

St. Patrick's Primary School, Lombard Street, Galway

Enrolment & Admissions Policy 2021/2022

Introduction

St. Patrick's Primary School is a Catholic co-educational primary school, catering for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. In addition to this St. Patrick's School also caters for children with special needs in the Early Intervention and Junior ASD classes. The school has a Catholic ethos and is under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, Bishop Brendan Kelly.

"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. Patrick's 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.

Our Mission Statement

St. Patrick's Primary School is a Catholic school, respecting other beliefs.

We offer a holistic education so that each child will emerge as self-reliant and confident.

We hope to achieve this through the collaborative effort of teachers, children, parents and the wider community.

The Enrolment & Admissions Policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff, parents and the Board of Management (BoM) of St. Patrick's Primary School. The policy of the school is set out in accordance with the relevant legislation. The BoM trusts that this policy will inform and assist parents/guardians in the process of enrolling their child(ren). The Principal will clarify any queries parents/guardians may have relating to the policy.

Our School Ethos

Our school is Catholic school with a Catholic ethos. Non Catholic pupils attending our school are

respectfully given the freedom to adhere to their own beliefs and practices.

Our aim is to create an environment where each child is valued as a person and is provided with a variety of opportunities enabling him/her to live as a child and developing all aspects of the person; spiritual, emotional, moral, social, intellectual, cultural and physical.

We seek to develop in the child a positive self-image and a respectful, caring attitude towards others.

We encourage each child to take an active part in his/her own development on all levels so that he/she can;

- enjoy being at school and contribute to making school life a good experience for all
- be ready and able to benefit from second level education
- go on to take his/her place in society as a happy, fulfilled and responsible adult

Since teaching/learning is a collaborative effort, we involve parents, teacher, pupils and the wider community.

We endeavour to challenge the gifted child and to give special support, care and attention to children with any level of additional needs. missions Policy/Statement

St. Patrick's Primary School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the grounds 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.

The policy is based on the principles of:

- Inclusiveness and non discrimination
- equality of access and participation in the school
- parental choice in relation to enrolment and
- respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages in the community

Therefore, no child will be refused admission to the school for reasons of gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, accent, language, traveller status, asylum /refugee status, religious, political beliefs, values, family, social circumstances or civil status

In determining its Policy the BoM has taken account of:

- (i) the design of the school building which facilitates two classes at each level
- (ii) Department of Education & Skills guidance regarding class size and pupil teacher ratio
- (iii)

the educational needs and rights of children already enrolled, multi-grade classes and the presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs and

(iv) the Health, Safety and Welfare of children and school staff

Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- the school/class is oversubscribed: In this event, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below in Table 1 of Stage 4: Formal offer of place.
- 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 he/she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation affecting the policy primarily The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), Equal Status Act 2000, The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) the Education Act 2018 and other relevant legislation
- Ensure that all children have an equal right to an education in an atmosphere that is supportive of their physical, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development
- Make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner, consistent with its ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements
- Make an accurate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in light of its available resources
- Develop an effective relationship between children, parents and school staff.

Communication Procedures re Applications

The BoM is committed to openness and transparency in relation to this policy. It will outline the process to be followed when seeking to enrol your child. Further letters (emails) will be issued as appropriate and as outlined in this policy.

Important Information for Parents/Guardians

- Parents/guardians are fully responsible for:
 - (i) the validity and accuracy of all the information on the Application Form
 - (ii) informing the school of any change in the contact details provided
 - (iii) informing the school of any specific needs or requirements on the Application Form
 - (iv) ensuring that their children cooperate with school policies and adhere to the code of behaviour at all times
- Failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the Principal/Chairperson of BoM, to discuss the application, may result in a child being refused admission to the school
- Children must have reached their 4th birthday by March 31st.

Enrolment of children with special needs

All applications for the enrolment of children with special needs should be accompanied by a copy of all relevant medical reports, such as Psychological, Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy, Child Psychiatry, Paediatric reports etc. The purpose of these reports is to establish the needs of the child relevant to his/her disability/special needs and to identify the school support services required.

Following receipt of such a report the BoM shall assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. If further resources are required the BoM will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the required resources. These may include any combination of the following; visiting teacher service, allocation of Special Education Teacher (SET) hours, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture etc.

Annual Admission Notice for Junior Infants

Prior to accepting applications for enrolment of Junior Infants, the school will publish an Annual Admission Notice. This will be published on our school's website and available in a hard copy on request. This will provide information on the Admission Policy and Application Form. It will also provide the key dates for parents in enrolling their child. Parents/guardians will be given a minimum of three weeks' notice to submit their child's Application Form. Please note that, from now on, submitting applications for very young children will not confer any extra priority for admission to the school. A new list will be compiled for each school year after the Annual Admission Notice.

