



St Mary's NS

Admissions Policy

December 2022

Admission Policy of St. Mary's N.S

**Bishop Street
Limerick
info@stmarysns.com**

Roll number: 204050

School Patron: Bishop Leahy

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 13th May 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 N.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.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

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

"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 NS 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 recognises the central role of the family as the Primary Educator of the Child. The school also accepts and supports the constitutional right and duty of the parents to provide for the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.

The school aims to provide the best possible environment to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all its children with the resources available to us. The focus of the school's philosophy is the education of the whole child to reach his/her full potential.

We show special concern for the disadvantaged, respecting the dignity and uniqueness of the child.

The school community strives to provide a warm, caring and safe environment. We take each child from where he/she is so they can develop to their full potential and grow in the knowledge that they are valued. We aim to promote positive learning experiences, knowledge and training for each child. The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the catholic ethos of the school and also the ideal of inclusivity. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board of Management supports the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary and parents in the review and operation of this policy.

3. Admission Statement

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

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the 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.

All denominational schools

St. Mary's N.S is a Catholic 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St Mary's NS will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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 NS will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

St. Mary's N.S is a school which has established 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.

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

St. Mary's N.S welcomes applications for enrolment of pupils with special needs. The school will endeavour to have suitable provisions in place when a student enters the school and throughout his attendance at the school. To help the school ensure that this is achieved it will be recommended that parents:

- Inform the school that special provisions may be required. This will allow the school to begin what, at times, can be a lengthy process in negotiating with the Department to secure the necessary resources.
- Provide up-to-date psychological/medical reports, as appropriate.

This is essential in order to support requests for resources and to enable a decision to be made.

The Board of Management will provide children with special educational needs with additional educational and/or care support in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and guidelines in relation to the deployment of these resources.

St. Mary's NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) (See Appendix 1 for enrolment criteria for this special class)

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 child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education, or in the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.
- d) The special class attached to St. Mary's Primary School provides an education exclusively for students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. (See Appendix 1 for details of enrolment criteria and procedures for this class)

All denominational schools

St. Mary's N.S is a Roman 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.

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:

1. Applicants with siblings currently or previously enrolled in the school (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address), priority eldest;
2. Families whose primary residence is either;
 - a. In the immediate areas of St. Mary's Parish, starting closest to the school and radiating outwards from the school or
 - b. In St. Mary's Parish within a 2-mile distance by road from the school.
3. Children of staff members, priority eldest;
4. Random selection (independently verified by Principal or member of Parents Gathering Group).

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:

Priority to eldest.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí.
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to:
 - admission to a special class 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;

- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.
- (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. Application Process

Application Process for Junior Infants/and other classes

Application and decision dates for admission to Junior Infants will be set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

Advance notification of enrolment dates will be placed on the school notice board and school Facebook page and in the school newsletters. The Board of Management strongly recommends that prospective Junior Infant pupils be at least 4 years of age on or before 30th August of the year of enrolment.

Parents seeking to enrol their child must complete an Application Form for Admission and attach accompanying documentation (see below).

The following documentation will be required upon acceptance of a place in the school:

- An original Birth Certificate (will be copied and returned)
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable for Sacramental purposes)
- Any other relevant reports (Medical/Psychological etc.)

Completion of an Application Form for Admission or the placement of a child's name on a waiting list does not confer a right to a place in the school.

Application Process for the Special Class Attached to St. Mary's N.S

(See Appendix 1 for enrolment criteria and procedures for this class)

9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary's N.S will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 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.

10. 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 19](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary's N.S, you must indicate—

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

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

12. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Mary's N.S where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of

- behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 11 above.

13. 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).

14. 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 NS were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Mary's N.S is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

15. 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.

