Admission procedures to Sonas ASD early Intervention Class.

About Sonas Pre-school

Sonas Pre-school was established in 2013 under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and St. Mary`s Junior Boys' NS. The Pre-school offers a specialised educational service to pre-school children who have been fully diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In September 2014, a second class was opened. Both classes operate a maximum size of 6 pupils, 1 teacher and a minimum of 2 SNA`s. Sonas Pre-school is managed by the Board of Management of Nenagh Community National School. However, Sonas Pre-school and Nenagh CNS are considered separate entities for the purpose of enrolment/admission.

Aims and General Information

We in Sonas Pre-school want to give the highest quality of pre-school education to our children. We want the individual to grow to his/her full potential. Our aim is that this education will prepare each child for continued and appropriate schooling to the best of his/her ability. We recognise and value the role of parents as the primary educator of their children; together we can provide the skills for a loving approach to learning. In Sonas, a variety of teaching approaches are used including the TEACCH method, keeping in mind the individual needs of each pupil.

The aim of the preschool is to provide a caring learning environment which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. The Principal, Teachers, Support Staff and Parents are partners in their children's education with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same purpose, the care and wellbeing of the children in our care. Each child's

placement in the unit will be reviewed after one year following input from the multi-disciplinary team. Sonas Pre-school endorses the principle that a child be in a setting appropriate to their needs.

The pre-school is funded and resourced by the Department of Education. The school policy has regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

All children must fulfil the enrolment criteria.

Enrolment procedure

The process of enrolment begins with:

1. A referral from the Autism team or a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
2. A Sonas Pre-school application form and relevant NCSE forms are then completed. This application must be accompanied by an up to date (up to date is considered 6mths to 1yr) educational psychological assessment and diagnostic report which confirms diagnosis of ASD in line with current Department of Education criteria.
3. Fully completed applications are dated and recorded in the applications file.

Please note that the closing date for receipt of completed applications is **29/01/27**. Applications will be responded to within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of applications.

The school acknowledges that all children with ASD present with differing profiles. For this reason, all applications must be considered individually.

The receipt of the enrolment application forms, psychological report and written recommendation is not a guarantee of enrolment.

All of the above information will be forwarded to the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) as part of the admissions process in order to ensure that all applications have a definitive diagnosis and to ensure that there are sufficient numbers to sustain a class.

Criteria for enrolment/admission

1. Each child attending Sonas Pre-school must have a definite diagnosis of Autism; the diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological

procedure. In addition, applicants must have a written professional recommendation for a place in an ASD pre-school in a mainstream setting.

2. The child must be between the age of three and five years upon enrolment/admission. A child who turns six during the academic school year should not be in a preschool setting and therefore will not be considered for enrolment/admission in Sonas Pre-school. It is compulsory to be enrolled in National School by the age of 6.
3. A child may only be enrolled in Sonas Pre-school for a maximum of two academic school years. Placement in the pre-school is subject to a yearly review. Parents/Guardians will be advised with regard to the child`s future schooling with the following options considered:
   -Mainstream
   -Mainstream with resource teaching support
   -Special Class attached to a mainstream school
   -Special School
   -Home Tuition

Whilst both Sonas Pre-school and Nenagh CNS are run by the Board of Management of Nenagh CNS they have separate enrolment/admissions procedures and criteria.

Should there be excess demands for places available; the recommendations made by the multi-disciplinary panel to the Board of Management will follow the following criteria:

1. Chronological Age –Children who will not be eligible for admission to Sonas Pre-school for the following school year will be offered a place firstly.

2. Should demand continue to exceed places available children with siblings in Sonas Pre-school or in Nenagh CNS will be offered a place.

3. Children whose primary residence is in the town of Nenagh or wider environs.

4. Should demand continue to exceed places available offers will be made on the basis of a ‘first come first served basis principle’ i.e., based on the date of application. Should there be only one place available to two children who applied on the same day chronological age will again be taken into account and the place will be offered to the older child.

Multi-disciplinary Panel

All applications to Sonas Pre-school will be assessed before admission by a multi-disciplinary team which may consist of the following members:

- School Principal of Nenagh CNS.
- NEPS representative
- Sonas Preschool Teachers
- HSE Representative- Early Intervention Team

The remit of the multi-disciplinary panel will be:

1. To ascertain the number of places available in Sonas Pre-school based on discharge of pupils.
2. To review all applications for a place in Sonas Pre-school based on relevant reports received and seeking further information if required.
3. To verify Sonas Pre-school's suitability in meeting the student's needs.
4. To make recommendations on these findings to the Board of Management of Nenagh CNS.

Role of the SENO

The Special Educational Needs Organiser has a very important role within the operation of Sonas Pre-school. He/She can act as liaison person between the HSE and Sonas Pre-school. Whilst not directly being a member of the Multidisciplinary team he/she may attend to provide advice, clarity in relation to NCSE guidelines or background information pertinent to each case.

All applications for supports for children attending Sonas will be processed by the SENO in line with the Department of Education and the NCSE guidelines.

Code of Behaviour

All offers of enrolment to Sonas Pre-school are subject to acceptance of the Pre-school`s Code of Behaviour, a copy of which is appended to this procedure.

Appeals – see Section 7.2 of Admissions Policy

Discharge of Pupils from Sonas Pre-school.

The number of places available in Sonas Pre-school will be ascertained following the annual multi-disciplinary team meeting. At this meeting a review of all children attending the preschool will take place and will result in one of the following:

- Onward progression to an autistic unit attached to a mainstream primary school.
- Onward progression to a child's local mainstream primary school.
- Retention in Sonas Preschool for a further academic school year. This will not be possible if the child was turning six years old in the academic school year following the multi-disciplinary team meeting i.e. a child should not turn six in Preschool.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1

Sonas Preschool Toileting Policy

This policy has been formulated by the Principal and staff of Sonas Preschool in response to the toileting and nappy changing needs of the students in our care.

Aims:

- To ensure safe toileting of children.
- To ensure a reasonable level of hygiene is provided for, considering the limitations of staff numbers.
- To strike a reasonable balance between providing for care needs and educational needs.
- To ensure staff protection.
- To foster and encourage independence in the children in the area of toileting.

Procedure and Practice

- Two members of staff to be present when nappies are being changed.
- Hands to be washed before and after nappy change.
- Medical gloves to be worn during nappy change and to be disposed of after each change.
- All nappies to be changed in the disabled toilet, where the changing table is located.
- Wet pull-ups can be changed in the disabled toilet in the classroom.
- In situations where the children are still using nappies for the purpose of toileting, the following procedure will apply;
    - We encourage all parents to send their children to school in a clean nappy.
    - All children presenting to school in a nappy will be changed at allocated times.
- Due to limited staffing within the school, any nappy changes which occur outside the organised nappy change times will be as a result of soiling. We will make every reasonable effort to ensure that a child is not left in a soiled nappy.
- A record of nappy changes will be maintained, which will record the time of change and the initials of staff members present. This is for the purpose of staff and child protection.

Signed:

Principal _____ Staff _____