is submitted.
3. Applications will initially be reviewed by a Steering Committee (Principal, SEN Coordinator and MGLD teacher) to determine their suitability for the Moderate General Learning Disability class.
4. Following the selection of possible candidates the Principal and MGLD teachers will carry out the enrolment procedures as set out below.
5. Following the finalisation of these procedures, the list of candidate(s) will be brought to the Steering Committee for the selection and approval of the most suitable student(s) to enrol in the MGLD class.
6. The maximum number enrolled in the programme will be in accordance with national Guidelines (currently 8 students).

## **Enrolment other than to First Year**

Applications from students other than to First Year will initially be assessed by the Steering Committee.

## Enrolment Procedures

The following are the procedures for admission to the MGLD class

1. The Principal, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and a member of the MGLD team will meet with the parents/guardians of the students.
2. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator and a member of the MGLD team will hold a consultative meeting at the Abbey Vocational School and will invite the Principal of the feeder school and any other school personnel (i.e. Special Needs Assistants) who are deemed to have played a significant role in the applicant's education to that point to attend.
3. Multidisciplinary meetings with relevant professionals including the NEPS psychologist will be held where suitable.
4. The school must be informed about:
  - Any behavioural issues (i.e. emotional behaviour outbursts / physical aggression) which could impact on the student's ability to participate in the class.
  - Any medication that the student may be in receipt of either at home or in the course of the school day.
  - Any additional medical conditions and/or dietary restrictions/toileting issues / requirements that the student may have.
5. The parents/guardians of the student and the Principal of the feeder school will be required to agree to facilitate members of the MGLD team in conducting as many observations as appropriate of the student in his current educational placement.
6. Once a student has been offered a place in the class, they will be invited to participate in a transition programme to the school. The participation of the student in the transition programme is essential in ensuring their smooth transfer to post-primary school as well as facilitating MGLD staff in making any necessary academic/ other reasonable accommodations for the student. The transition programme involves:
  - Visits by a member / members of the MGLD team to the student in his general classroom in his primary school over the course of the remaining academic year.
  - A number of arranged visits by the enrolled student to Abbey Vocational School. The student may participate in group activities with the students who are currently in the class.

## Refusal of Admission

1. The School reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant who does not comply with the terms of this Policy.
2. The School will refuse to enrol an applicant who is seeking to be enrolled in the classroom where that applicant was previously a student in the School and was either expelled from the School and/or transferred from the School to another school while on suspension and/or undergoing a process under the Code of Behaviour.
3. The School will refuse to enrol an applicant who is seeking to be enrolled in the School where that applicant is transferring from/is enrolled in/was enrolled in another school if that applicant has either been expelled from or is currently suspended from that school

and/or is/was undergoing a process under that school's code of behaviour. It is a requirement that reports detailing the applicant's behaviour record from the school from which the applicant is proposing to transfer/the last school which the applicant was enrolled in, be provided as part of the application.

4. The School will refuse to enrol an applicant who is seeking to be enrolled in the School where that applicant is transferring from/is enrolled in/was enrolled in another school if the Board is of the opinion that the references provided from the applicant's previous/current school are not satisfactory.
5. Students are deemed a risk to themselves or others.
6. Enrolment would have a detrimental effect on the education of other students.
7. In exceptional circumstances, the School reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant where:-
  - The applicant has special needs such that, even with additional resources being made available from the DES/NCSE, the School cannot meet such needs and/or provide the applicant with an appropriate education
  - The applicant poses unacceptable risk(s) to other students, staff and/or school property.
  - Parents of applicants refused admission will be advised of their right to appeal the Board's decision as outlined below.

### **Procedures to be followed if a student is found not to be benefiting from their participation in the MGLD Class**

- If following enrolment a student is encountering serious difficulties and, in the professional opinion of the MGLD team, is not benefiting from the MGLD programme, the Principal will arrange for an assessment of the student to be carried out.
- In cases (following further assessment) where it is the professional opinion of the MGLD team that the pupil poses a serious health and safety risk to himself and / or to other students or staff in the school, the case will be referred to the Board of Management to assess suitability for the programme.

### **Right of Appeal**

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents of students or students over the age of 18 years, who have been refused admission to the School, have the right to appeal such a refusal by the Board to the Secretary General of the Department of Education. Appeals must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the Board's decision to Refuse admission.

## **Review Procedures**

1. The policy will be reviewed every year in consultation with the review groups and The student's parents.
2. The review group will consist of the Principal, Deputy Principal, and Special Educational Needs Coordinator and a member of the MGLD team.
3. Progress will be reviewed and targets set for the following year.