



St. Nicholas Primary School Admissions Policy

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 on 05/08/2020. It was reviewed on 06/09/2021. 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. Nicholas Primary School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website and on Aladdin, at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

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

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

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Nicholas Primary School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath, Most Reverend Thomas Deenihan.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and

1

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(d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Nicholas Primary School 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.

St. Nicholas Primary School operates under the Rules for National Schools and Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidelines. The school is staffed in accordance with the schedule laid out each school year by the Department of Education & Skills. The school is funded by annual grant aid from the Department of Education and Skills.

St. Nicholas Primary School follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 & 30 of the Education Act, 1998. All pupils enrolled in the school are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum which includes the following subjects: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and Physical Education.

The school provides Religious Education for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the religious education programme at the request of their parents.

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas Primary School has formally adopted and implemented Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary School, 2017. Copies of our "Child Safeguarding Statement" are available from the school office and can be viewed on the school's website.

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding and resources available, equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

Pupils enrolled in St. Nicholas Primary School are required to co-operate with, and support, all published school policies, including the Code of Behaviour. Copies of these policies are available from our website (www.stnicholasprimaryschool.com) or from the school office upon request. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate with the policies in an age appropriate manner. In the unlikely situation of repeated serious misbehaviour, the school will follow procedures for suspension and expulsion as set out in

2

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the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) guidelines and reflected in our Code of Behaviour.

Parents who accept a place for their child in St. Nicholas Primary School will be required to sign an undertaking to uphold the school's policies including its Code of Behaviour. Parents must also accept the Catholic Ethos of the school as a condition of enrolment.

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the number of classes at each class level and the maximum number of children in each class. This number will vary across class levels as factors such as:

- size of/available space in classrooms
- educational needs of children of a particular age
- multi-grade classes
- presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs
- DES class average directives
- teaching resources provided to the school

will be taken into consideration. The maximum number of children accepted into our classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class will be determined and/or reviewed by the Board of Management of St. Nicholas Primary School according to the DES staffing schedule.

3. Admission Statement

St. Nicholas Primary School 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

3

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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. Nicholas’s Primary School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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. Nicholas’ Primary School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67 (4)(b).

St. Nicholas Primary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic 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.

St. Nicholas’ Primary School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established one class to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In the event of oversubscription for places in this ASD class then the criteria set out in section.6, categories 1, 2 and 3 below will apply.

We ask parents to inform the school if your child has an identified special educational need or if there are concerns about any aspect of your child’s development that might be relevant to the school. This will assist the school to ensure that suitable educational/assistive technology/teaching/care needs resources can be sought to support the child’s needs.

Children with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management.

It is the policy of St. Nicholas Primary School to request an up-to-date (within 2 years) Psychological Report and / or Medical Report etc for a child with identified special educational needs who is seeking a place in this school. The purpose of assessment reports is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child relevant to his / her disability or special educational needs and to profile the support services required.

Where the Board deems that further resources are required it will make an application (with the consent of parents) to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and/or Department of Education and Skills (DES) to seek the provision of resources to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and / or medical report.

4

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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.

St. Nicholas Primary School is a Roman Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Faith, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

6. Oversubscription

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas Primary School have determined a maximum enrolment for each class level.

Junior Infants:	57
Senior Infants:	57
1 st class:	58
2 nd class:	58
3 rd class:	57
4 th class:	58
5 th class:	58
6 th class:	58
ASD class	6

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, 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:

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas Primary School reserves the right to determine the number of Junior Infant pupils to be enrolled for the academic year. This decision will be made in early March after a review of completed application forms. The Board will consider a number of factors in making its decision including, but not limited to:

- the number of applications received
- the availability of classrooms within the school

5

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- resources and support provided to the school

The enrolment process for 2024 Junior Infant classes will begin on the 4th December 2023. On this date an application form for admission will be available to parents and guardians to register their interest in their child or children attending St. Nicholas Primary School. These forms must be submitted to the school secretary before 26th February 2024.

