



# **Autism Specific Class Provision Policy**

October 2024



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## **1.0 College Mission Statement**

High quality education changes the world, one child at a time.

We prepare our students for life in a diverse world by intentionally integrating students of all abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, from all faiths and none.

We provide a caring and inclusive environment to help our students achieve excellence within a culture of acceptance and understanding.

**\*This Policy should be read in conjunction with the whole school ASD Policy\***



## 2.0 Rationale

ICG opened the first ASC Provision in September 2019 as a Learning Resource Base for Key Stage 3 pupils who have a complex profile of needs and therefore would find full-time mainstream placement very difficult to manage. Pupils work in a small and nurturing environment that provides access to a tailored curriculum that balances social and emotional needs as well as academic strengths and abilities.

From September 2024, there are two KS3 Autism specific classes and one for Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 4 provision continues to provide age-appropriate support to promote social interaction and independence and improves access to education that will prepare pupils for further education and support positive transitions into adulthood.

Both provisions have a high adult to pupil ratio with both being staffed by 1 specialist teacher and 2 full time teaching assistants. Additional adult support is organised in a fluid way between both classes to allow some flexibility and shared support where required. The ASC provisions are highly structured settings with individualised approaches being a core value. It also provides a platform for pupils to extend their experiences and participate more widely in the life of the whole school. Where appropriate, pupils can access subject-specific teachers and have opportunities to learn and socialise alongside their peers in mainstream.



## **3.0 ASC Staffing**

**Key Stage 3 ASC Class Teacher** – Mrs C Woodward

**Key Stage 3 ASC Class Teacher** – Ms C Hudson

**Key Stage 4 ASC Class Teacher** – Mrs R Crawte

### **Teaching Assistants:**

Mrs S Ritchie

Ms K Waszcuk

Miss J Williamson

Mrs C Dowey

Mrs J Robinson



## 4.0 Inclusive Practice

The Headteacher and Board of Governors are committed to promoting the inclusion of all pupils with Special Educational Needs and this includes ensuring the ASC provisions are an integral part of the school. The Headteacher has increased the school's capacity to support pupils in the ASC by ensuring all staff undertake relevant training in Autism. The ASC Resource Base offers support and training at a whole school level and this is reflected in the whole school ASD Policy.

ASC classrooms are located in one of the main school buildings as opposed to a separate 'unit.' This helps to foster a positive perception of the provision and makes it easier to provide shared learning and social spaces with mainstream peers. This also helps pupils feel included in the busy life of the school.

After collaboration with Heads of Department and subject teachers, pupils attend some mainstream classes with their peers. These are planned and purposeful opportunities and based on the pupils' strengths and interests.

Opportunities are also provided for reverse integration where some pupils from mainstream classes join pupils in the ASC and are taught there for some lessons. Pupils may also use the ASC as a base to help support them with their work or with anxiety management.

During unstructured times of the school day, the Resource Base is available to pupils who present with similar difficulties to provide them with a safe space and to meet with others who have common interests.



## 5.0 Transition Support

The ASC provision supports pupils through 3 significant periods of transition. Anxiety can be heightened at these times for both pupils and parents so it's crucial to provide close support to help manage the demands at these times and ensure a successful transition.

Pupils transferring into the ASC from P7 will be offered opportunities to visit the school as often as required. This will be to meet the class teacher and assistants and to familiarise themselves with the ASC setting. Information will be presented visually in the form of a Transition Booklet which will include pictures of key staff, key areas within the school and timetables for the school day in a colour-coded format.

ASC teachers will liaise with the P7 teacher and/or SENCo to gather information for their Pupil Profile. ASC teachers will also meet with parents as part of this process so that ICG can build up a rich picture of needs and to ensure all relevant information is transferred. Information will also be gathered from any other professionals involved with the pupil e.g. CAMHs, EWS, AAIS, AIS.



## **5.0 Transition Support continued...**

Transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 begins early in Year 10 and there should be clear evidence of progression both academically and socially from one phase to the next. There should be a continuum of support. The 14+ Transition Plan underpins KS4 and is required for identifying needs and planning courses of study with end goals outlined. Pathways of study at Key Stage 4 are planned depending on the range of needs for each individual pupil and are based on pupils' strengths and areas of difficulty.

Alternative accreditation to GCSE is offered where appropriate and written agreement is sought from parents to help manage expectations at the end of Year 12.

On leaving school in Year 12, the ASC teacher will continue to liaise with the EA Transition Service and will also access advice from the Careers Service. Links are established with FE Colleges and information is gathered to help map out routes to further education, apprenticeships or jobs. Work is done in the ASC to practice the social and communication skills required for college or job interviews.

Opportunities will be provided to develop work-based skills such as working in the school office, assisting the caretaker and groundsman, working with younger pupils in lessons.

Pupils will also have the opportunity to attend AEL in Larne 1 day a week to undertake additional qualifications and the opportunity to participate in work experience through their Transitions programme.





## 6.0 Personalised Learning Plans (PLP's)

All pupils in the ASC will be supported by a Personalised Learning Plan Following a comprehensive identification process of strengths and needs, targets are agreed for the PLP. Targets are often social and related to improving independence and organisational skills.

The PLP should be a working document which lists targets for the pupil.

Targets can be social and related to improving their independence or their organisation skills.

- Keep the targets specific, measurable and set a time limit.
- Evaluate and review regularly.
- Remember, the PLP should be informative, reflect the child's needs and be easy to use.
- The PLP should include information on the pupil's strengths and weaknesses and should list any input from other agencies to show a collaborative approach.

