



# **Abbeyleix South National School**

*Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas*

## **Admission Policy Of Abbeyleix South National School Ballacolla Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois Roll Number: 14260F School Patron: Bishop Adrian Wilkinson**

### **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 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2022. 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 Abbeyleix South National School 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**

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland Parish School under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. Religion in our school is cross curricular.

The staff of Abbeyleix South National School strive to create an atmosphere in school where all students are equally valued and respected - irrespective of gender, social background, race, family circumstance or intellectual functioning. The staff also wishes to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour, discipline and achievement in the school. This involves a strong sense of community and co-operation between staff, students and parents.

Students will experience a sense of caring and belonging. Their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged, as is their intellectual, social and academic development. All efforts will be made by staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour and achievement, and will place a greater emphasis on rewards rather than on sanction. Each student will be encouraged to reach his/her potential.

Students are encouraged to be courteous to staff, to visitors and to each other and to be concerned for the safety and well-being of all in school. Students must be made aware that every child has the right to be educated in a classroom which is free from disruption and to behave accordingly.

Boys and girls are treated equally and are afforded the same opportunities, and are expected to partake in all areas of the school curriculum.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Abbeyleix South National School 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.

**Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion**

Abbeyleix South National School 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.

**All denominational schools**

Abbeyleix South National School 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 Church of Ireland and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Not Applicable

**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

## **6. Oversubscription**

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland School. In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, and are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d), as follows:

- a) Priority Category 1: An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction education which is provided in the school and who lives within the boundary of Abbeyleix and Killermogh Union of Parishes and of that portion of Rathdowney Union of Parishes formerly served by Rathdowney National School that includes the town of Rathdowney and the area between the town and Abbeyleix and Killermogh Union.
- b) Priority Category 2: Not applicable
- c) Priority Category 3: Not applicable
- d) Priority Category 4: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy

In respect of Priority category 1 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the school must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and it provides a programme of religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) A statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

**and**

- (ii) Evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:-
  - A letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
  - The signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion.

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the category (and only in that priority category) to an Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School (“Sibling Applicant Students”). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn. Names are drawn in order of category by an independent person who has no direct connection with the school. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student’s place on the waiting list as it applies in their particular category.

## **7. What will not be considered or taken into account**

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, 2018 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 naíonraí, 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;
- (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 siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.)
- (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 Abbeyleix South National School 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 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#) 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 Board of Management, 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 Abbeyleix South National School, 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 are 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 Abbeyleix South National School 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.

## **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 Abbeyleix South National School 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 Abbeyleix South National School 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.

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.

#### **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:

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland School. In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, and are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d), as follows:

- a) Priority Category 1: An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction education which is provided in the school and who lives within the boundary of Abbeyleix and Killermogh Union of Parishes and of that portion of Rathdowney Union of Parishes formerly served by Rathdowney National School that includes the town of Rathdowney and the area between the town and Abbeyleix and Killermogh Union.
- b) Priority Category 2: Not applicable
- c) Priority Category 3: Not applicable
- d) Priority Category 4: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy

In respect of Priority category 1 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the school must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and it provides a programme of religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (iii) A statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.



**and**

(iv) Evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:-

- A letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
- The signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion.

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the category (and only in that priority category) to an Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School (“Sibling Applicant Students”). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn. Names are drawn in order of category by an independent person who has no direct connection with the school. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student’s place on the waiting list as it applies in their particular category.

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:

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland School. In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, and are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d), as follows:

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- (v) A statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

**and**

- (vi) Evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:-

- A letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
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It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the category (and only in that priority category) to an Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School ("Sibling Applicant Students"). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn. Names are drawn in order of category by an independent person who has no direct connection with the school. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in their particular category.

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the priority

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Abbeyleix South National School 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 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: Students will be provided with alternative work during Religious Education classes and will remain in his / her classroom.

## **18. Reviews/appeals**

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

The parent of the student may request the Board of Management 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 of Management 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 7 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 7 of the Act where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 7 of the Act 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.

**Ratified by Board of Management on:** 29 / 9 / 23

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

**Chairperson, Board of Management.**