**Admission Policy of St. Mary’s P.S.**

**School Address: Enfield, Co. Meath**

**Roll number: 17821L**

**School Patron: Bishop Tom Deenihan**

## **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 01/08/2020. 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 the St. Mary’s P.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.

## **Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

St. Mary’s P.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath (‘the Patron’) which serves the parish of Enfield and Rathmolyon. “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:

1. the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
2. a living relationship with God and with other people; and
3. a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
4. 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 P.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.

The mission statement of our school is as follows: Success for all, learning and growing together. We believe in the holistic development of each child and our objective is that each child be allowed an opportunity to develop, reach their potential and progress as an independent learner. St. Mary’s P.S. currently has 31 teachers and ancillary staff.

## **Admission Statement**

While recognising the right of parents/guardians (‘**Parents**’) to enrol their child in a school of their choice, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine maximum school and class size, in order to ensure the safety of all pupils and to provide for the educational needs of existing pupils. This policy sets out the criteria used to determine admission into Junior Infants; admission into other classes and admission into special classes. It sets out the priority order, which will apply, where the number of applications for admission exceeds the number of available places. In doing so, the Board of Management has regard to available resources, directions from the Patron; Circulars from the Department of Education & Skills (‘**DES**’); Pupil Teacher Ratio (‘**PTR**’), school and class sizesetc.

The following is a list of factors taken into consideration by the Board of Management in devising its admission policy:

* Overall school capacity: The school has accommodation for 24 mainstream classrooms and our Board of Management will also consider availability of space in classrooms, play areas and overall site size.
* Health and Safety requirements, including school site, space and traffic restrictions.
* Availability of grants and resources: The school depends on grants and resources from the DES and operates in accordance with regulations and circular letters issued from time to time by the DES.
* Educational needs of existing pupils.
* The presence and/or integration of pupils with special educational and/or behavioural needs.

The arrangement of pupils into classes on an annual basis and the numbers in each class setting for teaching and learning purposes, remains the prerogative of the Principal, subject to Board of Management.

St. Mary’s P.S. will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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 P.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.

**Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004**

*St. Mary’s P.S. will cooperate 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 P.S. will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A*

*and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.*

**Schools with special education class(es)**

St. Mary’s P.S is a school which has established special classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

## **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

St. Mary’s P.S with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established classes to provide an education exclusively for students for students on the autistic spectrum, within the mild range of learning disability and the school may refuse to admit to these classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

**Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Pupils with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the DES and/or National Council for Special Education (‘**NCSE’**). In the event that the applicant has special educational needs, a copy of the student’s medical/psychological reports and/or a professional assessment of the pupil’s needs must be submitted, so that provision can be made for that pupil’s welfare and educational progress.

## **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#_Oversubscription_(this_section) below for further details
2. 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/her and that s/he shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student
3. St. Mary’s P.S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of that denomination, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
4. The special classes attached to St. Mary’s P.S. provide an education exclusively for students with a primary diagnosis of a qualifying autism spectrum disorder and the school may refuse admission to these classes where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs.

## **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 selection criteria in the order listed to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the Annual Admission Notice.

**Admission of Students to Junior Infants**

The following conditions must be met for admission into Junior Infants:

* A child must have reached his/her fourth birthday on or before the 1st May preceding the September in respect of which the application for enrolment into Junior Infants is made.
* A fully completed enrolment application form, duly signed and dated, must be returned during the enrolment period and in any case not later than the closing date as specified in the Annual Admission Notice.
* The official application form must be used. This is available for download at www.enfieldps.ie and/or in hard copy on request, from the school.
* A separate form must be used in respect of each child’s application.
* The following documentation must accompany a fully completed, signed & dated application form, in order for the application to be considered a “**complete application**”:

Copy of the applicant’s birth certificate

Proof of address, in the form of a utility bill in the name of one of the Parents, which must be dated no later than three months prior to the closing date.

* Only complete applications will be considered.
* Late applications on a waiting list.
* Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void *ab initio*. Where a place has been offered this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn and the place being reallocated. In the case of placement on a waiting list, it will result in removal from the waiting list.

If the application for admission is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined in this policy and the Annual Admission Notice, the pupil shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

**Criteria used to prioritise applicants for Junior Infants**

The criteria in priority order 1 – 3 below, are used to determine admission, where the number of applications received outnumbers the number of places available.

