

# **St. Colmcille's National School**

**Ballinahown Athlone, Co Westmeath**

**Roll number: 19632S**

**School Patron: Most Rev Paul Connell, Bishop of Ardagh Clonmacnoise**

## **Admission 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 in September 2019. 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. Colmcille's N.S, 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. Colmcille's N.S is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise

"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
- (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. Colmcille's N.S. shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for 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. Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the funding and resources available, St. Colmcille's N.S.. supports the principles of:

- Inclusivity (particularly with reference to children with disabilities or special educational needs)
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- Parental rights to enroll their children in the school of their choice; this in the context of the existing school community and the rights of the children already enrolled.

### **Mission statement of St. Colmcille's N.S**

St. Colmcille's National School, is a Catholic educational community, under the patronage of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, and is committed to the ethos of the Catholic Faith. It is an integral, important and valued part of the life of the local community and of the mission of Leamonaghan Parish.

St Colmcille's N.S is an inclusive school, welcoming all creeds, nationalities and races, where all are valued and respected. The aim of the school community is the best possible education for children, in all the dimensions of their lives - academic, intellectual, physical, sporting, artistic, social, moral, spiritual and religious.

We are committed to meeting the needs of all of the children in the school. Each pupil is educated here in such a way that his/her abilities and talents are developed to their fullest potential, and whatever limitations / difficulties s/he may have are addressed in the most constructive possible way.

This aim is pursued by committed and dedicated teachers, who work to the highest professional standards, and by the support of ancillary staff. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, are involved in the work of the school in a collaborative and supportive manner. The school Board of Management oversees the functioning of the school in harmonious cooperation with all the other stakeholders in the school. The Parents Association works with the school in supporting initiatives and events in the school.

The school recognises and encourages the rights of the child to have their say and be listened to and so includes the children in decision making and gives them a platform

through a student council. Effective communication between all stakeholders ensures a positive school climate for the whole school community.

The atmosphere of the school is happy and purposeful. Our motto of 'Respect Effort and Kindness' and this is reflected in all of our daily activities.

The school endeavours to prepare our students for the future that is ahead of them and are cognisant of the changing demands of the society and world in which they live. We are committed to preparing the children to meet their responsibilities to meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as outlined by the U.N as well as equipping our children with responsible digital minds to meet their needs. Ballinahown Village is renowned for its rich biodiversity and is a leading light in climate change, Tidy Towns and the environmental issues where the school plays a prominent and active role.

On leaving this school, the pupils face the future with confidence and hope, based on a strong sense of self-worth and a deep trust in God, and are well equipped to be a constructive and positive presence wherever life may bring them.

### **3. Admission Statement**

St. Colmcille's N.S 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. Colmcille's N.S. 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. Colmcille's N.S is not a special school. It is not a mainstream school with a special class attached.

St Colmcille's N.S. embraces the philosophy of inclusiveness and endeavours to reflect that philosophy in the admission of pupils with disabilities or other special educational needs.

The school welcomes applications from children with special educational needs. Such applications will be processed in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

- Pupils with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- In order to assist the school in establishing the educational and physical needs of a successful applicant, relevant to his/her ability or special needs, and to profile the support services required the school requests that parent(s) of the pupils accepted for enrolment; (i) Inform the school of any special needs as early as possible and (ii) Ensure that copies of relevant professional reports are provided so that provision can be made for that applicant's welfare and educational progress.
- Where a report is not available and an applicant is accepted for an enrolment, a request will be made that the successful applicant be assessed immediately. Following receipt of the report, the Board of Management will assess how the school can meet the needs as specified therein.
- Where the Board of Management deems that further resources are required, it will request the DES and or NCSE and or HSE to provide resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the medical and or psychological report(s).
- The Principal may, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) or the DES Inspector, meet with the parent(s) of the child to discuss the child's needs. This meeting is not a condition of enrolment.

## **5. Admission of Students**

### **Junior Infant Enrolment Procedure**

The registration process is initiated on receipt by St. Colmcille's N.S of a completed application form. This application for enrolment must be signed and dated by one or both parents or guardians. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school

Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

Date of application, child's date of birth, address, and parent /guardian names and telephone contact numbers are recorded in St. Colmcille's N.S Record of Applications, and an acknowledgement is sent to the applicant. The acknowledgement of an application merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application.

Entry in St. Colmcille's N.S. Record of Applications means that an application will be considered in April of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy.

Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board of Management, 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.

Upon enrolment, parents will be required to sign the following documentation:

1. St. Colmcille's N.S School Rules
2. Primary Online Data form
3. Acceptable Use Policy (For the use of technology/internet)
4. Pupil Profile Information – (Medical details, emergency contacts etc.)

These may be added to and revised from time to time.

All information will be collected and stored in line with the principles of G.D.P.R.

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

- Application forms are available from the school secretary or the school website.
- Failure to fully complete forms or return them in a timely manner may result in refusal to admit the applicant.

**Please note:**

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

This school shall admit each student seeking admission **except** where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- b) The applicant has not yet reached their fourth birthday by the 1st of March of the year in which he/she is applying
- c) 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.

## **6.Oversubscription**

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;

### **Selection Criteria**

1. Siblings of currently enrolled pupils
2. Those permanently resident within the parish boundary
3. All remaining applicants

Note ;

(a) In the case of an over-subscription within one of the above categories, places will be allocated beginning with the eldest in descending order of age until all remaining places have been allocated.

(b) 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 following arrangements will apply:

Selection will be based on age, where the older child will be accepted.

## **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;  
other than siblings of a student attending or having 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.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Colmcille's N.S 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 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 make a decision 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. Colmcille's N.S. 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 are 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. Colmcille's N.S. 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 the students in relation to whom—

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

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. Colmcille's N.S. 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. Colmcille's N.S. 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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.

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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 applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in [Section 13](#).

### **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:***

- Application for enrolment to classes or years other than the school's intake group will be considered, subject to school policy, available space and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress. Such applications will be dealt with on a case –by- case basis.

***The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:***

- Pupils may be enrolled during the school year if they are newly resident within the Catholic parish boundary.
- Transfer of pupils from schools outside the parish boundary is discouraged during the school year. Parents/Guardians are required to make every effort to resolve any issues, at the original school before an application of enrolment can be made to St. Colmcille's N.S.
- Admittance depends on places being available and on applicants providing similar completed information as applicants for the school's intake group. Further information may need to be requested after acceptance, but it is not a condition of enrolment.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to follow up on these issues and may do so after enrolment.

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

The Board of Management of St. Colmcille's N.S. 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 whose parent(s)/guardian(s) has requested that the student attend St. Colmcille's N.S. 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) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in September 2019 and is reviewed annually.

It was recently reviewed in January 2026 and was ratified by the Board of Management on

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

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Principal

