

St. Mary's Parish Primary School



Bryanstown, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

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St. Mary's Parish Primary School Admissions Policy

School Name:	St. Mary's Parish Primary School
Address:	Bryanstown, Drogheda, Co. Louth, A92 XD80
Roll No:	20205G
Contact Details:	Tel. (041) 9845374 / email: office@smpps.ie
Patron:	Bishop Tom Deenihan, Catholic Bishop of Meath
Denomination:	Catholic School
Classes:	Mixed sex vertical school

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron in 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 St. Mary's Parish Primary 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

St Mary's Parish Primary School has been established with the Minister of Education and Skills, having as its Patron the Bishop of Meath. The school serves the people who reside within the geographical area of the Catholic Parish of St. Mary's, Drogheda. It is a parish based school with a Catholic ethos. "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 Parish Primary School 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 school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. The school enrolment policy must have regard to the resources and funding available. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

2.1 Aims

St. Mary's Parish Primary School is a co-educational primary school which aims to provide the best possible environment to cater for all our students with the resources available to us. Our philosophy is the education of the child to reach his/her full potential including the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social aspects of human development; and where a love of learning and an appreciation of life and the world are ingrained.

St. Mary's Parish Primary School endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community and to empower all, especially the pupils, to be kind and friendly, respectful and tolerant, confident, resilient and independent. We aspire to promote a nurturing inclusive environment where each child is encouraged and motivated to become a responsible and happy individual.

We aim to create a school where each child achieves his/her full potential. The school aims in particular to:

- Respect the dignity of the student with his/her background, tradition and beliefs, valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak.
- Enable the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- Encourage in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others.
- Promote the student's appreciation of his/her cultural heritage.
- Prepare the student through academic training for his/her vocational role in life.
- Provide opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service of others.
- Provide a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his/her own education and for the life of the school community

2.2 Mission statement

St. Mary's Parish Primary School. is a co-educational Roman Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. Its aim is to promote the full and harmonious development of our pupils: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with others. 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 Parish Primary School provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

3. Admission Statement

St. Mary's Parish Primary 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.

St. Mary's Parish Primary 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 of Catholic denomination 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

is a mainstream school. It currently does not have a Special Class or ASD Class. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team. St. Mary's Parish Primary School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its 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 requested to do so by the Council. St. Mary's Parish Primary School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (see 'Oversubscription' 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) St Mary's Parish Primary School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The BOM is bound by the DES rules for National Schools which provide that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and up.

5.1 Application Procedures:

- i. The application process for junior infants usually takes place in January/February annually. The application process for senior infants - 6th class takes place in May / June. The exact closing dates will be published in our Admission Notice each year. This notice will be published on the school's website at least one week prior to the school commencing our annual admission process. We will also place a message in the parish bulletin and in the local playschools as to where the admission notice will be located.
- ii. Junior Infants must be 4 years of age by September 1st in the year of entry. (However, the Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before April 1st of the school commencement year.)
- iii. Parents wishing for their children to attend this school should, in the first instance, complete an 'Application for Admission' form. These forms may be obtained from the school office and also be downloaded from the school website www.smpps.ie. Parents are reminded to read the admissions policy and other relevant policies on the school website. A hard copy of policies will also be available on request or may be viewed in the main school office.
- iv. Where both parents have joint-guardianship – as is the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for and been granted joint-guardianship, or where unmarried fathers/parents satisfy the legal requirements for guardianship under family law, both signatures are required on the 'Application for Admission' form. In the case of a single guardian, this signature alone is required.
- v. The application process is initiated on receipt of the fully completed and appropriately signed 'Application for Admission' form together with:
 - a. Original Birth Certificate
 - b. Evidence of address: Applicants are required to present **2** recent utility bills (2 of the following: Gas, Electricity, Telephone, Car or Home Insurance Policy, Official Government Documents, Social Insurance Document etc.
- vi. On receipt of an 'Application for Admission' form the application will be date and time stamped. The child's date of birth, address and telephone contact numbers are recorded on the school's database (Aladdin Schools). This record of the application merely confirms that the application will be assessed under the criteria outlined below and does not confer any further status on that application.

Please note:

- *Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage*
- *Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated but are not in themselves enrolment applications.*

6. Oversubscription

While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management (BOM) of St. Mary's Parish Primary School is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice, and acting in the best interest of all children. Accordingly, 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

In consideration of the above the Board of Management has determined a maximum class size of 24 students.
(The sole exception to this maximum is where a child who was previously enrolled is returning to the school following a period in a language unit).