16. 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 Department requirements for the transfer of a pupil from one primary school to another are fully complied with
- TherequirementsoftheEducationWelfareAct2000arefullycomplied with.
- There is a vacancy in the school
- A completed ***Application Form for Admission - Other Classes*** (available from the secretary's office)
- Information/documentationonanyspecialeducationalorbehavioural needswillberequestedonofferofenrolment. St. Mary's N.S mayneed todefer enrolmentpendingresources.
- The school may postpone a decision on enrolment of a student pending a report from an appropriate psychological or medical professional.
- The following documentation will be required upon offer of a place, and failure to provide the documentary may result in a refusal to enrol:
 - An original Birth Certificate (will be copied and returned)
 - Baptismal Certificate (if applicable for Sacrament purposes)

- Any other relevant reports (Medical/Psychological etc.)
- Information/documentation on any special educational or behavioural needs
- Any recent school reports.

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.

Applicant students will be offered a place in the relevant class:

if a place is available this may not be until the beginning of the next term.

In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places in the relevant class, the school will apply the selection criteria set out in Section 6 of this policy to those applications.

In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 14 of this policy.

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:

Applications as to that of other classes in section 16 must be followed.

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.

Applicant students will be offered a place if there is a place available, this may not be until the beginning of the next term.

In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of this policy which will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Mary's N.S is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

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

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

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

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.

18. 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) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

Some of the procedures are outline below.

The student will remain in the class and will complete other tasks while religious instruction is being completed.

While incidental instruction and lessons are occurring during the school day, including mass, prayer service, assembly prayer etc. Students will remain with class and class teacher but do not have to participate.

When school masses are taking place or sacramental preparation students will have to attend with the class and class teacher. Students do not have to participate. If parents or guardians wish to collect their children at this time they must contact the school and confirm either orally or in written format to the class teacher that they will remove their child from school for the duration of the religious mass etc.

If there is capacity in other classes children may stay in those classes while this instruction is taking place. However this will be subject to teacher availability, student needs, health and safety of all pupils and capacity to provide safe supervision.

19. 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)

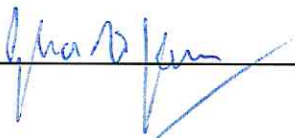
Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

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

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's NS on 6th December '2

Signed:  Chairperson, Board of Management

The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron.



Appendix 1: ASD Class Enrolment Procedures

The decision to provide a special class for children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in St. Mary's NS was taken by the Board of Management of the school in 2021. These decisions were taken with a view to providing an education in a mainstream setting for children who have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who fulfil the relevant enrolment criteria.

It is envisaged that this special class will cater primarily for children resident in the parish of St. Mary's Parish. The Board of Management notes the Department of Education and Skills' policy to allow Boards of Management of recognised Primary Schools to establish similar ASD classes in their schools

The ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Class at St. Mary's Primary School is a class for children:

- who have a recognised ASD diagnosis
- who have been recommended for placement in an ASD Class in a mainstream Primary School
- who have the potential to integrate into a mainstream, age appropriate class.

NOTE:

1. All placements will be reviewed annually in order to ensure that the placement continues to be appropriate for each child.
2. The maximum class size is 6 pupils.
3. The provision of an ASD Class in the school was proposed by our SENO and approved by the NCSE for the school year 2020/21.
4. The establishment of this class is contingent on approval for additional accommodation being granted by the Department of Education School's Capital Appraisal Section and also on the necessary funding and resources being furnished to St. Mary's Primary School by the Department of Education and Skills.

Aim

We aim to offer a positive and meaningful educational experience, for children who are on the Autistic Spectrum and which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.

Our ASD class offers an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion in mainstream education as part of the school community, as appropriate, while having due regard for levels of general learning disability, resources and each child's current suitability for such inclusion.

We wish to provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities and strengths of each child while supporting his/her areas of need. We will strive to enhance the communicative and social skills of the children in the ASD class.

- Develop an IEP/ Student Support Plan to address identified needs.
- Assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.

Taking into account the Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special education need.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Discharge Policy

It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils once they have completed 6th Class and/or reached the age of thirteen after September 30th in any year. This means a June discharge in the following year. The onus will be on the parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable post-primary School. St. Mary's NS will facilitate all transfer of records/reports as well as assist with any information required with regard to students. Discharge from the ASD Class may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school.