

# St. Brigid's National School



## Admissions Policy

**Roll number:** 17230L | **School Patron:** Bishop of Kilmore

### 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 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. Brigid's National School admission process 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.

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. Brigid's National School is a Catholic, co-educational, primary school. 'Catholic Ethos' in the context of a Catholic 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
- (d) The formation of the pupils in Catholic faith.

And which school provides religious education 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. Brigid's National 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. Brigid's National School

## 3. Admission Statement

St. Brigid's National 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

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. Brigid's National 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/special class

St. Brigid's National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with on the Autistic Spectrum.

St. Brigid's National School is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

## 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

The special class attached to St. Brigid's National School provides an education exclusively for students on the Autistic Spectrum 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 – *See Enrolment to Special Class section of this policy.*

St. Brigid's National school is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

## 6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)



# St. Brigid's National School

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:

## Mainstream Classes

1. Brothers and sisters of current pupils in St. Brigid's National School or who have attended St. Brigid's National School in the past.
2. Children whose parents were past pupils in the school
3. Children of current St. Brigid's National School permanent staff members.
4. Distance from the school in kilometres.
5. Applicants not covered by criteria 1 – 4 above.

## Special Class

1. Priority will be given to pupils already enrolled in the school and who meet the criteria for admittance to an ASD class as outlined in Section 5 (c).
2. Siblings of current pupils in St. Brigid's National School or siblings of pupils who have attended St. Brigid's National School in the past.
3. Children whose parents were past pupils in the school.
4. Children of current St. Brigid's National School permanent staff members.
5. Distance from the school in kilometres.
6. Applicants not covered by criteria 1 – 5 above.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), The Board of Management of St. Brigid's National School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

## 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;
- 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;
- 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 (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Brigid's National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy



# St. Brigid's National School

- 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 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. Brigid's National 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
- (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. Brigid's National 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. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of students in relation to whom:

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



# St. Brigid's National School

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. Brigid's National 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. Brigid's National 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.

## **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.

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

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: Where the class is not oversubscribed, St. Brigid's National School will abide by its Admission Statement as outlined in (a) to (i) in Section 3.

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

The board of St. Brigid's National 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.

## **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents, who has 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) of the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.



# St. Brigid's National School

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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.

# St. Brigid's National School



## Enrolment Policy into Special Classes

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline the procedure for applying for a place in the ASD class, the criteria used to allocate places and the steps that will be taken in advance of a child joining the class.

### Application Process

- An Enrolment Application Form provided by the school should be filled out by the parents/guardians on behalf of the child they wish to enrol.
- This form should be accompanied by an original birth certificate.
- A recent psychological assessment or report from a multi-disciplinary team should be provided with the application. Any other reports in operation on a child should also be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
- The school's Admission Team will examine each application to assess the suitability of the placement for the applicant.
- The Principal will undertake to communicate to the parent / guardian the decision of the Admissions Team.

### Enrolment Criteria

It is essential to clearly ascertain that placement in an ASD class within a mainstream school is appropriate for the applicant. It is also necessary to ensure that the school is in a position to cater for the needs of the applicant. The needs and rights of other members of the ASD class and the school community in general must also be considered when assessing applications for enrolment.

The criteria below have been put in place in order to uphold these principles:

- The applicant must have a diagnosis of Autism/ Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV or ICD 10 by the psychologist or multi-disciplinary team.
- If a child also presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range or above, (this diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.) The reason for this is that firstly, in order to benefit from a placement in a mainstream school, children need to be capable of accessing the Primary School Curriculum. Secondly, as a mainstream school, we do not have the facilities to cater for the needs of children with moderate or profound learning disabilities.
- The school must be in a position to provide for the needs of the applicant. It is necessary that the level of needs and care required by each child will be clearly defined. In order to ascertain this the following steps may be taken:
  - Where necessary, contact will be made with the relevant psychologists, therapists or members of A.S.D. team to clarify any outstanding matters regarding assessment.
  - The parents of a child being offered a place in the class may be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Ed. Team and the Principal of the School. Any information requested by the parents will be provided at this meeting.
  - The parents may be requested by the school to consent to a visit by the Special Education Team to a child's pre-school/ school/home setting to observe the child.
  - There must be a recommendation by the relevant professionals that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the applicant. In this respect, the behaviour of children applying for enrolment must also be considered. It is accepted that Children with Special Educational Needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. However, where behavioural issues are likely to result in danger to the applicant or other children or where behaviour issues are likely to negatively impact other children's constitutional right to an education, placement in the ASD class may not be suitable.



# St. Brigid's National School

- Children must be of primary school age to qualify for a place in the class.
- The individual needs of each child are constantly reviewed to ensure that the ASD class is the appropriate setting to meet the needs of the child. Reviews will be carried out in consultation with the parents, SENO, psychologist and all relevant health care professionals.

## Allocation of Places

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year. The maximum total enrolment of places in the ASD classroom is 6 children but the availability of a base class for members of the ASD class also needs to be factored in. For example, it is not feasible to integrate multiple members of the ASD class within a single base class. In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment into the A.S.D. classes exceeding the number of places available names will be placed on a waiting list. The practicalities of providing for the needs of newly diagnosed children already in St. Brigid's National School and for children whose families are already attending the school have to be considered in selecting from the waiting list.

Accordingly, when the number of places available exceeds demand, places will be allocated in the following order:

- Children who are newly diagnosed and already enrolled in a mainstream class within the school will continue to be supported in the school by automatic transfer to the class for ASD. This transfer should have the consent of the parents of the child. Complaints/disagreements/ refusal will be further considered by the BOM upon written application to the Chairperson of the BOM.
- Children whose siblings are already attending the school.
- Children for whom St. Brigid's National School is the nearest school with an ASD class.
- First come, first served. This will be implemented using waiting a list in accordance with the date the school receives fully completed application forms and appropriate documents, assessments and reports.

## Induction

Once a place in the ASD class has been allocated to an applicant, the following steps will be taken to facilitate the inductions of a new child in the ASD class.

- The parents / guardians will be invited in advance of his/ her first day in the ASD class to come with their child to the class to meet with staff and see the classroom and school. This may happen over a number of days.
- Each child in the A.S.D. class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes.
- After placement in the class a relevant Student Support File will be provided for the child. This plan will have an input from all parties involved with the education of the child and will be supported by a psychologist from the N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychology Service) team.
- The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.

## Behaviour

It is accepted that children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Student Support Plan. We will promote and reward positive behaviour. We will withdraw privilege in the event of persistent negative behaviours. The school's Code of Behaviour applies to all children in the school, including those enrolled in the ASD class. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the Board of Management of the School, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

## Parental Support to Facilitate Training/EPV Days

It will be necessary for ASD staff to attend training seminars on occasion for which DES substitute cover may not be provided. Similarly, teachers may be entitled to Extra Personal Vacation Days for which substitute cover is not provided. The policy in this school in these situations is to provide work for children and divide them between other classes when





# St. Brigid's National School

their teacher is away. If the needs of a child attending the ASD class cannot be catered for within a mainstream class while the teacher is away, parents will be asked to keep the child at home on the day in question. In the absence of adequate substitute cover from the DES, we rely on the co-operation of parents to facilitate this.

## **Appeals**

Parents/ Guardians whose child(ren) have been refused enrolment may appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 by accessing the website of the Department of Education and Skills.