

# **Admission Policy of School of the Holy Spirit**

**Callan Road, Kilkenny, County Kilkenny, R95 DV56**

**Roll number:19523N**

**School Patron: Most Rev. Dermot Farrell, Bishop of Ossory**

## **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 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for School of the Holy Spirit 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

School of the Holy Spirit is a Catholic co-educational vertical Primary Special School with a Secondary top. It has a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory.

'Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all'. *'The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15'*

'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 the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,
- d) 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 School of the Holy Spirit 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.

The staff of School of the Holy Spirit, with the support and assistance of the Board of Management, Parents and the community, strive to create for each child, a safe environment, conducive to the love of learning, respect for and tolerance of others, while recognising the uniqueness of each individual and his or her desire to grow to their full potential in all aspects of their educational, social and spiritual development

The school supports the principles of :

- a) Inclusiveness with reference to children with additional education needs
- b) Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- c) Respect for diversity of values- languages, traditions, way of life in society and religious beliefs

### **3. Admission Statement**

School of the Holy Spirit 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.

School of the Holy Spirit 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.

School of the Holy Spirit 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 of the Roman Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School of the Holy Spirit is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

School of the Holy Spirit, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students aged between 4 years old and 18 years old with:

- The Primary level ( children aged from 4 years and upwards on 1<sup>st</sup> September of year of entry to the school) caters for the educational needs of students with a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's syndrome, or Emotional Behavioural Difficulties
- Second level provision (students aged 12 years and upwards on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year of transition up to 18 years old) is specifically for students with a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's syndrome
- The entire school caters for students with an assessed Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of Low Average or above (Full Scale IQ 80+), which must be confirmed by a current (within two years) and conclusive professional's report/ psychoeducational assessment
- As well as meeting the above criteria, a professional recommendation for a placement in a Special School is required.

#### 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
- c) The student is within the category designated to the school by The Minister of Education and Skills

#### All Denominational Schools

School of the Holy Spirit is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Roman Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### Special School

School of the Holy Spirit provides an education exclusively for students with diagnosed special educational needs as outlined in Section 4 above, and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

It is school policy to phase in new students. Children are usually phased in over a four week period. If it is in the child's best interest, in consultation with parents and other involved professionals, this period may be extended for an agreed set time.

Parents/guardians of children who have specific educational needs differing from the category which is catered for at the School of the Holy Spirit will be advised of perhaps more appropriate educational settings in the area and referred to the SENO.

## 6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

- Whether there are siblings of the proposed new entrant already in the school
- Students from the Kilkenny/Carlow area

- Children from Autism Specific preschools, Enable Ireland or The Early Years project

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:

By the later date of birth of the student

## 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, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
  - an autism specific early intervention class, or
  - Early intervention class such as from an autism specific preschool
- (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 special school insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents/guardians;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents/guardians, 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 siblings of a student currently attending the school who is within the criteria for admission;

(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

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

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

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to School of the Holy Spirit 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
- As well as meeting the above criteria, a professional recommendation by a psychologist for a placement in a Special School is required.

(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 School of the Holy Spirit, 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.

The Board of Management having received the completed application form and necessary reports will make a decision in accordance with this Policy and The Educational Welfare Act 2000 and will notify The Parents/Guardians of their decision within 21 days.

## **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 School of the Holy Spirit 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 other another Board of Management with a list of 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 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 the 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 School of the Holy Spirit 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 School of the Holy Spirit 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 Admissions 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.

All applications will be considered in relation to a vacancy available in a specific class, specific age range and the category of that class.

#### **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 a 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 above.

#### **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:

- The Board of Management specifies that pupils may transfer into the school at any time, subject to school policy and the availability of space. Children may also transfer out of the school and the school will co-operate fully in this process.
- Categories for consideration for enrolment remain as laid out in Section 4 above.
- All applications will be considered in relation to a vacancy available in a specific section of the school, specific class and specific age range.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of School of the Holy Spirit 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.

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

## 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)guardian(s) or the student to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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, 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.

## Appendix 1

The Board of Management of School of the Holy Spirit sets out the following procedure to be followed at the time of application:

1. Parents/Guardians seeking to enrol their children in School of the Holy Spirit are requested to return a completed Enrolment Application Form available from the office at the School, with an original birth certificate / adoption certificate and other key information/reports as requested in the application form.
2. At the time of application The Board of Management requests a copy of the Child's Psychological Assessment Report(s) and Medical report if applicable. These may include Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language and Physiotherapy Reports. The Psychological/Psychoeducational Report must recommend placement in a Special School. The purpose of the Psychological Assessment Report is to assist the School in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special and additional needs, and to assist the school in profiling the support services required. The application will not be considered as being complete until such time as the requested information has been received.
3. All applications will be considered in the first instance by the Principal, in accordance with the Admission Policy
4. The Principal will make a decision in respect of the application in accordance with the Admissions Policy, and all decisions on application for admission will be communicated in accordance with Section 9 above.
5. Acceptance of an offer should be made in accordance with Section 10 above.
6. Successful applicants will be offered a date and a time to visit the school and discuss the placement with the Principal and Class Teacher. If further specific resources are required, the relevant application will be discussed and then submitted to the NCSE
7. Where the Board of Management deem that additional and further resources are required it will request the Department of Education & Skills/ Health Service Executive to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the Psychological and/ or Medical reports. For children with complex needs a professionals meeting may be called at this stage.

8. If an application to enrol is unsuccessful, notification will be in accordance with Section 9 above.

It is school policy to phase in new students. Children are usually phased in over a four week period. If this period is extended it will be fully discussed and agreed with the parents/guardians and other relevant professionals.

The Board of Management of School of the Holy Spirit will have regard to relevant Department of Education and Skills and National Council for Special Education guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provision and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of students.

**Implementation/Ratification and Review:**

This policy was re-ratified by the Board of Management on

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2021.



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

**Chairman Board of Management**

Signed: Karen A. Lawther

**Principal**

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020