A. Enrolment Procedures for children for Junior Infants

Stage 1: Application for Enrolment

Applications will only be accepted on the basis of receipt of a fully completed Application Form, which includes PPSN, current address and contact details, including an email address. Information gathered in our application process, including PPSN, is required to log applications on the Department of Education and Skills Primary Online Database. At this stage, we would request that the Pre-School Transfer Form provided by the school be filled out by the pre-school which your child attends and be returned to the school with the completed Application Form.

The Application Form must be signed by both parents/ guardians, as relevant to the circumstances. The Form will be date stamped on receipt by the school. The school will request a recent copy of a utility bill as evidence of address at a later stage.

Stage 2: School Record of Applications

The school will maintain a record of each child's name, date of birth, address, telephone contact number and date of application on the school's computerised Record of Applications.

Stage 3: Confirmation of Interest

In early January of the year of enrolment, all applicants will receive a letter requesting the completion of

a Confirmation of Interest Form. This completed form must be returned to the school by the date indicated, in order to confirm your continued interest to enrol your child. This ensures that your child's application will remain on the school record of applications.

This letter is not a guarantee of a place for your child

Stage 4: Formal Offer of a place

Applicants will be notified of the decision on their application on the date indicated in the published Admissions Notice. Applicants who deferred their place in the previous school year, on the grounds of age, will be offered a place for this school year. In the event of the number of children exceeding available places, places will be allocated according to the following criteria as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria for prioritisation of offers of enrolment

Priority Criterion

- Siblings of children already attending this school (including step siblings and foster siblings)
- Siblings of past pupils
- Children who live in the surrounds of Galway City, priority youngest
- Children not resident in the surrounds of Galway City - whose home address is closest to the school

Where all of the above criteria are equal among applicants, places will be offered based on a supervised lottery draw. This draw takes place once all applicants from our parish have been offered a place.

Stage 5: Formal Acceptance of a place

Both parents/guardians must accept the offer **in writing by a date specified in the Letter of Offer**. The offer of a place is subject to the parents/guardians having provided the school with:

- a fully completed, accurate enrolment form
- a copy of a current utility bill (dated within the previous 6 months)
- written confirmation accepting all school's policies and procedures. The list includes key policies on Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Child Protection. A complete list of policies will be made available on the school website: www.saintpatricksgalway.ie
- St. Patrick's Primary School is a Catholic primary school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic faith, where it is proven that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Stage 6: Waiting List

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Parents/guardians of these children will be notified immediately outlining the reason why they were refused admission and their position on the waiting list.

Should places become available children will be offered a place with reference to this waiting list.

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians, who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the BoM. The Appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 days of receiving the refusal and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds of the appeal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may further appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol their child.

B.Enrolment Procedures for children from Senior Infants to 6th Class

Children from Senior Infants to 6th Class may be enrolled at any time during the school year, subject to availability of space, school policy, the provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.

Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area.

Stage 1: Application for Enrolment

Applications, signed by both parents/guardians, as relevant to the circumstances, will be accepted at any time. The form will be date stamped upon receipt by the school. At enrolment the school will request a recent copy of a utility bill as evidence of address and a Birth cert.

Stage 2: School Record of Applications

The school will maintain a record of applications for each class. Each child's name, date of birth, address and telephone contact number, and date of application will be recorded.

Stage 3: Formal Offer of a place

Both parents/guardians must accept the offer **in writing by the date specified in the Letter of Offer**. The offer of a place is subject to the parents/guardians having provided the school with:

- a fully completed accurate enrolment form
- an original copy of the child's Birth Certificate
- a copy of a current utility bill and
- written confirmation accepting all the school policies and procedures

Stage 4; Waiting List

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Parents/guardians of these children will be notified immediately outlining the reason why they were refused admission and their position on the waiting list.

Should places become available they will be offered in accordance with this waiting list. Where all of the criteria for enrolment (Table 1) are equal among applicants, places will be offered based on a supervised

lottery draw, once all applicants from our parish have been offered a place. If parents/guardians are not satisfied with any enrolment decisions made the following appeals procedure is in place;

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians, who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the BoM. The Appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 days of receiving the refusal and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds of the appeal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol their child.

B. Enrolment Procedures for children for Admission of Children into Early Intervention and ASD Classes

Specific Information for the Admission into the E.I. Class

Enrolment Procedure

The process of enrolment begins with:

To be enrolled/ put on the waiting list for the Early Intervention class, the following procedure must be followed:

- A school enrolment form and relevant NCSE forms are fully completed.
- The enrolment application must be accompanied by an up to date educational psychological assessment and diagnostic report which confirms diagnosis of ASD in line with current Department of Education criteria (DSM-V)
- A letter from a member of the child's multidisciplinary team that recommends that the child attends an Early Intervention class.
- Fully completed applications are dated and recorded in the applications file.

