



## St Nicholas' Primary School

### Enrolment Policy

St. Nicholas Primary School serves the people of the Catholic parish of Longwood. It is a parish-based school. It is a Catholic school that has been established with the Minister of Education and Skills having as its Patron Most Reverend Michael Smith, the Bishop of Meath. It aims at promoting the full harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil – intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic faith.

The Board of Management hereby sets out its policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, and trusts that by doing so parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters.

#### Rationale

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 Ethos, the Mission Statement of the school and legislative requirements
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in light of the resources available to it and
- 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

#### Legal Framework

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that:

“A recognized school shall ....Subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school”.

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall:

“Publish the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected”.

Section 27 (1) states that:

“A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school” and (2) that “the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the School having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers”.

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 Admission 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) after receiving such information “make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof”

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community” regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values [Section 7 (3)].

### **Goals**

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures
- To enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- To ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, our Mission Statement & current legislation
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

### **Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum**

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent’s choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. It will make every effort to secure those resources – where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills, and these regulations are subject to change from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the

teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

### **Policy Considerations**

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas' Primary School reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Departmental guidelines on class size, etc.

The school will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided the necessary supports are in place in the school.

The school will maintain a list of refused applicants for each class, their place on this list having been determined under the criteria outlined.

The Board of Management respects parental choice in relation to enrolment, provided the enrolment criteria are fulfilled.

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas School, in its Policy of Admissions/Enrolment, respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled.

Consequently, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:

- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children
- Available classroom space
- Multi-grade classes
- Educational needs of the children
- Presence of children with Special Educational Needs
- Department of Education & Science class size directives
- Appropriate Supports and Resources available
- Time of school year

### **Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision / Appeals**

- Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit a student.
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- In applying the criteria for enrolment, the school will take into account Gender Balance Male / Female and limitations in the size of classes

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission.

Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources-where the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare.

In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. Failure to fully complete the application form, failure to supply any relevant information requested by

the school, or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.

### **Application for immediate admission in the current school year**

- Application forms are available from the school secretary.
- Failure to fully complete forms will result in refusal to admit the applicant.
- The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall be considered.

### **Application Procedure**

- Parents who wish to enrol their child in junior infants or subsequent years in the school must complete a pre-enrolment form.
- Parents must include birth certificate and, in the case of Catholic children, a baptismal certificate is also required.
- Written application is required to be received by a specified date in Feb. /Mar. preceding the Sept. start for Junior Infants. This specified date will be circulated in Parish newsletters, local crèches local shops, listed on the school website and circulated on Textaparent.
- Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of the school in accordance with school policy.
- Parents of children who have been offered a place will be invited to bring the children to the school in mid June for an informal visit to the classroom and, if possible, meet with the child's new teacher. This visit allows the child an opportunity to become familiar with school environment in advance of the commencement of the new school year in September.
- Neither the completion of an application form, nor the placing of a child on a waiting list confers an automatic right to a place in the school. The processing of applications will only begin after the closing date for receipt of applications.

### **Enrolment Criteria**

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/ standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year (due to the Board of Management being unable to provide suitable accommodation, or recruit the required teaching staff) the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

- i. Children of the parish or the traditional catchment area served by the school, including children of Travelling Community resident within parish or this traditional catchment area.
- ii. Brothers and sisters of children in the school.
- iii. The children of staff who are working in a full time capacity in the school.
- iv. Catholic children who live outside the parish and do not have a Catholic school in their parish.
- v. All children who apply to the school and are not Catholics and not residents within the parish boundaries or catchment area are entitled to a place in the school if there are vacancies in the school after the groups from (i) to (iv) have been allocated places.
- vi. In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management on foot of a written request may allow for the enrolment of children not catered for in the above categories.

In order to accommodate groups (i), (ii) and (iii) Boards may have to operate a cut off in age of applicants to give places to groups (i), (ii) and (iii) if there is pressure for places in the school.

Any child who is not offered a place will be placed on a waiting list.

Pupils wishing to transfer from another school will be enrolled, subject to the Rules governing National Schools, as well as our own school's enrolment policy and local agreements with other schools.

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000), information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress is to be provided by the school from which the child is transferring.

Children with Special Educational Needs will be given a place, depending on the level of necessary resources provided by the Department of Education and Science, and also depending on the resources that the Board of Management has at its disposal to adequately address the needs of the child.

Parents of children with special educational needs are requested to include any available medical, educational or psychological assessments/ reports, when submitting the pre enrolment form.

Notwithstanding the availability of resources, parents of children with special educational needs, who are dissatisfied with the level of educational provision at St. Nicholas Primary School, are advised to consider the option of enrolling in a special school, one which may be better designed and resourced to specifically cater for the particular needs of their child.

All children enrolled in this school are required to co-operate with and support, the School Board of Management's Code of Behaviour, as well as other policies on curriculum, organisation and management.

The Board of Management places an expectation on Parents/Guardians ensure and encourage their child (ren) to comply with all school policies.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of their application within a period of 21 days from the closing date for receipt of pre enrolment forms.

### **Appeals**

1. Parents, who are unhappy with the enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal and lodged within ten days of receiving the final refusal.
2. If unhappy with the outcome of this appeal, parents may then appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, using the official form provided by the Department.  
This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the final refusal from the school.

### **Transfer Enrolments from other schools**

Transfer is subject to available places, in accordance with the stipulations as set out in St. Nicholas Primary School Enrolment Policy, D.E.S. guidelines and local agreements with other schools. The Department of Education and Skills 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 a change of the home address of the child.

Applications to transfer from other schools will only be considered if the Board is satisfied that the transfer is in the best interests of the child. A child will only be accepted for enrolment in such circumstances, after the school is furnished with all relevant information regarding attendance and progress, under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The school also requires a letter from the principal of the school from where the child is transferring, confirming that the Principal is aware of the transfer.

All children enrolled, are expected to both comply with and also support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as all other school policies, procedures and curricular subject plans.

### **Evaluation**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the Enrolment/Admissions Policy, and review and amend the Policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon

- Effective management placed on application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Applicants informed in good time re. the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
- Positive Parental feedback

### **Monitoring Procedures**

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board of Management at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the Principal for consideration by the full staff at the same time. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment in December each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete.

Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

### **Review Procedure**

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every three years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with either the content or the implementation of any school policy, may request a review at any time, and such a request will be addressed as early as possible.

Next review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2015/2016.

### **Ratification**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management:

Chairperson: *Patrick Kearney*

Principal: *John Smyth*

Date : *October 15<sup>th</sup> 2014*