Following a review of completed application forms, the following categories will be used, in descending order of priority, to select children for enrolment:

Category 1

Siblings of children already enrolled (*siblings to include step siblings, half siblings and fostered children residing at the same address*) in St. Nicholas Primary School who are 4 years of age on or before the 1st September in the year of admission.

Category 2

Children who are permanently resident in *Longwood parish, at the time of application, and are 4 years of age on or before the 1st September in the year of admission.

Category 3

Children of families who are **not** resident in *Longwood parish, at the time of application, and are 4 years of age on or before 1st September in the year of admission.

Once the offers are made in writing and accepted by the return of a signed form (see the Annual Admission Notice), a waiting list will be drawn up of the remaining applicants, and offers will be made to these applicants only if one or more offers are not accepted or subsequently declined at a later date.

Where the number of applicants within any one of the criteria categories listed above exceeds the number of school places available, the applicants within that category will be prioritised on the grounds of age, beginning with the eldest and proceeding in descending order of age until all remaining places have been allocated.

Where two or more pupils are tied for the last remaining available school place (on grounds of shared date of birth), that place will be awarded to the applicant who is oldest by virtue of the time of birth recorded on their birth certificate. In the event that multiple-birth siblings (e.g. twins) remain tied for the last available place both/all will be admitted by way of exception.

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,

6

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(other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—

(I) an early intervention class, or

(II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time)

- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
(other than in relation to a fee charging school or a plc or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to:
- admission to (a) a special school or (b) 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 and/or
 - admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act)
- (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;
(other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school or to a plc or further education and training course run by a school)
- (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 wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school).

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (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.

7

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This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Nicholas Primary School 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 pre-enrolment form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 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 decide 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. Nicholas Primary School, 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

8

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(ii) whether or not you have applied for and 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. Nicholas Primary School 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.

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. Nicholas Primary School 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. Nicholas Primary School 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.

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.

9

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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 applications for Junior Infants, received after the closing date, will be placed at the end of the waiting list with the order of the date of receipt of the application.

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

Children wishing to enrol into classes that already exist, or children seeking to transfer to St. Nicholas Primary School from other schools, are enrolled subject to the Rules Governing National Schools, St. Nicholas Primary School's Admissions Policy and the availability of places within the school.

It is advised that parents who seek enrolment for child/ren or who seek to transfer a child/children from another school should apply to St. Nicholas Primary School **in advance of the commencement of the school year.**

If the number of applications received exceed the number of available spaces in any class from Senior Infants to Sixth Class, then the selection criteria outlined in the 'Enrolment Criteria for children seeking a place in Junior Infants' section will apply.

Prior to deciding on the enrolment of a child into any class from Senior Infants to Sixth class (or Junior Infants once the academic year has started) St. Nicholas Primary School will post an application form for enrolment to applicants' parents / guardians and request (where applicable):

- birth certificate
- educational, psychological or other relevant reports

Parents / guardians will be informed of a decision on enrolment applications within 21 days of receiving completed applications. Applications that have not included the requested documents by St. Nicholas Primary School will not be considered complete. This also applies to children whose parents apply to enrol them mid-year.

For all mid-year applicants waiting lists for each class level will be in operation from September to June of each academic year. If a place becomes available those on waiting lists will be prioritised according to the selection criteria.

The waiting lists mentioned in the above paragraph will be dissolved at the end of each academic year. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to reapply for the following academic year if they wish to do so.

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

10

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The board of St. Nicholas Primary School 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Incidental religious instruction occurs throughout the school day in the form of morning prayer, grace before meals etc. Religion is formally taught for thirty minutes each day. Where parents have requested that their child does not participate in religious instruction, their child is expected to remain in the classroom and carry on with their class work or work assigned to them by their class teachers while religious instruction is being taught.

Parents who wish that their child(ren) do not attend religious instruction will be made aware of the above procedure upon enrolling their child in St. Nicholas Primary 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.

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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 to 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.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Fr. Tom Gilroy- Chairperson.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Siobhán Henry- Principal.

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