

Ábalta

Admission Policy of Ábalta Special School for Students with Autism and Complex Needs

School Address: Parkmore East Business Park, Parkmore, Galway H91 V9K4

Roll number: 20371A

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.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 30th April 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Ábalta 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.

Notices will also be placed on the school sign to notify parents that the school is accepting enrolment applications for the coming year. The enrolment process is by written application only. Completed application forms should be returned by January 30th each year. All applications must be fully completed for consideration.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Abalta Special School is a co-educational special school for students with autism and complex needs under the patronage of Autism Ireland ranging in age from 4-18 years.

1. To create a welcoming and open environment where students and their families can interact in a secure and supportive manner and where positive relationships with others can be fostered and maintained.
2. To provide a child-centred autism specific education, which draws on a range of evidence based interventions in line with the Minister's Policy for Education.
3. To ensure students have access to a broad, balanced, relevant and developmental range of curricular experiences in each dimension for learning, as set up in current Department of Education guidelines.
4. To tailor each child's programmes to their individual need and facilitate the development of each child's unique potential.
5. To interact with and develop community links in special education, autism and evidence-based teaching practices on a local, national and international level.

Ábalta Special School supports the principles of

Inclusiveness – particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need

Equality – of access and participation in the school

Parental choice – in relation to enrolment and involvement in the school

Respect of diversity – of values, beliefs, traditions and languages

Individual Educational Programmes

Ábalta Special School offers a child-centred autism specific education, which draws on a range of evidence based instructional principles and methodologies (Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), discrete trial training, in line with the Department of Education Policy. Educational programmes are designed to meet each child's individual needs and facilitate the development of each child's unique potential. Our aim is to develop skills for success in the home, school and the wider community. Training in the basic skills of communication, self-care and key social competences form an integral part of the school programme at all levels.

Allocation of classes

Ábalta Special School caters for students aged 4 to 18 years. The school has regard for the resources and funding available to meet the individual needs of students and the number of children per class. Children are divided into classes mainly according to their age and also based on their skill strengths, developmental need and their communicative ability.

Intregation

Students enrolled in the school may also be offered the opportunity of integration in an age-appropriate mainstream class should their skills be suitable for such an arrangement. The nature of the integration will be determined by the Principal / Teacher and participating staff, in consultation with the child's Parents and the Principal of the selected mainstream school.

3. Admission Statement

Ábalta 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.

Special schools

Ábalta Special school for students with autism and complex needs is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the school a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

- Ábalta Special School for students with autism and complex needs with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with autism and complex needs.
- Definition of an ASD diagnosis: Assessment and classification of Autism or ASD by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist using DSM –V and /or a multidisciplinary team (including a psychologist).
- Definition of Complex needs: Individual with a primary diagnosis of ASD as currently defined in DSM –V requiring substantial or very substantial support with functioning in the context of social communication and restricted repetitive behaviours.

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

Admission process

- Before an application is made, parents / guardian should ensure that: the child will be 4 years old on or before the 1st of September of the year in which they are applying for admission.
- The child has a recent (within the last 2 years) documented and confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The report must detail the assessment classification of autism spectrum disorder by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist using DSM-V or ICD-10 criteria OR multi-disciplinary assessment of same by a professional team (including a clinical psychologist / educational psychologist. The psychological report must include a recommendation for placement in an autism specific special school.
- The enrolment application form is completely filled out and received by the school by January 30th of the application year. Any application form not accompanied by the written confirmation of the diagnosis or recommendation for an autism specific special school place will be returned and only dealt with when the full documentation is presented. If the school does not receive the necessary documentation by the last day of January, the application will be returned to the applicant.
- Current medical, speech and language, occupational therapy and / or behaviour support plans, pre-school / school placement reports (and home tuition reports, if relevant) must be submitted.
- Original birth cert
- Verification of address by way of original utility bill or equivalent for all new families to the school.
- On enrolment in Abalta Special School of children the BOM will request a copy of the child's medical and or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to the disability or special needs to profile the support services required.
- Following receipt of the report, the BOM will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the BOM deems that further resources are required, it will request same from the SENO (NCSE see Circular 01/05).

6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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:

Selection criteria

The maximum class size in a special class is 6 students. If the number of children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply:

Priority will be given to the brothers and sisters of children already attending the school. Younger siblings with a confirmed diagnosis of ASD should be pre-enrolled at the earliest opportunity.

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) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
 - 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.
- (d) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills of aptitudes of a students' parents
- (e) A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission
- (f) 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 lists up until the end of the current school year.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Abalta Special School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by 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.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the B.O.M. in accordance with school policy. The BOM will notify parents of their decision within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of applications.

The BOM will have regard for the relevant DoES guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of children.

The BOM is bound by the DoES Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years. Children applying to enrol in Abalta Special School must have reached the age of 4 years by September 1st of the year they will commence 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 student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's 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 Ábalta 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 are 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 Ábalta Special School where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) the 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; or
- (iv) 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.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

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 Ábalta 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 Ábalta 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 three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is 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 during the school year will be considered subject to school policy and available space in that class grouping

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:

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 Abalta 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.

Allocation of any places which become available will be line with school policy and available space in the appropriate class.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Ábalta 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Our school is of non-denominational ethos and in keeping with that ethos, children of all or no faith are welcome to apply to this school

Individual religious instruction can be provided to students on parental request as part of the student's individual education plan.

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.

19. Implementation and Review

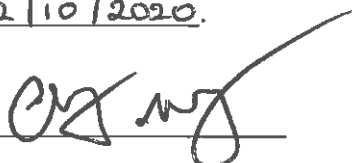
This Policy will be reviewed, as deemed necessary, by the Board of Management.

20. Policy Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Abalta Special School

on 02/10/2020.

Signed:



(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date:

16/11/2020

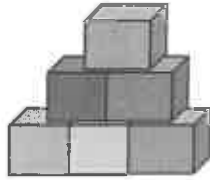
Maura Madden

(Principal)

Next Review period: September 2022

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





Abalta

Appendix A

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	Occupation
Tel Home	Tel Work
Mother/ Guardian's Name	Occupation
Tel Home	Tel Work

Home Address (including postcode)

Name of previous school(s) attended	Class
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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 not 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 for

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 (ex gluten free): _____

Any other relevant information:

Appendix B

Privacy Notice for Parents/Guardians

Your Personal Data: What the School Needs –

Abalta 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, Abalta 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 Abalta Special School Needs Data/Purpose of the Processing

Abalta 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 Abalta 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.

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

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

Abalta 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: Abalta Special School

Principal: Maura Madden

Data Protection Officer: Maura Madden

Parkmore East Business Park, Parkmore, Galway

091 701974

abalta.mmadden@gmail.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.

September 2020

I confirm that I have received a copy of Abalta 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: _____

