

2025/  
2026



ST. ATTRACTA'S NS

# AUTISM CLASS PROSPECTUS



ST. ATTRACTA'S NATIONAL  
SCHOOL CHARLESTOWN

*NÍ NEART GO CUR LE CHÉILE  
UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH*

## OUR SCHOOL

St Attracta's National School, Charlestown, Co. Mayo is a mainstream co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Achonry.

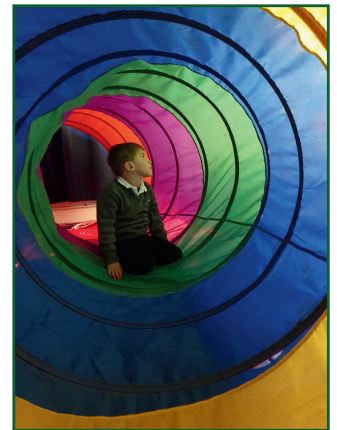
Our caring, inclusive school has a high level of commitment to children with an autistic spectrum disorder and associated social and communication difficulties.

The decision to provide specialised education for pupils with Special Education Needs was taken by the Board of Management of St. Attracta's National School in conjunction with the Principal and Staff in 2016.



## OUR AIMS

- To offer an autism/special needs specific learning environment within a mainstream setting.
- To facilitate optimum inclusion as part of the whole school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate to the individual pupil.
- To value the individuality of each pupil.
- Strive for each pupil to reach his/her individual potential.
- To create an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.
- Form partnerships with Parents, relevant Western Care and relevant Health Service Executive professionals for the holistic development of the child.



## WE ARE COMMITTED TO

- Providing an individualised curriculum shaped by the pupil's individual interests, strengths and needs.
- Providing teaching in both mainstream classroom, in groups and on a one to one basis shaped by the individual pupil's needs, readiness and ability/IQ.
- Promoting maximum independence for pupils in an atmosphere of respect, challenge, encouragement and praise.
- Increasing expressive and receptive language.
- Working with other professionals including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Behavioural Specialists to promote the overall wellbeing of each pupil.

# HOW WILL YOUR CHILD BE SUPPORTED ?

St. Attracta's National School in 2024/25 has 8 mainstream classes and 5 AS classes.

There are:

9 Mainstream Teachers

1 Early Intervention class for pre-school age children.

4 AS classes for Primary School age children.

4 Special Educational Needs Teachers .

17 Special Needs Assistants .

Deputy Principal.

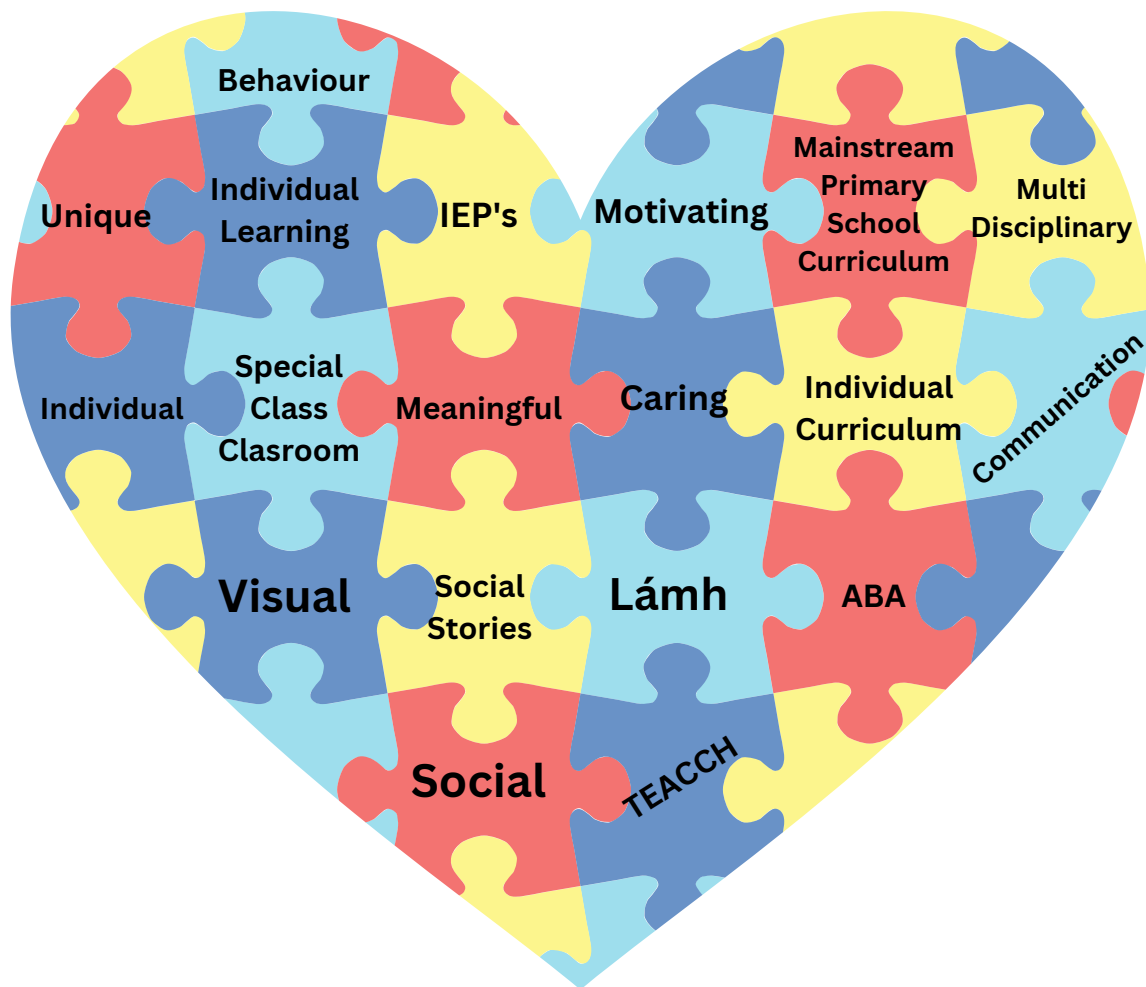
The Principal teacher is also further to this team.