Criteria for Enrolment/Admission

1. Each child attending the Early Intervention Class must have a definite diagnosis of Autism; the diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological procedure (DSM-V). In addition, applicants must have a written professional recommendation for a place in an ASD pre-school in a mainstream setting.
2. The child must be between the age of three and five years upon enrolment/admission. A child who turns six during the academic school year should not be in a preschool setting and therefore will not be considered for enrolment/admission in the Early Intervention Class. It is compulsory to be enrolled in Primary Education by the age of 6.

3. A child may only be enrolled in the Early Intervention Class for a maximum of two academic school years. Placement in the Early Intervention class is subject to a yearly review. If, in the course of the year, it transpires that the school cannot meet the required needs of the child, the child will not be enrolled for the following year. The decision will be made by the in-school management team and the Board of Management. Parents will have had meetings with the school throughout the year. The parents will be notified in writing. Parents/Guardians will be advised with regard to their child's future schooling with the following options considered: Mainstream/ Mainstream with resource teaching support/ Special Class attached to a mainstream school/ Special School/ Home Tuition.
4. The Early Intervention Class will only enrol children on a full-time basis. This means that the child is expected to be in school 5 days a week. A staggered/slow start may be accommodated with the view that it will turn into a full-time 5-day placement.
5. Enrolment in the Early Intervention Class does not entitle a child to a place in a class in the mainstream school or in the ASD class once the period of Early Intervention has finished.
- In relation to point 3 above, a third year in the Early Intervention Class may be considered in exceptional circumstances whereby the school, parents and multi-disciplinary team agree that to meet the child's needs, another year in the Early Intervention Class may be required. The child must fall within the parameters of the necessary age for the class in the event that a third year will be facilitated.
- The BoM will consider any application to the Early Intervention class in the context of the resources available in the school and the needs of the class at that time.
- All applications to the school for the Early Intervention class should be submitted by May 31st annually.

Discharge of Pupils from St. Patrick's Early Intervention Class

The number of places available in the Early Intervention will be ascertained following the annual Multi-disciplinary team meeting. At this meeting a review of all children attending the preschool will take place and will result in one of the following:

- Onward progression to an autistic unit attached to a mainstream primary school.
- Onward progression to a child's local mainstream primary school.
- Retention in the Early Intervention Class for a further academic school year. This will not be possible if the child was turning six years old in the academic school year following the Multi-disciplinary team meeting i.e. a child should not turn six in preschool.

In the event that the Early Intervention 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 to the Special Classes and that meet the set criteria for applications as set out in Section 3 above:

- Siblings of current pupils in mainstream and Early Intervention/ASD Class, priority youngest
- Siblings of past pupils* in mainstream and Early Intervention/ASD Class, priority youngest (*see Section 7 F (2))
- Children who live in the surrounds of Galway City, priority youngest
- All other applications, priority youngest.

***Please see rationale document for prioritising youngest attached at end of document.

Specific Information for the Admission into the ASD Class

Enrolment Procedure

To be enrolled/ put on the waiting list for the ASD class, the following procedure must be followed:

1. A school enrolment form and relevant NCSE forms are fully completed.
2. A copy of the child's birth certificate.
3. The enrolment application must be accompanied by an up to date educational psychological assessment (dated within 2 years prior to application being made) and diagnostic report which confirms diagnosis of ASD in line with current Department of Education criteria (DSM-V or ICD 10).
4. A letter from the child's multidisciplinary team that recommends that the child attends an ASD Class in a mainstream school. The letter must state that 1. s/he has a disability (in line with the designation of the special class in question) and 2. S/he has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting.
5. Fully completed applications are dated and recorded in the applications file.

*Children enrolling into the ASD class from St. Patrick's Primary School's Early Intervention Class will need to fill out a new NCSE form for the ASD class. They will also need a letter from the child's multidisciplinary team that recommends that the child attends an ASD Class in a mainstream school.

Criteria for Enrolment/Admission

1. Each child attending the ASD Class must have a definite diagnosis of Autism; the diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological procedure (DSM-V / ICD 10). In addition, applicants must have a written professional recommendation for a place in an ASD Class in a mainstream setting.
2. The child must have turned 4 by 31st of December of the previous year before starting in the ASD Class.

