

SETANTA SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS

SETANTA SCHOOL

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Setanta School is for children on the Autistic Spectrum. It is situated on the grounds of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, Beechpark, Stillorgan, County Dublin. The school originated from a small school (St Loman's) that was once attached to James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Blanchardstown, County Dublin. On moving to Beechpark it was renamed Setanta.

SCHOOL OWNERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

- A. Setanta is owned by the Department of Education and Science (the Department) and it has designated Setanta as "Autism Specific".
- B. The Health Service Executive (the HSE) is the patron of the school.
- C. The school is managed by a Board of Management.
- D. The school is supported by a Parents' Association.
- E. The school is staffed by full-time teachers, part-time teachers, special needs assistants, and a caretaker.
- F. The staff is further supported by a range of specialist consultants.
- G. The pupils all have a diagnosis of ASD and range in ages between 12 and 18 years.
- H. The legislation affecting the school are the following statutes:
 - i. The Education Act 1998
 - ii. The Education Welfare Act 2000
 - iii. Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004
 - iv. Equal Status Act 2000
 - v. Equality Act 2004

HOW SETANTA IS RUN

THE DEPARTMENT:

Setanta is owned by the Department and the school's teachers and other staff have the same status as their colleagues in all other national primary schools. The Department pays their salaries and they are ultimately answerable to the Department for the provision of services.

THE HSE:

The HSE is the Patron of the school and it provides support services through access to specialist consultants. It has two nominees on the Board of Management of the school.

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

The Board of Management consists of eight members, including the two nominees referred to above. The School Principal is a member and one other teacher (elected by the teaching staff) is nominated, two parents who are selected by the parent association, one being the father of a current pupil and the other being the mother of a current pupil make up the other two members. At the first board meeting of their tenure of office the above members of the Board of Management select by unanimous decision two community representatives to join them on the Board.

Each Board of Management term is for four years and a minimum of three meetings per year must take place.

Duties and Functions of the Board:

All policy issues are submitted for consideration and approved to the Board of Management.

All significant decisions affecting school administration as submitted to the Board for approval.

All enrolment decisions are made by the Board.

All staff appointments are submitted for approval to the Board.

THE PARENTS ‘ASSOCIATION:

The Parents’ Association consists of and represents the parents of children currently attending the school and is elected at an AGM by the parents of children attending the school. All parents of children attending the school are entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. The object of the Parents’ Association is to support the students and teachers through supporting the school and its activities.

The Parent’s Association is encouraged to contribute to policy making and to contribute to future planning and proposals. Submissions relating thereto can be advanced to the Board of Management by their Board members.

The role of the Parents’ Association is regarded as crucial from the point of view that the school is regarded as an extension of the home and, therefore, developing and fostering a relationship between parents and staff is an important objective.

THE STAFF:

The staff at the time of the adoption of this document, consists of the school Principal together with ten class teachers, four part-time teachers-therapists, twenty two special needs assistants, and a school caretaker. The staff, in numbers and qualifications, in experience and skill, was so appointed having regard to the number of pupils, the individual needs of those pupils, the physical size and structure of the buildings and the health and safety of the children, the staff itself, the parents and all visitors. While the number and composition of staff may change marginally from time to time, substantial expansion of Setanta School cannot be envisaged given the nature of the tasks, the environment, the shape and sizes of the building and the limits of campus space.

SETANTA SCHOOL

ENROLMENT/ADMISSIONS POLICY

- Setanta School is for pupils on the Autistic spectrum in the cognitive range of mild and moderate, and is exclusively for pupils between the age of 12 and 18 years. Applicants must be at least 12 years old by the 1st of September of the year of entry. Based on the individual needs of each pupil, he/she may be accommodated in classes of less than six pupils having due regard for health, safety and educational requirements. Given the Department of Education & Skills approved ratio of 6:1 for ASD classes it is not feasible for Setanta School to enrol pupils who cannot function in a class of at least four pupils. Some pupils may, from time to time, require one to one attention. When considering applications, particularly in relation to pupils who demonstrate a high incidence of severe challenging behaviour, the Board of Management of Setanta School respects the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the pupils already enrolled.
- The Board of Management will entrust to the Principal and his/her staff the task of assessing all pupils for suitability as candidates.

How to Apply:

- The school year commences on the first day of September and therefore the parent/guardian (the applicant) must make his/her official application to Setanta School for enrolment prior to the first day of November being ten months prior to commencement of the school year. The latest date for acceptance of applications with completed relevant reports is the fifteenth day of January being seven and a half months prior to commencement of the school year.
- The applicant will be provided with an application form for completion and may contact the school if there are any queries regarding that application form which he/she is unsure how to reply to.
- When returning the form, the applicant should annex to it all educational reports in his/her possession to date and all other reports including psychological reports, speech and language reports, psychiatric and social reports and other relevant information. All relevant reports should not be more than two years old.
- The Principal and/or senior staff members will meet with the applicants and candidates.
- The Principal and/or nominated teacher may, at their discretion, visit the school of the applicant's child to observe classroom performance.

Who May Apply:

Subject to assessment and suitability, pupils of Ballyowen Meadows School shall get priority for enrolment. Subject to availability, other suitable referrals will be accepted from schools, clinics, and relevant professionals.

Completion of Application Process:

- The acceptance process shall be completed not later than the thirty first day of March being five months before the commencement of the school year in September.
- On completion of the assessment, the Principal shall prepare a report on each candidate which will be submitted to the Board for approval.
- Upon approval of successful candidates, an immediate application will be made to the Department of Education & Skills for sanction and resources.
- The parents of the successful candidates, will be informed by the school by post once the Department of Education & Skills sanctions the placement and written acceptance of the offer will have to be returned within fourteen days of the offer having been made. Failure to respond within the aforementioned time frame will result in the place being offered to another applicant.
- For candidates who cannot be accommodated, Setanta School will endeavour to offer constructive advice to applicants with a view to finding a way forward for their children.
- Unsuccessful candidates are not automatically excluded from re-applying the following year.
- All admissions are at the absolute discretion of Setanta School.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to change the enrolment policy at their discretion.

Appeals Procedure

Parents, if unhappy with the result of the final decision of the Board of Management, may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, on the official form provided by the Department. Appeal forms are available to download on the Department of Education and Skills website, www.education.ie. Please note that this appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal of the Board of Management to enrol a pupil.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Setanta School on 24/09/13.