

Dear Principal,

We hope this letter finds you well and that your school community has had a positive experience settling into this new academic year. We are excited to announce that AsIAM – Ireland's National Autism Charity, is opening applications to new schools to join our Autism Friendly Schools Project.

In 2019 /2020, the Autism Friendly Schools Project ran as a pilot programme and recruited 96 primary and post-primary schools across the country participate in this initiative. Since that time, we have worked with almost 400 schools across the country.

2023/2024 will be the fifth year of this exciting project, which will investigate ways in which we can further refine what it truly means to be 'Autism Friendly' in primary and post-primary schools across Ireland. The project will reaffirm good practice and support those wishing to foster a culture of inclusion of autistic students in their schools.

The project involves three main elements.

1. Whole-school staff training: An online CPD training course will be made available for all staff members in your school.
2. Workshops for project leaders: The two project leaders to be released to attend 3 workshops over the academic year (2 online and 1 in-person event). Workshops will be provided by experts and autistic community members in a range of relevant areas.
3. The Autism Friendly Toolkit: Project leaders required to establish an AFS working group within their school. AsIAM will provide self-evaluation tool which schools can use to evaluate the levels of inclusion for their students across different areas of school life. We will provide a bank of resources to promote inclusion in areas identified as requiring further development.

We will be hosting an "Autism Friendly Schools Project Information Webinar" on **Tuesday 17th October @ 7pm** which any prospective schools interested in taking part in the project can attend to learn more about the development of the project over the last number of years and gain a greater understanding of the structure of the project for this year. [Click here to Register](#)

If you believe that your students, staff and wider school community would benefit from being part of AsIAM's Autism Friendly Schools Project, and by doing so create a more inclusive school culture, please complete the following steps:

1. [Click here](#) and fill out an expression of interest (closes October 27th)
2. Nominate two staff members to lead the project within your school and to attend the trainings and in-person event (1 mainstream teacher and 1 SET / support teacher).
3. Once EOIs close, we will ask that you confirm your place on the project and pay the participation fee of €500 before the first session in November.

Patron: President Michael D Higgins

Chief Executive Officer: Adam Harris Company Secretary: Richard Looby

Directors: Alan Cox (Chair), Una Herlihy, Brian Irwin, Eileen Jackson, Kevin McLoughlin, Dr Stuart Neilson, Prof Emer Ring, Shaun Murphy, Orla O'Connor, Marie O'Riordan, Lucinda Murrihy, Ian Baker

Company No: 553241 RCN 20144838 Charity No: 21201

Please note – there will be no provision for travel expenses/sub-cover. As we are a charity, the programme is dependent on an investment from starting and returning schools to cover the cost of the three training days. We recommend that schools engage with the project for three years, the current fee for returning schools is €300.

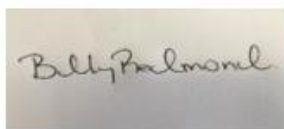
Finally, we would like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to consider participating in AsIAM's Autism Friendly Schools Project 2023 / 2024. We would be delighted to hear that you wish to be a part of our project and are happy to answer any further questions you may have at autismfriendlyschoools@asiam.ie You can also find a wealth of information and resources on our website <https://asiam.ie>

We wish you and your school community every success in the academic year ahead and look forward to working with your school in the future on our collective journey towards inclusion.

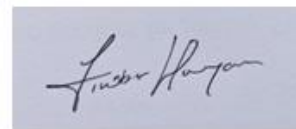
Sincerely Yours,



Adam Harris
Chief Executive Officer, AsIAM



Billy Redmond
Project Coordinator



Finbar Horgan
Education Training Officer, AsIAM