Admission Policy of

St. Finian's National School

Newcastle, Co. Dublin.

D22A388.

Roll No 16461C

School Patron: Archbishop of Dublin

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 28th November 2024. 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. Finian's NS 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. Finian's NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"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) (b) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
(c) (c) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
(d) (d) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and (3) 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. Finian's NS 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

St. Finian's is a Catholic primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

While St. Finian's is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions and cultures.

St. Finian's will strive to promote both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of staff through development programmes so that the needs of pupils can be identified and addressed.

St. Finian's encourages the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through the Parents' Association.

St. Finian's strives to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, and will through its efforts model respect and courtesy.

St. Finian's promotes equality of opportunity as far as is practicable.

St Finian's student council have developed a set of values for students of the school to aspire to:

Be brave

Do your best

Be Kind

#bravebestkind

3. Admission Statement

St. Finian's NS 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 Finian's NS 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.

St. Finian's NS is a school which has established a class, 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. Finian's NS 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. Finian's NS 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/special class

St. Finian's NS, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established 2 classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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.

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

The special class attached to St. Finian's NS provides an education exclusively for students with an ASD diagnosis 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 (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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 for mainstream classes:

· Priority 1 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school and children resident in the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 2 – Children of staff (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 3 – Children residing outside the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)

·Priority 4- Late application (priority to the eldest)

Priority 4 is only applicable to junior infants

Selection criteria for ASD classes*
· Priority 1 – Children currently enrolled in the mainstream classes (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 2 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 3 – Children resident in the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 4– Children residing outside of the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)

*School must be furnished with professional reports including a diagnosis of ASD and a recommendation for special class setting for applications to special classes as per NCSE requirements.

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:
Each priority area will be ordered by age, where the eldest child is offered a place first (priority to eldest)
Applications by Siblings or Two or more pupils into the same class with same date of birth

Where an application for enrolment is made into the same class on behalf of multiple siblings with the same date of birth, the parents/guardians will be asked to indicate the order in which the applicants were born, (if this is not obvious from the Birth Certificate) which will indicate the order the applicants appear within each priority with priority to the oldest. The time of birth as recorded on the child's Birth Certificate will be used to verify the priority order.

Where an application for enrolment is made on behalf of two pupils with the same recorded date of birth and time, or where the same date of birth is shared but the time of birth is not verified on the official birth certificate for one or more of the relevant pupils, lots will be drawn to establish order on the waiting list, when a vacancy arises.

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.

(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) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs (ASD) 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 Priority 1 criteria based on siblings of a student attending)

(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. Finian's NS will be based on the following:
- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Finian's NS, 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. Finian's NS 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. Finian's NS 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. Finian's NS 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 on the late application waiting list (priority 4) and selection criteria applied.

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 (Junior Infants – 6th Class)

The Term 'Transfer Application' refers to applications for enrolment into a specific class made on behalf of a pupil currently enrolled and registered in a class in another primary school. Effectively, the pupil is applying to transfer from one school to our school.

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:

1. Parent/Guardians must complete an 'Application to Enrol Form' and submit this to the school with the requested documentation.

2. The fully completed Application may be submitted personally or via post/email.

3. Upon receipt of the application, parents/guardians will receive a 'Confirmation of Receipt of Enrolment Application Slip' to acknowledge that we have received the application.

    - It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school of any change to their contact details and that of any other details contained in the 'Application to Enrol Form'.

    - It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure the documentation requested for submission with the 'Application to Enrol Form' is supplied with the application.

Applications must be fully completed and accompanied by a copy of;

- Birth Certificate/Adoption Certificate,
- Proof of Address in at least one of the parent's/guardian's name must be provided from one of the following sources; Electricity Bill, Gas Bill, Correspondence from a Government Department or Office of the Revenue Commissioners; a solicitor's letter stating that the parents have entered into a binding contract to purchase/rent a house in Newcastle.

- Applicants may also be asked to provide official postcode identification in their name.
- Applicants are reminded that the burden of proof rests with the applicant to satisfy the Board of Management that they are primarily resident at the address stated on the application. The Board of Management reserves the right to verify to its satisfaction, any information submitted. False or misleading relevant information on an application form will deem the application invalid. The Board of Management may also request additional documentation to verify any matter pertaining to the application.

- Failure to supply authentic and genuine items of documentation requested for submission will deem the application invalid and the application will be refused.

The Application will be categorised by Priority and in the event that applications for enrolment exceeds or is expected to exceed the number of places available, the Board of Management will, when a vacancy arises, apply the prioritised criteria as outlined.

Summary of 'Transfer Applicants' Prioritisation Criteria (please consult Section 6 of the 'Enrolment/Admission Policy' for full details of Priority Groupings)

· Priority 1 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school and children resident in the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)
· Priority 2 – Children of staff (priority to the eldest)

· Priority 3 – Children residing outside the Parish of Newcastle (priority to the eldest)
·Priority 4- Late application (priority to the eldest)

Priority 4 is only applicable to junior infants

A 'Transfer Application' To Enrol into Senior Infants – 6th Class will normally be processed at the earliest opportunity but will receive a response within 21 days. Applications made during school holidays will not be processed until the school re-opens.

Where the number of applicants exceeds the places available in the school in each of the priority areas, applicants will be prioritised by age with the eldest child offered a place first.

Secondment: When a pupil is on secondment to a school for children with Specific Learning Disabilities on a whole time, temporary basis, their place will be retained in St. Finian's National School in expectation of their return to mainstream school.

Class capacity is a maximum of 28 students.

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

The Board of St. Finian's NS 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 parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has 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.

19. 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.

Signed:

Kevin McDonnell
Chairperson BOM
November 2024

Jonathan Loftus
Principal
November 2024