1. Siblings of pupils currently enrolled in the school [It is to be noted that reference to siblings is to be taken as including reference to step siblings.]
2. All applicants currently living within the Roman Catholic parish boundary of Enfield / Rathmolyon
3. All other applicants.

**Students tied for places**

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

1. Applicants’ ages will determine the outcome i.e. places will be offered beginning with the oldest eligible applicant in the oversubscribed category and proceeding in descending order of age from oldest to youngest, until all available places have been filled.
2. If this process fails to offer a solution and two or more applicants remain tied for a place, the name/s will be drawn by lot.

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

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Admission to Schools 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:

1. A student’s prior attendance at a pre-school
2. Payment of fees or contributions to the school
3. A student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude, other than in relation to admission to the special classes, insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the specified category of special educational needs
4. The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents
5. A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission
6. A student’s connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school
7. The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications as set out in the Annual Admission Notice.

## **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission will be based on the following:

* The 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 the Annual Admission Notice.

(Please see [section 1](#_Procedures_for_admission)4 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#_Declaration_in_relation)  below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria not included in the school’s admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in the school.

## **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](#_Reviews/appeals) below for further details).

## **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary’s P.S. parents must indicate

(i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school/s. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer/s concerned and

(ii) whether or not they have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school/s, and if so, they must provide details of the other school/s.

## **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 P.S. where—

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#_Acceptance_of_an) above.

## **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).

## **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 P.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 P.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.

## **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.

## **Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

**Admission of Students to the Special Classes**

The total number of places available is six per class.

* An applicant must have a primary diagnosis of a qualifying autism spectrum disorder and must submit a professional report, which confirms a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/V or ICD 10).
* An applicant must also furnish the school with a recommendation to attend an AS class **attached to a mainstream school**. Such a recommendation must be furnished by a professionally recognised clinical psychologist.
* If the applicant presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. This diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and the report confirming this must be submitted with the application form.
* A letter of acceptance from the clinical support service(s) associated with the pupil’s learning challenges must be submitted with the application form, as the school has no responsibility for the provision of such professional services to pupils attending the AS classes.

If the special classes are oversubscribed, places will be allocated taking account of the space available in each class in order to maintain a balanced range of ages across the classes, Having taken account of the above, priority will be given to children living within the parish in the first instance and the remainder of places will be allocated on a “first come first served basis,” provided that the applicant meets all of the criteria below.

* An applicant will not be enrolled in the special class unless s/he is four years of age on or before the 1st January preceding the academic year for which the application is made.
* No student can be older than thirteen years of age during his/her last year in the special class.
* A fully completed, signed and dated application form for enrolment has been submitted to the school by the Parents and a vacancy exists in the special class.
* If the application form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Parents will be notified that the application will not be considered, nor a waiting list number allocated, until a complete application is submitted.
* When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form and an acknowledgement is sent indicating that the application has been allocated a waiting list number on a ‘first come first served’ basis.
* The Parents and the applicant are invited to a meeting with the special class coordinator and are encouraged to bring reports from the applicant’s present educational setting to this meeting.
* The application will be assessed by the Special Class Enrolment Advisory Board, who will advise the Principal as the school representative on the application.
* The Principal as the school representative will decide on the acceptance or otherwise of the application.
* If offered a place, the Parents must confirm in writing within 7 calendar days that the place is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
* In the event that the number of applicants seeking admission into the ASD classes exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list **in order of the date** of the school receiving a **fully completed** eligible application.
* Parents must confirm in writing within 7 calendar days that a place on the waiting list is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
* The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the application was initially made.

**Placement / Continuing Placement of a Pupil in a Special class.**

* Pupils will be “phased in” gradually to the special class through a mutually agreed process between the school and the Parents.
* The individual needs of each pupil are constantly reviewed to ensure that a special class is the appropriate setting to meet the pupil’s needs. A review of each pupil’s progress and his/her School Support Plus Plan, will be carried out in consultation with Parents and other professionals where necessary.
* The school reserves the right to review each pupil’s progress at the end of each academic year to determine whether the special class continues to be an appropriate placement for him/her.