Targets are reviewed at least twice per year, more often if necessary, and ALL teachers have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate these.



## **7.0 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Pupils placed in the ASC will be assessed on academic development in line with their peers but will also be assessed in relation to their social and emotional development.

Standardised testing in Literacy and Numeracy will be carried out in the form of PTE and PTM online tests. Pupils also complete tracking tests in different subjects throughout the academic year. Formal class testing in their subjects takes place in the summer term and a formal school report is sent to parents. The ASC teacher will complete these reports in collaboration with the subject-specific teacher.

Some pupils may qualify for exam concessions. It is important that these arrangements have been common practice for the pupil and reflect their normal way of working. There also needs to be a clear record of evidence of need. Where possible, access arrangements which enable a young person to work independently are encouraged e.g. using a computer reader instead of a reader. This also helps prepare for further education.



## 7.0 Assessment, Recording and Reporting continued...

Examples of other exam access arrangements that pupils may require include the following:

- Scribe
- Reader
- Extra time
- Use of laptop
- Separate room

The evidence of need required by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), is based on teachers' observations. Evidence must be collated by the SENCo before the school applies to JCQ for access arrangements. The SENCo stores the evidence gathered for each pupil and is required to produce this evidence for the JCQ Inspector. The SENCo is also the school's designated qualified assessor and all pupils who receive access arrangements must have been formally assessed by her before an online application is made. Teaching staff support the SENCo in identifying, determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.

The ASC teacher will maintain an Assessment Folder for each pupil. Although results and grades are held on our schools SIMS system, it is useful to have a quick overview of attainments at a glance as these will vary from pupil to pupil depending on their individual, tailored curriculum.

Baseline testing on Social Skills will also be filed here and notes from observations and review meetings will also be held as evidence of progress in these areas.



## **8.0 Annual Review Process**

Annual Reviews are conducted early in the second term of each academic year. These are lead by the SENCo or Assistant SENCo with contributions from the ASC class teacher. Other contributions may be required from teaching assistants, mainstream teachers or HOD's if required. All other relevant professionals involved with the pupil will be invited to attend the review meeting.

The Annual Review will not just review academic performance but also a review of responses to any interventions that have been carried out.

There will also be continual monitoring and review of pupil wholistic progress to ensure that placement within the ASC remains appropriate and continues to meet the pupil's needs.



## 9.0 Partnership with Parents

As with all staff in ICG, teachers in the ASC will always strive to promote positive home-school collaboration. Establishing mutually trusting relationships is a priority. Parents unique insight into their child is invaluable and involvement in interventions and educational plans is vital. It is helpful for parents to share any significant events that might have an impact on their child at school.

In Key Stage 3, home/school communication is conducted through the SeeSaw App. This is a secure online journal and is only used between parents, the class teacher and the teaching assistants assigned to the class. It is used to add reminders for each day or post school announcements.

School seeks written parental permission for use of this app. Once consent is received, parents are sent a link via email with instructions of how to download the app and instantly start using it for home/school communication.

Seesaw is a private and safe app and information about their strong privacy promises can be found here: <https://web.seesaw.me/privacy>.

At Key Stage 4, school email is used as more discrete and age-appropriate method of communication.

Parents are **ALWAYS** encouraged to phone the ASC class teacher about any matter of concern.



## **10. Collaboration with Education and Health Professionals**

Many pupils in the ASC benefit from engagement with health and other educational professionals. This may be to enhance their communication skills, manage sensory issues and support mental well-being. The ASC teacher will adopt a holistic approach to pupil support and have established strong links with relevant Services.

Effective teamwork and collaborative working with Services enables school staff to develop a planned and coordinated response to needs. Working with other Services or attendance at multi-disciplinary review meetings may be at a consultation level to help problem- solve.



## 11.0 Autism-Specific Interventions

Staff in the ASC provisions have undertaken a vast amount of training in Autism and are experienced in delivering interventions in the following areas:

- Emotional Regulation
- Anxiety Management
- Visual Tools to Support Learning
- TEEACH
- Social Skills
- Lego Therapy
- Sleep Hygiene (Sleep Scotland)
- Behaviour Management
- Autism and Mental Health

These interventions are scheduled into pupil timetables as and when required. The ASC Resource Base also provides these supports to other pupils who have been identified by the SENCo.



## 12.0 Re-Charge Room

“Instead of concentrating on the lack of emotional wellbeing in people with Autism, we should develop strategies to facilitate their feeling of happiness. Since happiness is an abstract concept and the source of a person’s happiness is often not known (not even to the person with Autism himself because of his difficulties and self-awareness), it is pivotal to develop strategies and tools to assess happiness and emotional well-being that are Autism friendly.”  
(Vermeulen, 2014b, p.14)

ICG has access to two sensory spaces which have been named ‘Re-Charge’ rooms. These spaces are not only used to stimulate or calm the senses but are also used to promote positive emotional well-being in our young people. They are a place to relax, de-stress and diffuse anxieties as well as to provide physical and mental stimuli for those who need it. They are open to all pupils on the spectrum and to those who have anxiety disorders.


No food or drinks are permitted in these spaces and these rooms are **NOT** to be used when a pupil is in a heightened state. Mainstream pupils who are escorted by their teaching assistant should sign in and out using the form provided in each room. Older pupils sometimes require a bit of space but will always be supervised in a more discrete manner. A record of their attendance is also taken.

The correct use of sensory tools is explored by pupils in the ASC. For other pupils, there are visual instructions on the noticeboards to help explain the benefits of each tool.

There is also a ‘dark room’ available for students who are sensory avoidant.





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