The pupil to teacher ratio in each of our AS classes is 6:1 with two SNAs in each class also caring for the children's needs.

The pupils benefit from support of outside agencies who visit the school regularly, providing O.T, Speech and Language, Autism Therapists and Psychologists will work in conjunction with the school to set out programmes of interventions for each of our students.

Special Needs Assistants are allocated to the school and not to an individual child.





## INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM

- St. Attracta's National School has high aspirations for its pupils and thus each pupil will have an individually tailored curriculum with learning targets outlined in their individual education plan (IEP).
- Pupils will work to develop their social, physical, behavioural, emotional, communicative and intellectual abilities as part of their individual curriculum and targets set in their Individual Education Plans.
- Pupils will work in parallel with the mainstream primary school curriculum at a level that best suits their social, communication and behavioural readiness and ability / I.Q. score.
- Early Intervention Class pupils will work from NCCA curriculum targets for their age level and learning through play/social and life skills will be a large part of their day.
- Pupils will work on a one to one basis, individually, in groups or in the mainstream classroom at a level that best suits their ability, readiness, interest and motivation.



## INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING

- Individual Education Plans are developed during term one after the Learning Support team have spent time observing and interacting with the child, have conducted baseline assessments, received all previous reports from the relevant health care professionals and have received hand over from the relevant professionals who have worked with the child e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist, Autism Key Resource worker etc.
- Individual Education Plans are developed in partnership with parents and relevant professionals.
- Parent Teacher meetings are held annually in November.
- Individual Education Plans are reviewed the following February.



## INDIVIDUALISED TEACHING

We consider every pupil as an individual with individual strengths and needs. We base our teaching on a variety of approaches, choosing the most effective for each child.

The variety of approaches we use include:

- ABA - A behavioural approach using task analysis and positive reinforcement
- TEACCH - A visual, structured teaching approach
- PECS - Picture Exchange Communication
- Lámh - Augmentative sign language
- Social Stories - describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives and common responses.
- Sensory Integration - activities to promote healthy sensory processing
- Reverse Integration
- Mainstream Integration



## INTEGRATED LEARNING

The school promotes a policy of integration with age appropriate peers on a social level, and at a curriculum level which is appropriate to ability. Integration will be on a phased basis and is always based on the individual needs of the child. It may take the form of mainstream integration or reverse integration. Mainstream integration is where a child will attend mainstream classes, breaks and activities for specified periods. Reverse integration takes the form of small groups of children from mainstream classes attending activities and lessons in our AS Classes. Integration is planned according to the individual children's social and academic needs and level of comfortability, in order to allow for appropriate opportunities for meaningful integration.



