

Star of the Sea Primary School Admissions Policy

Section 1- General Information

Introduction

This enrolment policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of:

- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- The Admissions to School Bill 2015
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Education Act 1998
- The Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association Guidelines
- Rules for National Schools

The policy was drawn up in collaboration with school staff, parents and ratified by the Board of Management. This policy was revised in 2016 to take into account the provisions of The Admissions to Schools Bill 2015 and again in 2018 to ensure compliance with the enactment of some of the provisions of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

The Board of Management trusts that by laying out the following procedures parents will be assisted in relation to admission/enrolment matters. Furthermore the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal Teacher (School Phone No. 021- 4842072) will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

Rationale

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to:

- make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the ethos, mission statement of the school and legislative requirements
- make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it and
- put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school

Goals

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures to:

- inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities and procedures
- enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- ensure that these criteria are informed by our ethos, our mission statement and current legislation
- specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

Characteristic Spirit of Our School

Our school is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Buckley. The Catholic faith is informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Our school ethos recognises the uniqueness and importance of all members of the school community and is committed to developing the full potential of each pupil in an atmosphere of care and respect.

School Information

The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Science.

Name of School: Star of the Sea Primary School (Bunscoil Réalt Na Mara)

Phone No: 021 - 4842072

Email: staroftheseapw@eircom.net or office@staroftheseapw.ie

Patron: Bishop John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross

Staff: Principal Teacher, Class Teachers (16) Special Educational Needs Teachers (8) Special Needs Assistants (3.5 posts), Secretary and Caretaker

Opening Time: Classes begin at 8:50 am

Closing Times: Infants finish at 1:30pm

All other classes finish at 2:30pm

Curriculum

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

Funding

Our school depends on grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science. School policy is framed having regard to the resources and funding available to the Board of Management. Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for a diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and cultures

Section 2 - The Procedures

Children seeking to be enrolled in Junior Infants must be 4 years of age on starting school (Rule 64 of Rules for National Schools & DES Primary Circular 24/2002). The Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before March 31st of the year prior to commencing school.

1. Pre Enrolment forms are available on request at any time from the school office.
2. An Open Evening may be held in the school in the first term for parents and prospective parents to come into the school, meet with the school staff and are shown a range of activities/initiatives that the school engages in. Pre-Enrolment forms would be available if this event takes place.
3. At the start of November, prior to commencing school the following September, Enrolment Application forms are sent to families who have returned completed Pre-Enrolment forms for their child for the coming academic year. Alternatively families can request an Enrolment Application Form directly from the office.
4. A notice is placed in the parish newsletter informing the community that the school is accepting applications for Junior Infants for the coming academic year.

5. Parents seeking to enrol their children in Junior Infants are requested to return the completed Enrolment Application form with an original Birth and Baptismal certificate (where relevant) and other documentation as needed within three weeks of receiving the enrolment form. Where applicable, requests in respect of guardianship, custody and access arrangements on behalf of parents should be supported by a copy of the relevant Court Order/solicitor's letter. Where an application is made for the enrolment of a child and where his parents/guardians are aware that he/she has a disability or other special educational need the parents/guardians are requested to identify that disability or special educational need at the time of application and furnish the school with all relevant supporting documents.
6. Applications will only be considered and treated as complete upon receipt of all fully completed application forms and supporting documents. Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.
7. Completed application forms do not necessarily mean automatic acceptance.
8. Letters of offer are sent to parents within 14 days of the closing date for receipt of completed applications. Parents secure a place for their child/children when the completed Acceptance Form (Appendix 3) is received by the school.
9. Should parents choose to defer the offer of a place in the Junior Infant class their child will automatically secure a place for the following academic year. Parents will be requested to fill out a new Enrolment Application Form to ensure information is updated and relevant.
10. Information evenings for parents of new entrants are organised pre and post registration. Induction activities are held for the children in May or June prior to starting school in September.