**Special Class Admission Advisory Board**

* The Advisory Board consists of the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) a Special Education Teacher (SET) and a member of the Board of Management. The Advisory Board will advise the Principal on the applications for places in the special class.
* The decision as to the placement of an applicant in the special class lies with the Principal.
* Places are allocated in the special class on condition that the appropriate resources are provided and continue to be provided, by the NCSE and the DES.

**Transition from the Special class into Mainstream**

Arrangements for pupils’ integration into the mainstream will be made according to their level of need and attainments**.** School personnel will decide when inclusion/integration into a mainstream setting is appropriate. This may be at an age range above or below the pupil’s age, but will be the class that is best suited to meet the pupil’s needs and the one that is chronologically most appropriate.

**Application for Admission into a Mainstream class including Junior Infants after 1st October**

1. The following criteria apply when an application for enrolment into any mainstream class (including Junior Infants after the 1st October) during the academic year is under consideration:
2. That optimum arrangements of existing pupils for teaching and learning purposes are maintained
3. That a place exists in the relevant class/es, taking all relevant circumstances into account e.g. needs of the existing pupils, presence of pupils with special educational needs, integration of pupils with special educational needs, presence of pupils with behavioural needs, cap on class sizes as provided for in this policy, space in classrooms, health and safety considerations etc.
4. St. Mary’s P.S. is limited to its current accommodation of 24 mainstream classrooms. The Patron has determined and directed that no additional mainstream accommodation will be provided in St. Mary’s P.S. Consequently, the maximum number of pupils that may be enrolled is capped at the number of pupils that can be accommodated within the 24 classes.
5. An application for admission into a mainstream class, will not be accepted where the existing class, in respect of which the application is made, has 32 or more pupils.
6. An application for enrolment into Junior Infants after October 1st and for the remainder of the academic year, will be considered only where a vacancy exists, the applicant was already enrolled in another primary school and is/was in attendance at that primary school for not less than 20 school days.
7. Circumstances in which offers may not be made/may be withdrawn as outlined in Section 5 above are also applicable here.
8. Pupils will be enrolled in age appropriate class/es once the following criteria have been met:

* The official application form, which is available for download from the school’s website at www.enfieldps.ie and/or in hard copy on request from the school, must be fully completed, dated and signed by the Parents
* All requested documentation must be furnished i.e. a copy of the applicant’s birth certificate
* A separate form must be completed for each child
* The school is not obliged to consider incomplete applications
* Failure to submit a birth certificate will mean that the application is incomplete.
* The availability of a place, in a specific class, will be determined in the context of the overall number of pupils which the school can accommodate at the time the application is made and in addition taking into consideration other relevant circumstances e.g. needs of the existing pupils, presence of pupils with special educational needs, integration of pupils with special educational needs, presence of pupils with behavioural needs, cap on class sizes as provided for in this policy, space in classrooms, health and safety considerations etc.
* Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void *ab initio*. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn and it being reallocated. In the case of placement on a waiting list, it will result in removal from the waiting list.
* Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to Parents within 21 calendar days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form.

Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school by completing and returning an enrolment acceptance form within 7 calendar days. Failure do so will result in the place being forfeited and the place being reallocated.

If the application for enrolment is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined above, the pupil shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

Applicants who are not successful in securing a place for classes, other than Junior Infants up to the 30th September, will be placed on a separate waiting list. Any such waiting list will be prioritised in the following order:

Siblings of pupils currently enrolled in the school

2. All applicants currently living within the Roman Catholic parish boundary of Enfield/Rathmolyon

3. All other applicants.

In the event of any of the above categories being oversubscribed, the date and time of receipt of a completed application will determine the order of priority within that particular category.

A place on a waiting list expires at the end of the academic year for which the application was made.

The school is not obliged to consider applications which are incomplete and/or not signed and /or not dated and/or do not include the required documentation.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year will be made to those students, in the order of priority in which they have been placed on the waiting list and in the context of the cap on overall numbers and the cap on numbers in the particular class for which application is being made.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Mary’s P.S. or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

1. an application for admission of a student to the school, or
2. 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.

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

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.

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parents to discuss with a member of staff how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## **Reviews/appeals**

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

The parent 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.

**Ratification:**

This Policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on 06/12/2022