

# Rehab to Open New Primary School in Limerick

In a historic first for Rehab, it has been recognised by the Department of Education and Science as patron of a new pre-school and primary school for young people with autism in Patrickswell, Limerick.



**T**HE ANNOUNCEMENT, WHICH was made in February, paves the way for the development of a school which will initially provide six pre-school and 24 primary school places, increasing to 60 places within four years. Discussions are currently underway with architects and the planning authorities with a view to progressing a temporary facility, which it is hoped will be in place within the next academic year, while a permanent state-of-the-art primary school is progressed.

Ms Mary Hanafin TD, the then Minister for Education and Science, commented, "This new school is part of the continuing expansion of services throughout the country

for children with autism. We are responding to the desire of parents to provide children with a range of educational services for their child with special needs, including autism, based in their local community. Rehab has a track record of success in providing innovative and flexible services to people with autism and their families and I welcome this new initiative on their part."

The school will follow the Department's national curriculum which will be adapted and modified to suit the learning needs of the young people. A range of methodologies will be used to promote the maximum learning potential of each child, including TEACCH, PECS, ABA and Multi-Elemental Behaviour Support. An individual education plan will be developed with the involvement of families and specialist multi-disciplinary teams. The Minister added, "This will ensure a holistic approach, not only concentrating on the education of the child, but also on other areas such as independent living, social and leisure skills, play skills, communications skills and self-care."

Speaking to *Rehab News*, Angela Kerins, Rehab's Chief Executive, said, "Our immediate priority is to secure planning approval for the initial temporary accommodation. In tandem with this, we are at an advanced stage in the development of an enrolment policy for the school with

the Department and hope to shortly advertise for a school principal.

"To begin with, the facility will principally comprise five classrooms, a staffroom, gymnasium, multi-sensory room and playground.

"We very much look forward to working in partnership with the Department, the Health Service Executive and, most particularly, with children with autism and their families in the Mid-West, in order to provide high-quality, child-centred education programmes for children with autistic spectrum disorder."

Rehab currently provides a range of autism services to over 170 children and adults throughout Ireland, including residential, day and respite care, home care and after school services. ■

## Who to contact

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