

## **Admission Policy of St. Paul's National School**

**Ratoath, Co. Meath**

**Roll number: 20215J**

**School Patron: Bishop of Meath**

### **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 the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 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. Paul's National School'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 Notice to Enrol form is available on the school's website. The application form for admission will then be sent to parents who have completed the Notice to Enrol form 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. Paul's National School is a Catholic co-educational, primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath.

"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 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. Paul'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.

### **Mission Statement**

Within the atmosphere and ethos of a Catholic school, we in St. Paul's aim to ensure:

- That each child develops, academically, personally and socially to the best of their ability;
- That they develop an enthusiasm for life-long learning and a thirst for knowledge
- That each child acquires an appreciation of their religion and a respect for other religions, other people and the world in which they live.

We will achieve this by:

- Nurturing Christian values
- Encouraging good relationships and caring attitudes
- Promoting positive attitudes so that each child enjoys learning and draws maximum benefit from the experience
- Developing a stimulating and rewarding learning experience where independent learning is promoted and the needs of each individual child are met

- Supporting intellectual, social, physical and emotional development within a safe, secure and well-resourced environment
- Fostering a professional, caring and expert staff

### 3. Admission Statement

St. Paul's National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

- (a) the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the ground that the student, or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, is a member of the Traveller community 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. Paul'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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Paul's National School is a school which has established two 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.

St. Paul's National School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision and operating of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St. Paul's National School will comply with any direction served on the Board or Patron under Section 37A and 67 (4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

#### 4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the special class

St. Paul's National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established 2 classes to provide an education exclusively for students with autism.

##### **Criteria for admission to our ASD classes.**

*St. Paul's National School has updated the admissions criteria for autism classes in line with circular 0039/2025.*

A child will be offered a place in the special class when all of the following requirements have been met, as per circular 0039/2025.

**1) Professional report(s) are supplied** by parents/ guardians outlining:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multidisciplinary report). This diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports.

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same. This must be a recent recommendation (within two years of the proposed admissions date) to attend an autism class attached to a mainstream school.

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.

AND

- Parents must now apply directly to the NCSE by October 1<sup>st</sup>, prior to the September of the proposed starting date with the child's report and recommendation **before** applying to any special class.

AND

- A fully completed school application form for enrolment and all available reports have been submitted to the school by the parents or guardians.

AND

- 2) The school has an available place within the appropriate autism class.

AND

- 3) The place has been sanctioned by the SENO.

Also, in accordance with the following criteria, in order:

- 1) Applicants who are currently enrolled in the school. In the case of applicants who are currently enrolled, the NCSE will be informed of these applicants before the 1<sup>st</sup> of October in the year prior to the proposed admission date to the autism class.
- 2) Brothers and sisters, including foster or step siblings, of children currently in Junior Infants to Fifth class in St. Paul's National School.
- 3) All children who live within the Parish boundary.
- 4) All children who are not resident within the Parish boundary.

### **Waiting List.**

In accordance with the Admissions to School Act 2018, in the event of applications for enrolment exceeding, or being expected to exceed, the number of places available, the Principal will **compile a waiting list for the special classes in accordance with our admissions policy**. The waiting list will be compiled using the above criteria 1-4 as listed above and in that order. The school must use this list to fill any vacancies arising during the school year in question only. If the number of applicants under category (1) outnumbers the places available, children will be prioritised and enrolled in order of age, beginning with the eldest. The same applies to other categories should places then be available.

### Late Applications to enrol in the Special Class.

If the school receives **late applications** for the special class, these applicants will be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These late applicants, even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream classes of the school or are local children and young people, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the special class. This practice is in line with circular 0039/2025.

## **5. Admission of Students**

As a prerequisite for enrolment, only children who have reached the age of four on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> April, prior to the September in which they are starting school, will be considered for enrolment.

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

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

The special class attached to St. Paul's National School provides an education exclusively for students with autism 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.

## **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. Brothers and sisters, including foster or step siblings, of children currently in Junior Infants to Fifth Class in St. Paul's National School
2. All children who live within the Parish boundary
3. All children who are not resident within the Parish boundary.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (and the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

In the event of applications for enrolment exceeding, or being expected to exceed, the number of places available the Principal will allocate places using the above criteria and in that order. If the number of applicants under category (1) outnumbers the places available, children will be prioritised and enrolled in order of age, beginning with the eldest. The same applies to the other categories should places then be available.

Children who are currently enrolled in Junior Infants in another school will not be enrolled to start in Junior Infants in St. Paul's.

## **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 other than in relation to admission to our special classes insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned;

- (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 our selection criteria 6(1) - siblings of a student currently in Junior Infants to Fifth Class in St. Paul's National School.
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Paul's National School 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 admission's 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. Paul'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. Paul'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. Paul'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. Paul'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 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:

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 as per section 6 above, in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

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:

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.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Paul's National School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

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

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) 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, 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 policy was reviewed and ratified on the