3. Placement in the ASD class is subject to a yearly review. If, in the course of the year, it transpires that the school cannot meet the required needs of the child, the child will not be enrolled for the following year. The decision will be made by the in-school management team and the Board of Management. Parents will have had meetings with the school throughout the year. The parents will be notified in writing. Parents/Guardians will be advised with regard to the child's future schooling with the following options considered:
Mainstream/ Mainstream with resource teaching support/ Special Class attached to a mainstream school/ Special School/ Home Tuition
4. The ASD Class will only enrol children on a full-time basis. This means that the child is expected to be in school 5 days a week. A staggered/slow start may be accommodated with the view that it will turn into a full-time 5 day placement.
5. Enrolment in the Early Intervention Class does not entitle a child to a place in the ASD class or in the mainstream school once the period of Early Intervention has finished.
6. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team should be provided (no more than two years old). A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. ("Multi-Disciplinary Team"). **Please note all reports in operation for a child should be provided to the school, for consideration by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.**
7. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.
8. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.- Do we need an appendix in the CoD for children in the ASD class.
9. There must be a recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child. The letter must state that 1. S/he has a disability (in line with the designation of the special class in question) and 2 S/he has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting.
10. In the event that the number of applicants seeking enrolment into the specialised class exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list according to enrolment selection criteria.
11. If the applicant fulfils all of the enrolment criteria but is not offered a place, as there is no place available, the Parents/Guardians may opt to put the pupil's name on a waiting list. The waiting list will operate in accordance to the enrolment criteria and priority order as decided by Admission Team and Board of Management, in respect of those parents/guardians who opt to place the student's name on the waiting list.

Discharge of Pupils from St. Patrick's ASD Class

The number of places available in the ASD Class will be ascertained following the annual Admissions Team meeting. At this meeting a review of all children attending the class will take place and will result in one of the following:

- Onward progression to an alternative setting.

- Onward progression to a mainstream class in the school.
- Retention in the ASD Class for a further academic school year.

Additional Information for the Early Intervention Class and the ASD Class

Code of Behaviour

All offers of enrolment to the Early Intervention Class are subject to acceptance of the St. Patrick's Primary School Code of Behaviour. It is acceptable that a child with Special Education Needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviours. All pupils in St. Patrick's Primary School are subject to the School Code of Behaviour. Where a child's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other children in the Early Intervention Class, ASD class or another mainstream class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with as judged by the BOM of the school, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

Refusal to Enrol/Decision to Exclude:

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/ admission to any pupil where either:

1. The pupil has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet the needs and/or provide the student with appropriate education.
2. The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it is an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the BOM that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of other pupils, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made not to enrol the child and/or exclude the child from the school.

Transfer from Early Intervention to the ASD Class

Should a place become available in the ASD class each September, priority will be given to the pupils attending the Early Intervention Class in this School. However, placement in an Early Intervention Class does not guarantee a place in the ASD class in any given year, and places cannot be held for pupils due to transition. Children enrolling into the ASD class from St. Patrick's Primary School's Early Intervention Class will need to fill out a new NCSE form which will state their enrolment into the ASD class. They will also need a letter from the child's multidisciplinary team that recommends that the child attends an ASD Class in a mainstream school.

In the event that the ASD Class 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 to the Special Classes and that meet the set criteria for applications as set out in Section 3 above:

- Siblings of current pupils in mainstream and Early Intervention/ASD Class
- Siblings of past pupils* in mainstream and Early Intervention/ASD Class.

- Children who live in the surrounds of Galway City.
- All other applications (random selection).

Rationale behind Admission Policy re Oversubscription to Early Intervention Class

Reasons behind criteria re selection of pupils in the Early Intervention Classes priority youngest:

We see EI as referring to pupils prior to school going age=U 4.

Hence we feel our priority is pupils of 3 years/younger pupils:

- Who cannot access any other ASD specific facility
- Who have been diagnosed at this young age due to the severity of their Autism
- Who can complete the 2 year programme of early intervention
- The longer they attend EI the greater the chance they have of reinforcing skills and behaviours learnt in their first year and building upon those to achieve other personal targets in the following year
- This causes less disruption to the class with the majority of pupils staying for a 2 year cycle as opposed to pupils coming and going every year as is the case with 4 and 5 year olds.

Also please note for older pupils 4 years upwards they have the option to attend Primary School and get supports or to attend an ASD class attached to mainstream if they have a recommendation from a professional such as psychologist and multi-disciplinary team working with the child and their family.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The BoM will evaluate and review all aspects of the policy and amend as required. The policy will also be reviewed annually. The principal will report to the BoM on the enrolment process and especially where an applicant is refused admission.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the BoM on 17th December 2020 and communicated to the school community via the school website. Hard copies are available on request. This policy supersedes all previous enrolment and admission policies.

Brian Keville,
Single Manager,
St. Patrick's Primary School