Numbers will be allowed to fall to this level over time in classes that currently have more than 24 students

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. Siblings of students already enrolled in St. Mary's Parish Primary School
- b. Children living within the geographical area of the Catholic Parish of St. Mary's, Drogheda.
- c. Children living outside the above catchment area

Junior Infants: 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 school will offer places on an age basis, oldest first. Where two or more applicants are tied for the last remaining place because of shared date of birth, the place will be awarded to the oldest as determined by time of birth as recorded on their birth certificate. Where multiple birth siblings (twins/triplets) are tied for the last remaining place both/all will be admitted by way of absolute exception.

Senior Infants - 6th: in the event that the number of applications in any of the above categories (a), (b), (c) is greater than the number of available places, a lottery will be held to determine ranking of applications within that category and subsequent categories.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list and will be prioritised in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

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, 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 siblings of a student attending 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. 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 Parish Primary School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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

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. (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.)

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 17 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

If a child is offered a place at St. Mary's Parish Primary School, parents/guardians will receive a 'Letter of Offer'. They will also receive a 'Form of Acceptance / Non Acceptance' and a more detailed 'Pupil Registration Form' which includes all necessary details and consents that are required by the school.

Parents/Guardians will be required to provide details of the child's name (including birth cert name), child's address, date of birth, PPS number, nationality and child's mother tongue. This information is transferred to the Department of Education (DES) via the Primary Online Database (POD). Sensitive information (religion and ethnic/cultural background) is also requested by the DES, however, permission is sought on the 'Pupil Registration Form' for these two pieces of information to be shared with the DES.

Parents will also be requested to provide details of their child's previous education, special educational needs and any medical needs to the school. In the case of a child with specific special educational needs, the B.O.M. may request copies of medical and/or psychological reports in order to assess the school's ability to appropriately provide for the education of the child. In such cases, a meeting will be held with the child's parents and all personnel involved in the care of the child. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the needs of the child and to profile the support services required. Following this meeting and on receipt of all relevant reports, the B.O.M. will assess how the school can meet the needs identified. Application may be made to the Special Educational Needs Organiser for additional resources if appropriate.

Please Note: As with the application to enrol, where both parents have joint-guardianship – as is the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for and has been granted joint-guardianship or where unmarried fathers/parents satisfy the legal requirements for guardianship under family law, both signatures are required on the 'Form of Acceptance / Non Acceptance and the 'Pupil Registration Form'. In the case of a single guardian, this signature alone is required.

In accepting an offer of admission from the school, the parent / guardian must indicate—

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

(ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they 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 Parish Primary 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.

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 Parish Primary 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 Parish Primary is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admissions policy. (see section 6 above)

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 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.

15. Admission of students to other classes 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, in the following instances:

(i) to classes or years other than the school's intake group

(ii) after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought,

are as follows:

- a. Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to the procedures set out above, assuming that there are places available in the requested classes.
- b. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the terms of our own school's Admission policy. The Education Welfare Act (2000) contains some specific provisions in relation to the transfer of pupils, including the requirement that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools following enrolment.
- c. All fully completed applications received by the school by the date specified on the annual admissions notice will be evaluated on the basis of the enrolment criteria outlined in Section 5 & 6.
- d. In the event that the school is oversubscribed in a particular class then a waiting list shall be operated as outlined in sections 6 and 13 above.

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

The board of St. Mary's Parish Primary 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

Parents/Guardians who wish for their child not to engage with religious instruction must make a written request to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parents/guardians to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of 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.

19. Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of 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)

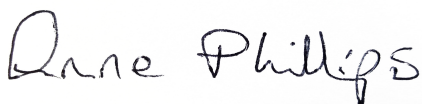
Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

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.

20. Ratification and Review

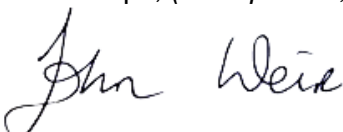
This policy was developed by the Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents in April 2020 . It was ratified by the Board of Management on 29th April 2020 following online consultation/meeting and was approved by the patron in July 2020. It was most recently reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 25th September 2023. It will be reviewed by the Board of Management every 3 years or sooner if necessitated by statute / direction of Patron.

This document is available on request from the school office or downloadable from www.smpps.ie.

Signed: 

Date: 25 / 09 / 2023

Anne Phillips, (*Chairperson, Board of Management*)

Signed: 
John Weir (*Principal*)

Date: 25 / 09 / 2023