



Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

Mr. Seán O'Callaghan
Senior Executive Officer
Cork County Council
County Hall
County Cork



PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE.
Our Ref: 1603543 /KM

July 2016

Dear Mr. O'Callaghan,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton TD in relation to the shortage of places in special education classes at secondary level in Cork.

The policy of the Department is that children with special educational needs, including children with autism, should be included where possible and appropriate in mainstream placements with additional supports provided. In circumstances where children with Special Educational Needs require more specialised interventions, special school or special class places are also available.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including the establishment of special classes in various geographical areas as required. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such support.

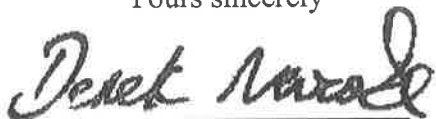
SENOs are currently liaising with schools in Cork City and County regarding the establishment of classes for the 2016/17 school year.

The NCSE has advised that for the coming school year there will be an additional 7 new ASD classes in Cork City and County, bringing the total number of ASD classes to 41 at post primary level in mainstream schools in Cork city and County. Each post primary special class for autism has a 6:1.5 pupil teacher ratio.

Details of all special classes for children with special educational needs, including those in Cork City and County, are available on www.ncse.ie in county order, with new classes identified.

I hope this clarifies the position.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek Newcombe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'D'.

Derek Newcombe
Private Secretary