# AUTISM FRIENDLY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

We are working with ASIAM in their Autism Friendly Schools Initiative. This promotes St. Attracta's NS as an informed, welcoming and accessible place for autistic students, where they are supported to participate fully in academic and social life. We address and support our students across the following eight domains or key 'areas of practice', to enhance the wellbeing, learning and participation of all:

1. Learning Environment
2. Language and Communication Development
3. Social Development
4. Emotional Development
5. Sensory Processing
6. Functional Skills for Daily Living
7. Academic Development
8. Behavioural Development



## SUMMER PROGRAMME/JULY PROVISION

The Summer Programme is offered to children attending our AS Special Classes. It is an extension of the school year, taking place in the school and running for the first two weeks after the Summer Holidays each year.

The programme is aimed at continuing to address the key skills for the children, as well as engaging in activities such as swimming, play therapy, music therapy and school outings.

Children in receipt of school transport will be eligible to maintain this service for the duration of the programme.



# SCHOOL UNIFORM

Our school uniform consists of the following items:

- Grey jumper with school crest available through the school
- White Shirt
- Black Trousers, Skirt or Pinafore

On PE days our pupils wear:

- PE sweatshirt with crest available through the school
- Black tracksuit bottoms
- White polo shirt

If the pupil has difficulty opening and closing buttons, he/she may wear their PE uniform.

Early Intervention Class students will wear the school PE uniform everyday.

School uniform order will be taken on Aladdin. For further information contact Gemma our School Secretary in the office by calling 094-9254905 or emailing [office@stattractasns.ie](mailto:office@stattractasns.ie)

Please ensure your child's name is on all clothing items, lunch box, drinks bottles etc.



# PUPIL PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

This scheme covers claims for compensation and/or reimbursement of medical/dental expenses following accidents to pupils in the school where the school is not deemed negligent. The school recommends 24 hour cover at an annual cost of €9 per pupil. Further details will be sent out on Aladdin at the beginning of the school year

# COMMUNICATION

- Regular updates and news is distributed using our communication app Aladdin
- IEP meetings takes place bi-annually in October and February.
- Parents can request an additional meeting with a teacher by making an appointment
- Communication journals are in place for daily updates on school and home
- Summer report for each pupil is sent home in June
- Log on to our website [www.stattractasns.ie](http://www.stattractasns.ie) for a comprehensive list of all events and information on our school which is regularly updated.
- Please email us with your opinions, views and suggestions at [office@stattractasns.ie](mailto:office@stattractasns.ie)

# PARENTS ASSOCIATION

There is an active parent's association in St. Attracta's N.S. The committee usually meets once a month. The PA liaises regularly with the Principal and provides a forum to raise issues and concerns, suggests and implements initiatives and organises fundraising activities.

Full details of the members of our association and their activities can be found on our school website [www.stattractasns.ie](http://www.stattractasns.ie)

# ALADDIN

We ask that you use our school communication tool Aladdin for the following:

## Absences

Under the Education Welfare Act 2002 the school is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer of all absences exceeding 20 days during the academic year. Parents must inform the school of the reason for their child's absence. Absence can be reported on the Aladdin App.

## Early Collections/Late Arrivals

Parents / Guardians must notify the school in advance if their child must leave the school during school time and indicate who they will be collected by. Parents must arrange for their child to be collected from the school main entrance/office.

## Contact Details

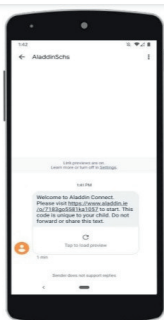
We request that you keep your profile section on Aladdin up to date with current address and contact numbers. Should your details change during the year please update the app at your earliest convenience.

## Payments

The Aladdin app also allows us a means of accepting payments online throughout the year for the various fees that arise.

## Noticeboard

We will keep you updated with all relevant news and information using the noticeboard section of the app. There is also a useful links section, where you will find booklists, calendar etc.



### 1. Link From School

You will receive either a text or email from the school.

Within this message there will be a link unique to you.

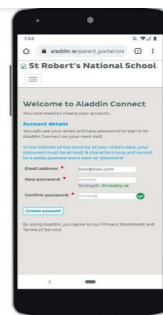
Simply tap on this link to begin.



### 2. Connect Registration

The link will direct you to the Connect registration page.

You will be required to enter information such as your child's **first name** and **date of birth**, along with your **own name**.

