

## St. Mary's Primary School Draft Admission Policy

### Admission Policy of St. Mary's N.S,

School Address: Gracepark Road, Athlone

Roll number: 20073P

School Patron/s: Bishop Francis Duffy

### 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 in **June 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. Mary's N.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.

St. Mary's depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and it operates, within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department.

School policies have regard to the funding and resources made available to the school and must consider at all times the health and safety of all pupils. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the DES which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school.

### 2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Mary's N.S is an inclusive Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Ardagh & Clonmacnois.

"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. Mary's N.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.

St. Mary's N.S is a Catholic Primary School concerned with the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual development of a child, in a warm, caring environment, in partnership with parents, parish and community.

*"There is a variety of gifts but always the same spirit; ..... working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same Lord working in all of them. (Corinthians 12:1-4)*

### 3. Admission Statement

St. Mary's N.S 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.

#### **All denominational schools**

St. Mary's N.S 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.

#### 4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

#### **All denominational schools**

St. Mary's N.S is a catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### 5. 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:

Decisions in relation to applications are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children and are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy. St. Mary's Primary School is bound by the rules for National Schools which states that a child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a National School before the fourth anniversary of his birth. (Rule 64.1). St. Mary's Primary School will have an average of 26 children per class, in line with the DES allocation of teachers to primary schools. There will be two classes at 7 levels (in 2020/2021); Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th & 6th and 3 streams of 4<sup>th</sup> class (17 mainstream classes). The school will be deemed full when it has 467 pupils ( $17 \times 26 + 25 = 467$ ). Every effort will be made by the BoM to keep class sizes close to 26. However there will be times when classes will be greater or less than 26 but in the school as a whole, no more than 467 pupils will be enrolled.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy.

Criteria used in decision making by the BOM in relation to enrolment are, in order:

Health, welfare and needs of all pupils currently enrolled.

Physical space in relation to class size, staffing provision and accommodation in line with DES class size average directives.

Children resident within the boundary of the Parish of St. Mary's in Athlone, within the limits stated above.

Children of current school staff.

Siblings of children already enrolled in the school, resident outside the boundary of St. Mary's Parish, Athlone within the limits stated above.

All other applicants.

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

In the event of two or more students tied for a place a lottery will be held to decide.

## 6. 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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí
- (b) other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
  - (I) an early intervention class, or
  - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (c) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (d) 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 concerned and/or
- (e) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (f) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (g) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;  
(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (h) 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).

## 7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary's N.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.

### **Application Procedures**

Closing date for applications is March 30th in the year of enrolment. An Enrolment week for parents considering enrolling their children in the school takes place in January/ February. The school community is informed of the dates, time and venue of the Open Day/Enrolment through the:

- Parish Newsletter
- School website
- Text to parents
- Informing pupils already in the school
- Notice displayed in and outside the school.

Parents fill in an application form, along with consent forms for transfer of information from pre-school to primary school, school trips etc.

Parents are also requested to present a Birth Certificate. Filling in an application form does not guarantee a place in the school. While parents are encouraged to fill in an application form on or before the 30th March, parents will be allowed to enrol their children at a later date pending acceptance by the BOM.

NOTE: No application will be considered complete until such time as all requested information has been received i.e. eircodes, PPS numbers, all assessment reports, medical reports etc. Custody/access arrangements; court/barring orders should be supported by a letter from a solicitor.

## 8. 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).

### **Applicants for Junior Infants**

If the number of applicants for Junior Infants received by the March 30th closing date exceeds the number of places available, a 'cut-off birthdate' will apply. Places in Junior Infants will be given to children based on their dates of birth (as on their Birth Certificates), the oldest children receiving places first. Intake numbers in Junior Infants will depend on whole school enrolment and subsequently may fluctuate from year to year, keeping within the limits and criteria stated above. In accordance with the Educational Welfare Act 2000, the BOM will notify parents of their decision within twenty-one days of the closing date for applications. For applications received after the closing date, parents will be notified of the decision of the BoM within 21 days of receipt of the application. If the BOM using the limits and criteria stated above decides not to enrol a child, parents will be informed of their right to appeal this decision under Section 29 of the Education Act

**\*Applications received after the closing date will only be considered when all applicants seeking a place before the closing date have been offered a place.**

Admission Day Junior Infant pupils are expected to attend school from the 1st day of the new school year. Admission to the Junior Infant class takes place once a year (August/September), except when a child is transferring from another school or has just arrived into the country.

**9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant** –In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary's N.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.

### **10. 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. Mary's N.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 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.

