

Enrolment Policy

St. Catherine's Special School

The Enrolment Policy of St Catherine's School has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the relevant Health and Safety Legislation, Equality Legislation and in keeping with the directives of the Patron in order to assist Parents in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the Policy.

1. The Education Welfare Act 2000 [Section 19(1)] requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the School's Admissions Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management shall, as soon as possible (but no later than 21 days from the closing date), "make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof".
2. This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school:
 - To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the school's Ethos, the Mission Statement and legislative requirements.
 - To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it.
 - To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school.
3. While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St Catherine's is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management, with due regard for the Patron's wishes, reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:
 - The size of available space in classrooms.
 - The availability of grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

- The educational needs of children of a particular age.
- The presence of children with behavioural/specific needs.
- The health and safety of other students.
- The Department of Education and Skills maximum class average directives.
- The needs of the child proposed for enrolment can be met.

Enrolment Procedures

1. St. Catherine's Special School is designated by the Department of education and Skills for children aged 4 – 18 years whose primary assessed disability is either:
 - Moderate General Learning Disability (MGLD)
 - Severe/Profound General Learning Disability (SPLD)
 - Autistic Spectrum Disorder with complex needs (ASD)

Only pupils assessed within this range are eligible to apply for enrolment in the school.

2. Application forms for enrolment are available from the school office. Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child in the school must complete the application form and forward it to the school Principal along with a Psychological Assessment which is no more than 18 months old. Parents are advised to attach any other current reports that may be relevant to the application e.g. Medical, Speech and Language, Physiotherapy, Behavioural, Occupational Therapy or Psychiatric.
3. Applications will not be considered without at least a Psychological Report which states the child's level of intellectual functioning and recommends enrolment in a special school.
4. Applications must be made by the 1st of February for enrolment the following September. The Board of Management will endeavour to respond with a decision within 21 days.
5. If the child meets the criteria for enrolment and there is room in the appropriate class, parents will be invited to visit the school to discuss the application for enrolment with the school Principal.
6. Following receipt of the completed application form and all reports the Board of Management will assess how the school could meet the needs specified. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will request the DES and/or The National Council for Special Education prior to enrolment, to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined.
7. Offers of enrolment will be made to the parents/guardians in writing and parents must confirm acceptance of an offer within 14 days of an offer being made.

8. Following acceptance of placement applications will be made to the SENO for transport and any other additional resources required.
9. In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class exceeding the number of places available, the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:
 - That St. Catherine's School is the nearest appropriate designated school.
 - That there is room in the class designated to meet the assessed needs.
 - That placement in a class is age appropriate.
 - The impact of the enrolment on the proposed class group.
10. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules governing National Schools, as well as our own school's Enrolment Policy. Under the terms of Education Welfare Act (2000) information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress are to be provided by the school from which the child is transferring.
11. The Department states that a parent may transfer a child from one National School to another at any time of the year, either with the consent of the Minister or when a transfer is made because of the change of the ordinary residence of the child.
12. Application from other schools will only be considered if the Board is of a view that it is in the best interest of the child. The school also requires a letter from the child's present school indicating the principal's awareness of the intention to change school.
13. The Board of Management, in considering enrolment of a pupil, will take into account the needs of all existing pupils before offering a place.
14. In the event of a child not being offered a place, parents/guardians are entitled to make an appeal to the Board of Management. Appeals must be addressed, in writing to the Chairperson of the Board stating the grounds for the appeal and lodged within 10 days of receiving the refusal. If parents/guardians are unhappy with the result of the appeal they may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act.
15. By virtue of enrolling your child in St Catherine's School parents are undertaking to adhere to the schools Code of Behaviour and all other school policies.
16. The school regularly reviews children's progress. Parents are kept informed and where it is felt that a child would be better placed in another setting, parents are notified and the matter is discussed with them.

Exclusion of Children Already Enrolled in the School

Children enrolled in St. Catherine's School are obliged to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour. In accordance with the Rules for National Schools (130) and the obligations on St. Catherine's School Board under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1989) it may be necessary to

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temporarily or permanently exclude a child from the school. Such exclusions will comply with the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Written notification of permanent exclusion and the reasons will be sent to the DES and the relevant Education Welfare Officer.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 03/03/2016.