

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

School Address: Kilrusheighter, Templeboy, Co. Sligo

Roll number: 18580U

School Patron/s: Bishop Fleming, Killala Diocese.

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. It 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 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 will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Mary's N.S is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Killala

"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.

Mission Statement

St. Mary's N.S. is a Roman Catholic school which aims to promote the harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil - intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people.

The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

St. Mary's N.S. provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

As a Catholic school St. Mary's N.S. primarily addresses the needs of Catholic families, but is open to welcoming pupils of other religious traditions. The school is concerned to promote the faith formation of all pupils and seeks to work with the families of pupils of other religious traditions to provide for the faith development needs of such pupils in appropriate ways.

St. Mary's N.S. SCHOOL VISION/OBJECTIVES

The education of pupils at St. Mary's N.S. is based on a "living faith together" tradition which is founded on Christian, Catholic, religious and human values.

The school is inclusive and respectful of all and confidently engages with people of all beliefs.

Our educational vision promotes dignity, self-esteem and full development of each pupil as a human person. The focus is on developing each child to their full potential, encouraging them to develop their individual talents and abilities.

St. Mary's N.S. is dedicated to passing on the Catholic faith through daily prayer, preparation for Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and through following the "Grow in Love programme".

This school aims to provide a pleasant and positive atmosphere for children to learn and develop in a safe and secure environment.

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 religious 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 Mary's NS, will co-operate 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 of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St Mary's NS, will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

Additional information must be included (as applicable) in this section, in the case of single gender schools, post-primary denominational schools, denominational primary schools of a minority religion, all denominational schools, special schools and schools with special classes as set out below.

Schools must retain any of the following statements that apply to them and delete those that do not:

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion

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 in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

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

The school promotes inclusion of all children, particularly those with a disability or other special educational needs.

In the case of a child with a disability or other special educational need, a copy of the child's medical report and/or psychological report will be required by the board. This is in order that the Board can request that the Department of Education and Science provide the resources required to meet needs as outlined in the medical or psychological report(s).

It may be necessary to defer enrolment until the Department of Education and Science have met the needs specified in the child's medical and/ or psychological reports.

It is vital that adequate notice be given to the Board of Management prior to enrolment of any pupil requiring skills of ancillary teacher(s), staff, or any special facilities in the school.

The Board needs adequate notice in order to put in place these necessary structures (in consultation with the Department of Education and Science) prior to the pupil commencing his/her attendance at the school.

Note for schools: The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.

5. Admission of Students

1. All parents/Guardians must meet the principal prior to their child starting in the school.
2. Children may not start school until their fourth birthday, and will only be accepted into the infant class in September at the start of the school year, unless there is a change address.
3. In keeping with Department of Education and Science regulations, and in order to avoid class disruption, new pupils will only be accepted on the first day of each quarter ie 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, 1st October.
4. Pupils who are newly resident in the area may be enrolled at any time.
5. If the pupil is moving from another school in this state, a letter is required from the principal of the school from which the pupil is leaving, stating last class in which the pupil had been placed
6. Parents seeking to enrol their child (ren) in St. Mary's N.S are requested to return a completed enrolment Application Form to the school by the date specified in the Admissions Notice.
7. Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational

needs, disability, asylum- seeker/refugee statue, religious/ political beliefs & values, family or social.

8. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Mary's N.S. is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principle of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the BOM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind.
 - a) Size of/ available space in classrooms
 - b) Educational needs of children of a particular age
 - c) Multi – grade classes
 - d) Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs
 - e) DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average 50 children)

The 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

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:

- a) Brothers and sisters (including step – siblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled priority to oldest
- b) Children living within the parish (in the case of parish schools) priority to oldest
- c) Children whose home address is closest to the school (as measured by a straight line on an OS map) if the child is normally resident outside the parish/agreed catchment area.

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:

1. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of criterion A, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
2. If the class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion B, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest until all places are allocated.
3. If the class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion C, then the furthest from the school under either will be eliminated first.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) 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) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (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 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 or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

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

- (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 31st January 2025 only).

8. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

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:

- A. Brothers and sisters (including step-siblings resident at same address) of children already enrolled – priority to oldest
- B. Children living within the parish – priority to the oldest
- C. Children whose home address is closest to the school (as measured by a straight line on an OS map) if the child is normally resident outside the parish / catchment area

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. The DES requirements for the transfer of a pupil from one primary school to another are fully complied with.
2. A recent school report and recent assessments where relevant are provided
3. The school is satisfied with the reasons for transfer. Information will be requested from the student's current/former school in this regard.
4. There being a vacancy in the class/standard in which the student would be most appropriately placed.
5. Information/documentation on any special educational or behavioural; needs be provided by the child's parents/guardians at the time of application for a place in the school
6. The school is satisfied that the move is in the best interest of the student and the other students in the class.

16. 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.

17. 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 parent(s) 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, or in the case of a 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, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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.