



St Catherine's National School
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Admissions Policy – Explanatory Note

In Autumn 2018, sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 came into force. This Act also changed provisions in other relevant legislation such as the Equal Status Act.

In November 2018, The Church of Ireland Patron's Office published updated Guidelines in relation to Admissions Policies for Church of Ireland schools in the United Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough (the Archbishop of Dublin is the Patron of all Church of Ireland schools in the Diocese). These updated Guidelines address the new legislation and include a template for Admissions Policies.

Our updated Admissions Policy for St. Catherine's National School closely follows the Patron's Guidelines including the template for Admissions Policies.

The Guidelines allow a school Board of Management to determine maximum school and class size capacity, in order to ensure the safety and educational needs of students. Our Policy notes the current substandard size of school classrooms, play areas etc., and seeks to ensure that class sizes are kept to within reasonable limits - preferably 28 or fewer and no class exceeding 30 pupils. The overall number in the school should not exceed 210 pupils.

Section 3 of our Policy addresses *Notification of Intention to Apply*. It requires all children (termed "Intending Applicant Students") intending to enrol into Junior Infants to be four years of age on or before 1st May in the year of proposed school entry. Our Policy includes a Notification of Intention to Apply Form, which should be submitted to the School by the 25th October of the year prior to intended enrolment. Provision is made for cases where this form is not submitted by this date.

Section 4 of our Policy addresses *Applications for Admissions*, and includes an Application for Admission Form. In accordance with the Guidelines, strict dates are set for an Admissions Application period, outside of which applications will not be considered. In addition, all applications must be fully completed, including supporting information set out in our Policy.

Section 5 of our Policy addresses *Consideration of the Applications*, by the school Board of Management. It includes a timeframe (21 days) within which the Board must issue its decisions, and within which offered places must be accepted (14 days). Of importance, our Policy includes a provision set out in the Guidelines that any contact with and/or lobbying of school personnel or Board members regarding an application for admission will automatically disqualify the applicant and a place will not be offered.

Section 6 of our Policy addresses *Priority* in the awarding of school places. The Guidelines are very clear that Church of Ireland schools must prioritise children who are members of the Church of Ireland or a related religion/denomination/ethos (these are available online, and the Principal should be able to assist in this matter).

- *Priority Categories 1 & 2* relate to children who are members of the Church of Ireland or a related religion/denomination/ethos, either living within the Parish of St. Catherine & St. James with St. Audoen (Priority Category 1 - our Policy includes a map of the Parish boundary), or living outside the Parish boundary but within a 3km radius of the school (Priority Category 1 - this includes areas such as Kilmainham, parts of Inchicore, Drimnagh, Crumlin and Kimmage).
- *Priority Category 3* covers those children who do not meet the requirements of Priority Categories 1 & 2, but who have one or more siblings currently enrolled in the School on the closing date of the Applications Admissions period. If this category results in maximum class size being exceeded, successful applicants will be determined by a supervised lottery system.
- *Priority Category 4* covers the children of current permanent teaching staff. *Priority Category 5* covers children who do not meet Priority Categories 1, 2, or 3 who live within the 3km radius of the School; *Priority Category 6* covers all other children.

Within each of these Priority Categories (other than Priority Category 3 which specifically addresses siblings), priority will be given to children who have one or more siblings currently enrolled in the School on the closing date of the Applications Admissions period. So, for example, if the school receives applications for more than 28 Priority Category 1 children, those with siblings currently in the school at the time of making the application will get priority.

Section 7 of our Policy allows the school to refuse enrolment under certain limited circumstances.

Section 8 of our Policy outlines the formal appeal procedure to the Department of Education and Skills (DES), known as a “Section 29 Appeal”. However, our Policy also includes for unsuccessful applicants to request a review of the application by the Board of Management.

Section 9 of our Policy sets out other matters related to the Admissions Policy, particularly around admission to classes other than Junior Infants.

Section 10 confirms that our Policy follows the Patron’s Guidelines, and that it will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

The Guidelines require that Admissions Policies must be agreed with the Patron, and this has occurred in respect of our updated Policy.

The St. Catherine’s National School Board of Management

October 2019