

Enrolment Policy

Scoil Naomh Colmcille, Durrow.

Introduction:

This policy was reviewed by staff in April 2014. However, we are conscious that the Minister of Education is presently working on proposals in relation to school admission with a view to improving the admissions process and to ensure that the way schools decide on applications is structured, fair and transparent. Therefore we will review our enrolment policy when new guidelines have been issued from the Department of Education and Skills.

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

The Chairperson of the Board of Management, Ms. Mary Daly or the Principal Teacher, Mr. Frank Kelly will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of the school.

General School Information:

Name of School: Durrow National School, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Telephone No. (057)93 32433

His Lordship Bishop Michael Smyth is the Patron of the school.

At present, the teaching staff is comprised of 8 single class Teachers plus the Principal Teacher, 1.6 Learning Support Teachers and 1 Resource Teacher. The full range of classes is taught in the school and classes are of mixed gender. The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. The school Policy has regard to the resources and funding available. Class starts at 9.20 a.m. and finishes at 3.00 p.m. Infant Classes finish at 2.00 p.m.

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 the 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 shallSubject 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 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.

Roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy:

Roles of Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementations and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to any decision(s) made by the Principal/Board.

Role of the Principal

- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents, Board and Trustees.
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date.
- To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy.
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies.
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of students.
- To appraise the policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

- To ensure a register of all students attending the school is established and maintained.
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each student registered at this school and, in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same.
- Prior to registering a child, to provide the parents of an applicant with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure that the parent confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code and an assurance that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child.
- To provide, on request, to any parent of a child registered in the school with a copy of the Code of Behaviour.
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise the parents of their right of appeal to the Trustees and the Department of Education setting out Title and Address of each and advising of time limits.

Role of teaching staff

- To co-operate with the implementation of this policy.
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments.
- To bring concerns about Special Needs curricular matters and information to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Needs Teacher.
- To keep parents informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and School Reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of Students

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementations of the policy.

Role of Parents

- To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation.
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern they may have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Policy Considerations:

The Board of Management of Durrow National 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, traveler 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 that 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 Durrow National 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 needs.**
- > **Department of Education & Science class size directives.**
- > **Appropriate Supports and Resources that are 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.

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. For the child's welfare, it is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application. 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.

Transfer Policy

In the interests of the continuity of student education, it is the policy of the Board of Management of Durrow N.S. to discourage transfer of students from other schools, other than in certain exceptional circumstances (e.g. change of residence or family moving into the area). It is a matter for the Board of Management to determine if such 'exceptional circumstances' exist. The reason(s) for requesting a transfer must be stated clearly on the enclosed application form. The Board of Management will issue a reply to this application within 21 days of receipt of same.

Applications for enrolment under this category will be assessed by referring to the following criteria:

- (1) Is the transfer in the best interest of the applicant;
- (2) Is the transfer in the best interest of the students/staff of Durrow N.S.
- (3) Is the transfer of educational benefit to the applicant;
- (4) Is the transfer accompanied by all relevant information from the applicants' previous school(s)

The Board of Management reserve the right to consult with all agencies involved with the applicant, including other schools attended by the applicant and (where necessary) social workers, Special Educational Needs Organiser, National Educational Welfare Board and An Garda Síochana.

In considering such criteria, the Board of Management, cognisant of the rights of the applicant and those of current students and staff, reserve the right to refuse to enrol [even in exceptional circumstances] on grounds where;

- (1) Places are not available at the class level sought by the applicant.
- (2) Special needs resources are unavailable.
- (3) Appropriate accommodation are unavailable
- (4) Following consultation with all relevant parties, the 'needs' of the applicant would be best served in an alternative setting.
- (5) An 'established' prior record of poor behaviour exists.

Where the Board of Management is unable to offer a child seeking a transfer a place in the school, the child will be placed on a waiting list. The child's position on the waiting list is determined by the date of application. When a place becomes available, it will be offered in terms of the date on which the application is made, taking cognisance of the above criteria.

Section 29 Appeal

Parents have a right to appeal a decision by our Board of Management to refuse enrolment under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will be advised of how to process such an appeal if enrolment is refused. An appeal form will be posted with the letter of refusal. This letter will issue within 21 days of application.

Junior Infant Enrolment Procedure

- The school will take details of children hoping to enroll. The completion of an application form merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application. Applications will be considered in early March of the relevant enrolment year.
- The Principal will make a recommendation to the Board, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Please note:

Applications for admission to Junior Infant Class must be made at the very latest by the end of February of the year in which it is expected that the child will start school.

Enrolment Criteria

If the number of children on the Waiting List exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritizing criteria are used:

Priority	Criterion
1	Brothers and sisters of children attending the school.
2	Brothers and sisters of past pupils.
3	Children of current Teaching Staff.
4	Roman Catholic children living in the Durrow area.
5	Families whose primary residence is in the Durrow area.
6	Children of parents or guardians who are past pupils of the school or siblings to children who have attended the school in the past.
7	First cousins of children in the school.
8	Children not included in the above but whose parents wish them to attend the school subject to places being available under the Department of Education guidelines.

Criteria for Enrolment to SI to 6^m Classes.

The same criteria as above will be applied.

Evaluation

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the 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 implementations 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

The policy will be reviewed when new guidelines on enrolment are issued from the Department of Education and Skills.

(Policy reviewed by Staff in April 2014)

Signed by and on behalf of BOM: -

Mary Daly (Chairperson)

Signed by on behalf of Scoil Naomh Colmcille: -

Frank Kelly (Principal)

Date: _____