

## **SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY**

### **DIOCESE OF KILDARE & LEIGHLIN**



**NAME OF SCHOOL: ST. BRIGID'S NATIONAL SCHOOL**

**ADDRESS: CLONEGAL, ENNISCORTHY, CO. WEXFORD Y21XK73**

**ROLL NUMBER: 17514C**

**PATRON: Most Reverend Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin**

### **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 15 September 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 with a Catholic ethos. The Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin is the Patron of this school.

'Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all'.

*'The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15'*

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:

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

### **Vision of St Brigid's National School**

It is our vision that we will educate the children in our care in accordance with the Catholic ethos of our school, while acknowledging and respecting other cultures and religious groupings. We aim to provide a caring, secure, happy and well-ordered environment where everyone in the school community will feel protected, valued and accepted. We will endeavour to enhance the confidence and self-esteem of each person in our school. We promote team spirit and co-operation between all parties in education. An atmosphere of respect and care for all is fostered and a high standard of behaviour and inter personal relationships is expected.

Great emphasis is placed on providing the framework for each pupil to develop and enhance the life skills necessary for future life. We aim to provide an environment which nurtures, explores, and develops the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, moral, cultural and aesthetic development of each child as we prepare them for further education and lifelong learning.

In addition, we believe the child's responsibilities to themselves and to the world around them should be an integral part of their social and educational development. We view each child as an individual who must play an active part in his/her own education. This, coupled with the provision of a vibrant and stimulating school environment can make the achievement of each child's potential a reality.

### **Our Aims**

The aims of St. Brigid's National School are:

- To enable our pupils to enjoy school and to live life to the full as children.
- To enhance their self-esteem and to recognise their good qualities, while encouraging them to respect the views, rights and beliefs of others.
- To develop academic, cultural and aesthetic values in each child and to foster an appreciation of our Irish culture and heritage.
- To develop their full potential in all areas of the curriculum.

- To promote a sense of responsibility for themselves, others and the environment.
- To nurture a work ethic in each pupil in accordance with ability.
- To promote a spirit of co-operation and to develop good interpersonal skills.
- To develop leadership qualities and to encourage each pupil to be tolerant, caring and politically aware.
- To make each child aware of the importance of expressing his/her opinions and feelings in an appropriate manner.
- To equip them to avail of further education appropriate to each child.
- To prepare them to live, happy and useful lives as adults in society.

### **Our School Motto**

Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.

## **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 in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

### **All denominational schools**

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.

### **Schools with special education class(es)**

St Brigid's National School is a school which has established classes, 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.

## **4. CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CATERED FOR IN THE SCHOOL/SPECIAL CLASS(ES)**

St Brigid's National School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established classes to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

## **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

### **All denominational schools**

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

### **School with special education class(es)**

The special classes attached to St Brigid's National School provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 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.

### **Application for Admission to Autistic Spectrum Disorder Class**

The special classes attached to St Brigid's National School provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder who have been recommended for placement in the Special class in a mainstream primary school and who have the potential to integrate into a mainstream, age appropriate class. All placements will be reviewed annually in order to ensure that the placement continues to be appropriate for each child. The maximum class size is 6 pupils. Access to services etc. will be dependent on local H.S.E. services.

## ***Supporting Documentation***

As well as the information that needs to be provided in the Enrolment Form, all applications for admission to the Autistic Spectrum Disorder class must be accompanied by all of the following supporting documentation:

- The child must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder made by the psychologist or team.
- A written psychological assessment / report (dated within the 12 months prior to the Application being submitted) or a written report from a multi-disciplinary team must be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note that all such reports on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.
- A recommendation by the relevant professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.

All applications for admission to the ASD Class will be considered by the Admissions Team. This team will include the School Principal; the Special Needs Coordinator and a Special Class Teacher. In assessing an application for admission, the Admissions Team may seek the advice of the school's allocated NEPS psychologist.

The function of the Admissions Teams is to:

- Ascertain how many places are to be filled in the ASD Class. The maximum number of pupils in the class will be 6 pupils.
- Review all applications and all documentation relevant to a child applying for a place in the ASD class.
- Verify the class's suitability in meeting the needs of the child.
- Verify that there is a recommendation from a psychologist for placement in a special class in a mainstream school.
- Verify the suitability of the child for potential meaningful integration in an age appropriate mainstream class.

Identify qualifying applicants with reference to these criteria.

- Prioritise each qualifying applicant with reference to selection criteria – see **Section 6** below regarding the selection criteria that will be used in the case of oversubscription.
- To make a recommendation based on these findings to the Board of Management, which is responsible for admitting applicants to the school.

## **Pupils Transferring**

Pupils may transfer to the ASD class from mainstream classes during the school year subject to the availability of places. The Admissions Team (see above) will decide on the appropriateness of such transfers.

Pupils transferring to the ASD Class must enter the same class level that they are leaving, and have the necessary diagnosis and recommendations as outlined above.

**NOTE:** All other terms of this School Admission Policy will apply to those on whose behalf an application for admission to the ASD Class is made to St Brigid's National School.

### **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 Personal Profile Plan. All pupils including pupils with special needs and pupils without special needs are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health & Safety Statement. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the ASD class or another mainstream 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.

## **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:**

#### **Mainstream Classes**

1. All children living in the parish of Clonegal and the catchment area of the school.
2. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled (including stepsiblings, resident at same address).
3. All children who apply to the school and are not resident in the parish.

#### **Special Classes for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

1. Children living within the parish of Clonegal.
2. Siblings of existing pupils in mainstream school; priority to oldest who meet the criteria.
3. Pupils newly diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder already enrolled in a mainstream class in St Brigid's National School where it has been demonstrated that the pupil requires the support of a special class because he/she is unable to learn effectively in a mainstream class for most or all of the school day even with appropriate supports and where the pupil meets the enrolment criteria.
4. Children resident outside the parish of Clonegal who do not have access to a special class in their area.

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:

In the event of over-subscription for any category, places will be allocated to the older children first in order of category. If two or more children with the same date of birth are tied for the final place, then time of birth will be used to determine priority.

## **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, 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;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to:
  - admission to 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
- (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, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criterion based on siblings of a student attending or having attended the school as in Section 6.
- (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 Brigid's National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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 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 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 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.

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.

## **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 Admission forms must be fully completed*
- *All reports must be submitted (where applicable)*

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:

- *When such students are moving into the catchment area as defined by this policy, the school is willing to accommodate students provided space being available in the appropriate class at the time of the application and/or at the proposed date of attending school.*

## **16 DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES**

This rule applies to all schools.

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**

A written request should be made to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) 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 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 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 Admission Policy was approved by the Patron; Bishop Denis Nulty on 15/9/2020**



**This Admission Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Brigid's NS**

**on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Chairperson)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Principal)**