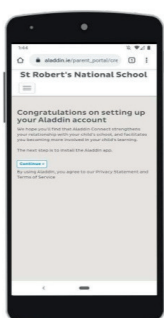


### 3. Account Setup

The next step is to setup your login details.

To create your account you will be asked to enter an **email** and **password** that will act as your login.

Make sure to select an email you have access to and a password you will remember.

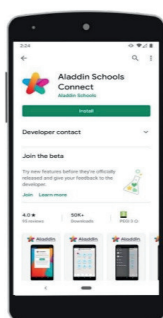


### 4. Account Created

Once you have created your account you will be greeted with this screen.

The next step is to download the Connect app.

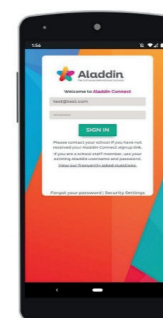
If you are on mobile you can click the continue button to be directed to



### 5. Download App

You can find the Connect app on both the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

The App is free to install so you will need to simply press the install button to add it to your device.



### 6. Sign Into App

Once you have installed the Connect app the last step is to login.

Parents will use the details set up in **step 3** in order to login.

Once signed in parents will be prompted to enter their mobile number for validation.



# POLICIES

## ENROLMENT

The registration process begins with an enquiry to the school - this can be by a telephone call or a visit from the parents, psychologist or SENO

Applications, incorporating date of application, date of birth, address and telephone number are entered in the Applications file.

There is an ASD waiting list in operation and interest in applications can be expressed on the school website.

If places are available and the child fulfills the criteria for a special class placement, parents must then fill in the NCSE's Notification of Enrolment Form which will be forwarded to the SENO on behalf of pupils enrolled in the class. This form is available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

Applications can only be processed on the basis of a diagnostic or psychological report - a diagnosis of autism meeting DSM IV?V or ICD diagnostic criteria.

## CHILD PROTECTION

The Board of Management is obliged to report any concerns in relation to child abuse to the Health Board in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures issued to all schools by D.E.S. The Health Board will assess the case and put measures in place to provide the necessary supports for the child concerned. Abuse is defined as - neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. The Stay Safe Programme is taught explicitly in Senior Infants, First, Third and Fifth classes and reviewed annually. The aim of the programme is to develop the personal safety skills of primary school children.

## DATA PROTECTION

The school is registered with the Data Protection Agency. All information is kept on file and will only be retained in the school for administration purposes only. Parents can access information on their own child.

## ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE

In the event of illness or an accident, minimum first aid is administered and parents/guardians are informed when collecting their child. In the event of a serious accident/illness the parents will be informed, and if necessary the child will be brought to hospital.

Children with a long-term medical condition will be accommodated in order that they continue with their education. Parents/Guardians must seek permission in writing from the Board of Management on an annual basis.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

Copies of all the school's policies are available on request at the office or accessed on our school website [www.stattractasns.ie](http://www.stattractasns.ie)

# THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day generally works on the following timetable:

- Mornings: 9.15am to 12.30pm with snack at 10.45am and a 20 minute break at 11.00am
- Afternoon: 1.00pm to 1.55pm (Infant day) and to 2.55pm for First Class upwards
- Pupils work on their individual timetables referred to in the classroom as schedules.
- Pupils will be based in the Special Class classroom. They will associate this as their home classroom. Each pupil will have their own TEACCH work area.
- Pupils will be scheduled to work in the mainstream classroom for subjects and events that are appropriate to their social, communication and behavioural readiness and ability / I.Q. score.
- Whole School assemblies take place every Friday. This provides opportunities for classes to gather together, to celebrate achievements and to discuss and reflect on topical issues.
- Infant pupils will start their school year with a shorter day in order to allow time to transition with as little stress as possible - finishing at 12.00pm for the first two weeks.
- The Early Intervention Class will operate on the same schedule as the infants. A further few weeks of 12.30pm finish will be facilitated to allow pre-school children to have a shorter working day.

## REMINDERS

Please ensure your telephone numbers and contact details are correct on Aladdin and updated when necessary.

We will welcome you all back to school with your child in June. At this time your child's class teacher will outline some helpful tips to assist you and your child with the transition to our school.

Other items on the agenda at this presentation will be School calendar 2023/2024, school uniform etc.

The school uniform orders will be taken by Gemma our School Secretary on this date. Samples will be available for your child to fit on.

Finally if you have any other queries / questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

We encourage you to visit our school website to give you a window into life here in St Attracta's [www.stattractasns.ie](http://www.stattractasns.ie)