## **11. 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).

## **Pupils transferring from another school**

In keeping with the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent may transfer his/her child from one National School to another, at any time of the year, either with the consent of the Minister for Education and Skills or when the transfer is made because of a change in the ordinary residence of the child. This is also subject to school policy and available space. When the application for enrolment is made the Principal shall ascertain from the parent whether the pupil was previously enrolled in another National School. In order to assess the needs of the child and in accordance with Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, Section 66, the principal will seek all reports relating to that child from the principal of the school where the child previously attended.

## **12. 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. Mary's N.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. Mary's N.S 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.

## **13. 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.

#### **14. 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:

St. Mary's Primary School will have an average of 26 children per class, in line with the DES allocation of teachers to primary schools. Applications received will be as per admission process stated above.

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:

St. Mary's Primary School will have an average of 26 children per class, in line with the DES allocation of teachers to primary schools. Applications received will be as per admission process stated above and pending admission by the BoM

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Mary's N.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 student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

#### **16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

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

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.

## 17. Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the Board of Management**

The parent of the student, 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, 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.

### **Appeals Procedure:**

In line with Section 28 of the Education Act 1998, parents who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be addressed, in writing to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the education Act on the official form provided by the Department. An appeal form will be issued by the school to the parents/guardians. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol. (See Section 29 Appeals form Appendix 1.)

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management and updated if necessary. St. Mary's N.S will consult with an inform parents where changes are being made to the admissions policy. The school will publish an Annual Admissions Notice detailing key information regarding admission processes for the year concerned.

Date this policy was reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chairperson of St. Mary's N.S B.O.M: \_\_\_\_\_



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS  
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
AND SCIENCE

APPEALS  
APPLICATION  
FORM

*This form should be used for the making of an appeal to the*

*Secretary General  
of the  
Department of Education & Science*

*(as provided for under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998)*

**IN GENERAL APPEALS MUST BE MADE WITHIN 42  
DAYS OF RECEIPT OF THE BOARD OF  
MANAGEMENT'S DECISION**

APPEAL APPLICATION

An appeal can only be taken by a **Parent**, or a student who has reached the age of 18 years.

(PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK PRINT)

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**   

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**HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER:**

**DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER:**   
**(IF DIFFERENT TO ABOVE)**

**MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER:**

**NAME OF STUDENT (If under 18 years of age):**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**  **YEAR/CLASS OF STUDENT:**

**NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE APPEAL IS MADE:**  
  

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**HAS YOUR CHILD ANY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS REQUIREMENT?**   
**IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:**


**NATURE OF DECISION:** (Please tick one category only)

Refusal to enrol	
Suspension *	
Permanent exclusion/ Expulsion	

\* Please note that an appeal may only be made in respect of a suspension which results in 20 days or more of suspension for that student in any one school year

**DATE WHEN YOU WERE NOTIFIED OF THE DECISION BY THE SCHOOL:**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>YEAR</b>								
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**DETAILS OF PROCEEDINGS AT LOCAL LEVEL:**

*Please give details below of any appeal or review proceedings that have taken place at local level in this case, either to the Board of Management, the school patron or, in the case of a VEC school, the VEC.*

Please state the outcome of these proceedings.


*(Extra pages may be added)*

**GROUNDS ON WHICH THE DECISION IS BEING APPEALED:**

*Please state clearly the grounds on which the decision is being appealed.*


*(Extra pages may be added)*

**PLEASE ENCLOSE COPY OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION, IF AVAILABLE.**

**IF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION IS NOT AVAILABLE, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY NOT.**


I certify that the information given above is true. I understand and authorise that all documentation considered relevant accessed as part of this appeal process, and that contact may be made for this purpose with relevant bodies such as the National Educational Psychological Service. In making this application I consent to the disclosure of information in relation to this application by the Appeals Administration Unit to the National Educational Welfare Board and/or the National Council for Special

Education. I understand that all documentation provided by me in relation to this appeal, including this application form will be released to the school in question prior to an appeals hearing taking place and may be made available to the National Educational Welfare Board and/or the National Council for Special Education.

<b>PLEASE ENCLOSE COPIES OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THIS MATTER</b>
<b>YOU MAY ALSO ENCLOSE ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF YOUR CASE.</b>

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>Please return completed application form to:</u></b>
Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit
<b>c/o Department of Education and Science</b>
<i>Cornamaddy, Athlone</i>
<b>Co. Westmeath</b>
<b>Tel: (0906) 483600</b>

<b>PLEASE NOTE THAT WHEN SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION FORM YOU SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IN QUESTION OF THE APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION &amp; SCIENCE, AND THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT IS MADE. A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS FORM MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL.</b>
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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

DATE OF RECEIPT:

FILE REF: