

**Admission Policy of St. Paul's School
Beech Hill
Montenotte
Cork
T23 P529**

Roll number: 19203S

School Patron: Bishop of Cork and Ross

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 parent/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 21/09/2020. 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. Paul's 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. Paul's School is under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross and the trusteeship of COPE Foundation. The denominational character of the school is Roman Catholic. The ethos of the school is Christian in the Catholic tradition. The school has 7 classes for pupils with moderate/severe general learning disabilities and 8 classes for pupils with severe/profound general learning disabilities. Prospective pupils must be at least aged 4 and not older than aged 18 by the last day of August of the year in question. The school caters for 97 pupils in total.

St. Paul's school is a happy, safe and enthusiastic environment in which the pupils can learn and develop to the very best of their ability. Everything centres around the pupils who are eager and willing to learn. We wish to promote this enthusiasm and environment of learning throughout everything we do.

3. Admission Statement

St. Paul'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.

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

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

St. Paul's School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability.

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/guardian 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 and the code of conduct for parents 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

St. Paul's School provides an education exclusively for students with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

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:

Criteria:

- (1) Priority is given to pass pupils of the School who may have unsuccessfully transferred to another school.
- (2) Priority order of current children seeking places from Cope Foundation's pre-school, Rainbow Lodge.
- (3) Priority order of the number applications for children seeking placement from Cope Foundation's junior school for pupils with a mild general learning disability – Scoil Eanna and the Foundation's senior school for pupils with a mild general learning disability – Scoil Bernadette.
- (4) Priority order of applications for children who were refused admission in the previous year/s (based on recommendations of School's Admission Committee).
- (5) The number and needs of prospective pupils currently on the waiting lists. The Department's maximum class average directives (currently 8 pupils per class of pupils with moderate general learning disabilities, 7 pupils per class of pupils with multiple general learning disabilities and 6 pupils per class of pupils with severe and profound general learning disabilities).
- (6) In some cases, special resources, equipment and adaptations to facilitate the prospective student's access to the building or curriculum may be recommended to the Board by the Committee. The Board may, on the advice

of the Committee, request that such resources, equipment and adaptations are in place before the prospective student is formally enrolled. The Board, in the interests of the prospective pupil and the other pupils in the School, may decide to refuse admission on the grounds that the School cannot, with current resources and facilities, meet the needs of the prospective student.

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 and inform the Admissions Committee:

- Which student has the greater need
- Other options available to the students
- Age of the students

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 other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
 - (I) an early intervention class, or
 - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parent/guardians;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parent/guardians, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) 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

(f) 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. Paul's School will be based on the following:

- The 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
- The information provided in the up-to-date psychological assessment (*within 2 years of date of application for under 7 yr. olds; within 4 years of date of application for all others*) stating that the child's primary disability falls within the moderate or severe or profound learning disability category
- The information provided in the up-to-date medical report disclosing all pre-existing medical conditions from the child's General Practitioner or Consultant
- The information provided by members of the Admissions Committee following a visit to the child's current educational placement
- The recommendation of the Schools Admissions Committee and subsequent approval by the Board of Management

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

A letter of acceptance must be returned to St. Paul's School within 7 days of the date on the letter of offer. If written acceptance is not received within 7 days the place will be offered to another child.

10. 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. Paul's 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/guardian 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 and the Code of Conduct for Parent/Guardians of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such codes.

11. Sharing of Data

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 and St. Paul's service provider, COPE Foundation in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

12. 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. Paul's School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

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

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

13. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will not be considered until the following year.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Paul's 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.

15. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parent/guardian 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. The student will integrate with another class during religious instruction

16. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent/guardian 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 parent/guardian of 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/guardian 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 parent/guardian of 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 parent/guardian of the 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.

Signed: Jerry Corkery

Date: 26/09/2020

Chairperson