Section 3 - Enrolment Criteria

If the number of children on the List of Applications to Enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritising criteria are used:

Priority	Criterion
1	Brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
2	Children of parents who are past pupils of the school and are resident in the parish. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
3	Children living within the parish catchment area. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
4	Children of the current teaching staff. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
5	<p>If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the waiting list, which consists of all other children wishing to attend Star of the Sea Primary School. This list is compiled and ordered according to age.</p> <p>The criteria are listed in order of priority, when spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated.</p>

Policy Considerations

Equality of access is the key value that determines the admission/enrolment of children to our school. Star of the Sea School does not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on the following grounds: gender, civil status, family status, religion, sexual orientation, disability, race, Traveller community ground or special educational needs of the student or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned, (Section 3 of Equal Status Act 2000), (Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018)

Section 4 - Decision Making Process

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of our school. As a general principle and in so far as practicable, having regard to the school's enrolment policy, children will be enrolled on application provided that there is space available. The Board of Management will notify parents in writing of its decision within 21 days of receiving a completed enrolment application form together with all supporting or requested documentation.

The Board of Management of Star of the Sea School strives to enrol each pupil seeking admission. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interests of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom.

(a) Where the number of pupils seeking admission is greater than the number of places being made available by the school the following considerations will apply:

- physical space and guidelines from the DES in relation to class size
- staffing provision
- multi grade classes
- DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 26 children)

- presence of children with special educational and/or behavioural needs

(b) Where parents fail to accept the Code of Behaviour of the school (accessible on school website : www.staroftheseapw.ie)

(c) The BOM reserves the right to refuse enrolment to a pupil in exceptional circumstances/cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

(d) The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and /or provide the pupil with an appropriate education and /or in meeting such needs it would have a detrimental impact on the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated (EPSEN Act 2004, Section 2)

and/or

(ii) In the opinion of the BOM, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

Section 5 - Children with Special Educational Needs

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board will request a copy of the child's medical and/or reports from external professional agencies eg psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists etc. Where such reports are not available, the Board of Management will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report(s) the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report(s). Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment request the Department of Education and Science to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or

the provision of any or a combination of the following; visiting teacher, resource teacher, special needs assistant, specialised equipment, furniture, transport services or other.

In some cases the school will meet with the parents of the child and with the SENO to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held which may include parents, principal, class teacher, learning support/resource teacher Special Educational Needs Organiser or psychologist, as appropriate.

In accepting a place for their child with Special Educational Needs parents agree to support the programmes offered by the school.

Section 6 - Procedures for Admission of Students after the Commencement of the School Year and to Classes other than the School's Intake Group

The Board of Management will not enrol a Junior Infant pupil after 30th September unless the child has attended a Junior Infant class in another school.

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to school policy, available space and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education & Science. Applications will only be considered and treated as complete upon receipt of all fully completed application forms and supporting/requested documents. Pupils transferring to the school will, along with their parents, be invited to meet with the Principal. Completed application forms do not necessarily mean automatic acceptance.

The Educational Welfare Act, 2000 requires that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools. This will be done once the child has been registered and is attending Star of the Sea school. In doing so the Board of Management complies with Data Protection legislation.

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children from another jurisdiction, with the exception of those enrolling in Junior Infants, it is the intention of the Board of Management to seek a detailed account of the child's previous schooling (including pre-school.) This may be done through official documents and interviews and should include, where

possible, class reports from the previous school including attendance. This information should be provided by parents prior to the child starting school.

Arrangements for Pupils Who do Not Wish to Attend Religious Instruction

Bearing in mind the Catholic ethos of the school, every effort will be made so that the school is as inclusive as possible. While Catholic education and the ethos of the school permeates the day, children of other faiths or none, where a request is made in writing, will be excused from attendance at formal religious instruction classes. However, due to supervision constraints, such pupils must remain in the classroom. Children of other faiths or none will not be expected to attend specific Catholic liturgies. As far as possible, in consultation with parents suitable alternative arrangements will be made in order to facilitate this. It will not be possible however to provide religious instruction in other faiths.

Section 7 - Appeals Procedure

The Board of Management informs parents in writing of a refusal to enrol their child in the school. In doing so, the Board of Management will advise parents of their right to appeal in line with Section 28 of the Education Act 1998.

This appeal must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. The Board of Management or person acting on behalf of the Board will inform the parents within a reasonable timeframe of the decision of the Board in respect of the appeal. If unhappy with the decision, parents may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within a reasonable time from the date that the parent was informed of the decision of the Board of Management.

Section 8 - Implementation, Review and Communication

This policy was reviewed in October 2018 and ratified by the Board of Management on _____ . It is accessible to view on the

school website and a hard copy is available on request from the school office.

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend it, as required, with particular emphasis on:

- effective management of the application process
- clarity and transparency relating to the process
- parental feedback

This policy will be reviewed by teaching staff and the Board of Management every five years or sooner, if prompted by legislative changes.

Signature: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____