

St. Catherine's N.S.

Admission Policy



School Address: Bishopstown Avenue West,
Model Farm Road,
Cork
T12 TF74

Roll Number: 18253F

School Patron: Bishop of Cork and Ross

All references to parents should be taken as including reference to guardians

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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 25th of 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. Catherine'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. Catherine's is a Catholic all girls primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross.

"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. Catherine's 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.

Mission Statement of Scoil Naomh Caitríona:

St Catherine's National School is a Catholic Girls' School under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross and operating under the guidelines and rules of the Department of Education and Skills. While St. Catherine's has a Catholic Ethos and our education is imbued with the spirit of the Mercy

Philosophy, we also have due recognition for all other religions and we aim to be a welcoming place, respectful and accommodating of diversity in race, culture, religion and ability.

We aim to offer our pupils a warm and positive atmosphere where they are encouraged to grow, develop and achieve their full potential based on courtesy, consideration and mutual respect.

We are a learning community promoting, modelling and valuing life-long learning. Parents are their child's primary educators and we strive to empower and utilise parents to be actively involved in their child's education and the life of our school.

We endeavour to foster the social, emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of our pupils and to promote, nurture and enhance their well-being throughout their time in St. Catherine's and to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attributes that will serve them throughout their lives.

We envisage that each pupil who leaves our school will do so with a positive self-image and the confidence born of knowing that they have been cherished by, and were valued members of, our school community.

3. Admission Statement

St. Catherine's will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned*,
- (b) the civil status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned has special educational needs

*Part (a) above is qualified in Section 61(2) of the Education Act 1998, regarding a school that admits pupils of one gender only. In such circumstances, "the admission statement of the school shall include a statement that the school does not discriminate in relation to the admission of pupils where it refuses to admit as a pupil a person who is not of that gender".

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. Catherine's is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

St. Catherine's is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Catholic religious' values, traditions and beliefs, and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a pupil a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Catherine's will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

St. Catherine's will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the School

St. Catherine's welcome pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and in line with the Education for Person's with Special Needs Act 2004, recognises *"the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment"*

The School 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 also embraces the principle of equality of access and participation in the School. It is our hope that our school is a place where we promote and facilitate a whole school approach to special educational needs and so create a community of learning. In our policy and practice, we aim to nurture the values of hope, compassion and understanding in all of our pupils. We recognise each pupil as a unique individual with different talents and needs. We endeavour to meet their physical, intellectual and emotional needs through our teaching.

In fostering an atmosphere of learning that is holistic in approach, we nurture each pupil's personal growth and development. We strive to enable all to achieve their full potential. We offer an inclusive curriculum, and we do so in active partnership with pupils, parents and staff.

Special Educational Needs encompasses Academic, Social, Behavioural Needs, and well as needs associated with Physical, Sensory, Language and Communication Difficulties. Pupils with the greatest level of needs will have access to the greatest level of support.

Pupils with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the DES and/or NCSE. Upon confirmation of admission into the school, parents of pupils with special educational needs are requested to arrange a meeting with the Principal and/or SEN co-ordinator where the pupil has previously been assessed or has received Learning Support classes or in the case of care needs or SNA supports arising from a medical condition. This facilitates advance planning for providing support for a pupil with special educational needs and easing the transition from pre-school to primary or transition between schools.

The principle aim of our Educational Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is to enable pupils with special educational needs to access, participate and benefit from the education normally provided in the school to the fullest extent possible and to do so in an inclusive learning environment which respects the dignity of all pupils and facilitates the development of a truly inclusive school. Support provided to pupils are based on identified needs are subject to regular review of progress in consultation with parents and teachers as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.

