

Admission Policy of St. Mary's NS

**Waterpark
Carrigaline
Co. Cork**



Roll number: 18279A

School Patron: Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron in September 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Mary's NS admission process to both mainstream classes and to special classes are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for junior infants, must have attained their 4th birthday no later than the first school day in the school year in respect of which the application for enrolment is made.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The link to the online application form for admission is published on the school's website and hardcopy is available on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Mary's NS is a co-educational primary school with a Church of Ireland ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

"Church of Ireland" ethos in the context of a Church of Ireland primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Anglican Christian tradition. This seeks to nurture and encourage the formation of the intellectual, academic, sporting, social and religious abilities of each child within the framework of the community of faith. A Church of Ireland ethos encourages intellectual diversity of thought and encourages the individual to seek to understand themselves, the world around them and the connection between the world and God. This understanding of school ethos promotes pluralism in thought and living, in the context of a Christian school community. Drawing on its Anglican tradition, the Church of Ireland School encourages home/family involvement, highlighting the importance of the family/home in the social and emotional development of the child, and more broadly, the community of the school and church.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Mary's NS shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

The Church of Ireland is an ecumenical church and fulfils its ministry in a spirit of inclusiveness and openness to the needs and concerns of all in society. Traditionally, the school has welcomed pupils from the wider community along with those from the Carrigaline Union of Parishes. St. Mary's N.S. is a school which, in accordance with the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, serves mainly those of a 'minority religion'.

The School motto, Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí - Praise the youth and they will flourish, is a core philosophy for the school. St. Mary's N.S. is a community where pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging in a positive nurturing atmosphere where respect for each

other is of paramount importance. We strive to foster the true potential of each child through the nurture of their spiritual, religious, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

The school endeavours to complement the work of parents / guardians in the home and build on this relationship to enable the child to grow and develop to achieve their full potential in society.

3. Admission Statement

St. Mary's NS will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

- St. Mary's NS will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.
- St. Mary's NS will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

St. Mary's NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not a member of the Church of Ireland and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

St. Mary's NS, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder within the mild range of learning disability. The maximum number of pupils in each class is six.

In determining the level of admissions to the ASD Classes, the Board shall take account of Department of Education & Skills ('DES') regulations/circulars in relation to staffing, class size and pupil teacher ratios; health and safety requirements; it shall also have regard to issues such as physical space, age range within the class, behavioural needs, the number of pupils expected to leave the class, the size of classrooms/play areas/school premises, the deployment of teachers and the resources of the School.

The following criteria for admission to the ASD classes apply:

1. An applicant must have a primary diagnosis of a qualifying autism spectrum disorder and must submit a professional report, which confirms a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/V or ICD 10).

These reports must be recent and cannot be dated more than 18 months prior to the proposed admission date. Parents may be asked to furnish further up-to-date reports.

2. An applicant must also furnish the school with a recommendation to attend an ASD class attached to a mainstream school. Such a recommendation must be furnished by a professionally recognised clinical psychologist.
3. If the applicant presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. This diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and the report confirming this must be submitted with the application form.
4. A fully completed, signed and dated application form for enrolment has been submitted to the school by the Parents and a vacancy exists in the ASD Class. If the application form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Parents will be notified that the application will not be considered, nor a waiting list number allocated, until a complete application is submitted.
5. When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form and an acknowledgement is sent indicating that the application has been allocated a waiting list number.
6. If offered a place, the Parents must confirm in writing within 7 calendar days that the place is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
7. Places are allocated in the ASD Class on the condition that the appropriate resources are provided and continue to be provided, by the NCSE and the DES.

If the ASD classes are oversubscribed, places will be allocated as set out in Section 6.2 below provided in the first instance that the applicant meets all of the criteria listed above. A waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the initial application was made.

4.1 Inclusion

- It is hoped that pupils enrolled in the ASD classes will experience meaningful inclusion during their time in St. Mary's NS. Inclusion of pupils with ASD into mainstream classes for some subjects will be considered on an individual basis. The provision of inclusion for the pupils is dependent on personnel resources and accommodation and on their priority needs.
- The child's first year in the ASD Class will be used to:
 - Assess the child's educational, social and emotional needs
 - Develop an Individual Education Plan to address identified needs

4.2 Age gap

- A three-year age gap is the preferred maximum allowed between any two children within each class.

4.3 Discharge from ASD Classes

- Discharge of pupils from the ASD Classes will usually take place once they have completed eight years of primary education but no later than the academic year of their fourteenth birthday.
- Discharge from the ASD Classes may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.

4.4 Placement Review

- Regular reviews of a school's capability to continue to meet the pupil's needs in a way that ensures that the pupil develops to his/her potential may be necessary. Parents will be kept fully informed of any concerns that might arise at the earliest opportunity.
- Should these concerns continue the school shall request that a multi-disciplinary team assessment be carried out to determine the best options open to the pupil.
- If the School and its related professional support team were of the opinion that the pupil's needs were not being met in the class, in consultation with the pupil's parents/guardians, an alternative placement would need to be considered in the best interest of the child.
- The final decision rests with the Board of Management

5 Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- (a) the school is oversubscribed (please see Section 6 below for further details)
- (b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student
- (c) St. Mary's NS is a Church of Ireland school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Church of Ireland faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
- (d) The special classes attached to St. Mary's NS provides an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

6 Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed for mainstream classes, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

- (a) Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school* and who lives within the boundary of the Carrigaline Union of Parishes.
- (b) Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school* and who lives within the boundaries of Church of Ireland parishes which adjoin the Carrigaline Union of Parishes.

(c) Priority Category 3: An Applicant student who lives within the Carrigaline Union of Parishes and who complies with the terms of this Policy

(d) Priority Category 4: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy.

*As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act

6.1

In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

1. a statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student. The Form of Statements of a Minority Religion is available on the school website
and
2. evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of: -
 - a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

Where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School ("Sibling Applicant Students"). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. The Chairperson of the BOM, the Principal and one other person, nominated by the BOM will conduct the lottery. Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not exceed the number places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system as described above. Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

6.2 Admission to Special Classes:

If the number of children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available the following criteria will apply:

(a) Priority will be given to children currently enrolled in the School with an ASD diagnosis and who meet the terms of this policy. If the number of applicants from within the school exceeds the number of available places the Board reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled. The following criteria will be considered: Suitability for enrolment considering the needs, age, abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.

(b) In the event that the number of applications from children not currently enrolled in the school exceeds the number of available places, the Priority Categories 1 to 4, listed above in Section 6, are used to determine the priority given to applications.

In respect of Priority Categories 1 and 2 outlined in section 6.1 above the Applicant must complete the Form of Statements by Applicants of a Minority Religion which is available on the school website.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7) (e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
other than in relation to admission to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school, other than, in the case of the school's selection criteria based on siblings of a student attending the school;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary's NS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)

- The information provided by the applicant in the school’s official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 13](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 14](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student’s ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student’s place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school’s decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary’s NS you must indicate—

- (i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned **and**

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Mary's NS where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom:

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;

(iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Mary's NS were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Mary's NS is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicant students whose applications are received after the closing date outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 this policy.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

- (a) The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place in the relevant class if a place is available. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places in the relevant class, the school will apply the selection criteria set out in Section 6 of this policy to those applications. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of this policy

- (b) The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year admission is sought, are as follows:

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of this policy.

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of St. Mary's NS or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardians or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.