5. Admission of Pupils

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where –

- a) St. Catherine's provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a pupil a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.
- b) a parent of a pupil, 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 pupil
- c) St. Catherine's is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a pupil a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
- d) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

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:

1. Sisters (including step-sisters and foster sisters) of children who are attending the school, providing that they are resident at the same address, and sisters of past pupils.
2. Children living within the parish of Dennehy's Cross.
3. Children of current school staff.
4. Children who are living outside the Dennehy's Cross parish.
5. Any applicant not covered by 1-4 above

In the event that there are two or more pupils 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 all categories, places will be allocated to girls starting with the eldest. In the event of oversubscription and two children having the same date of birth, the time of birth, as per the Birth Certificate will be the deciding factor, if the Birth Certificate does not give a time, a lottery shall take place, which will be overseen by a member of the Board of Management and the Principal. In general, all pupils will have reached the age of four on or before May 1st in the year of enrolment

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 pupil on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a pupil'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 pupil's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a pupil's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a pupil, or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a pupil's connection to the school by virtue of a member of her family attending or having previously attended the school;
other than, sisters of a pupil 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. Catherine'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 pupil 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 pupil's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the pupil'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. Catherine'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 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.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

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. Catherine'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 pupil, 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 pupil; 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 pupils.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the pupils 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;

- (v) a pupil's personal details including 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 pupils whose applications for admission to St. Catherine'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. Catherine's is in the order of priority assigned to the pupils' 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 pupils on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the pupils 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 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 pupils to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of pupil to classes other than the school's Junior Infants intake group and the procedures in relation to the admission of pupils after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought are as follows:

The Board of Management has set a maximum limit on the number of places in Junior Infants in the school in any given year. The school has 28 places to allocate in the both Junior Infant classes (56 places in total). This does not prevent the school from increasing/decreasing this figure in future should circumstances change. The Board will set such limits based on the availability of resources, facilities and staff. The maximum number of pupils in classes other than Junior Infants is 28 pupils.

In general, it is the policy of the Board of Management not to accept transfer applications from pupils currently enrolled in other local primary schools. In certain circumstances however, (e.g. a family who have moved into the area and an applicant is not currently enrolled in a local primary school) the school will make reasonable efforts to facilitate an applicant seeking to enrol in accordance with the criteria stated in this policy.

The Board of Management has delegated the Principal to decide on applications for enrolment. Applicants then have the right to appeal that decision in writing to the Board of Management and subsequently to the Department of Education and Skills, if necessary. The following criteria will be used:

St. Catherine's may enrol a female pupil in the school during the school year subject to the following conditions:

- i. The terms of the Admissions Policy will apply.
- ii. The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of pupils currently enrolled in the school.
- iii. A meeting with the Principal.
- iv. Where the applicant is transferring from another school, the parents of the applicant must inform the School of the reason for the transfer and the School reserves the right to contact the applicant's school/former school in this regard.
- v. Prior to any application, the School may seek information and/or reports from the pupil's former/current school regarding the applicant's record in such areas as attendance, disabilities, special needs, and any other matters relating to the pupil's educational progress and deportment as the school management may consider important.

The School will take due account of:

- i. Overall capacity of the school.
- ii. That current optimum arrangement of pupil for teaching and learning purposes are maintained.
- iii. The place exists in the relevant class/age appropriate class, taking all the relevant circumstances into account, e.g. the maximum number of pupil in a mainstream class, the needs of the existing pupils, the overall number of pupils that the School can accommodate at the time the application is made, the presence of pupils with special education needs and/or behavioural needs, physical space etc.
- iv. Applications which are incomplete, not signed and/or do not include the required documentation will not be accepted. A place will not be offered and/or the applicant will not be placed on the waiting list.
- v. When the number of applications received outnumbers the available places, any available places arising will be allocated on a "first come first served basis" based on the date the fully completed application was received, subject to the conditions above.

In submitting the application, the applicant and her parents are confirming that they have read, and agree to adhere to, the school's ethos and missions statement, Admissions Policy and Code of Behaviour.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Catherine'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 pupil to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a pupil in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding pupils not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to pupils.

The following are the school's arrangements for pupils, where the parents have requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils:

A written request should be made to the Principal/class teacher. Parents may meet and discuss with the Principal and/or class teacher how this request may be accommodated.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the pupil 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 pupil, 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.