

Admission Policy of Whitechurch National School

(DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT FOR CONSULTATION)

School Address: Whitechurch Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Roll number: 11638N

**School Patron: The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough,
Dr. Michael Jackson.**

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 [date]. 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 Whitechurch National School'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

Whitechurch National School is a co-educational primary school with a Church of Ireland ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough, Dr. Michael Jackson.

"Church of Ireland/Anglican" ethos in the context of a Church of Ireland primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Anglican Christian tradition. This seeks to nurture and

encourage the formation of the intellectual, academic, sporting, social and religious abilities of each child within the framework of the community of faith. A Church of Ireland ethos encourages intellectual diversity of thought and encourages the individual to seek to understand themselves, the world around them and the connection between the world and God. This understanding of school ethos promotes pluralism in thought and living, in the context of a Christian school community. Drawing on its Anglican tradition, the Church of Ireland School encourages home/family involvement, highlighting the importance of the family/home in the social and emotional development of the child, and more broadly, the community of the school and church.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Whitechurch National 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

Mission Statement and General Objectives of the school:

Whitechurch National School is a coeducational primary school under Church of Ireland management. The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough is the school's Patron. The school is managed by a Board of Management made up of nominees from the community, parents, teachers, and parish. The Patron nominates two representatives to the Board of Management; one of whom is nominated by him as Chairperson of the Board. The Ethos (characteristic spirit of the school that informs all aspects of its work) is set out below:

Whitechurch National School is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, social or ethnic background, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning. Pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging, they are treated fairly and their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged, as is their intellectual, social and academic development.

Whitechurch National School is a community where the traditions and teachings of the Church of Ireland inform the encouragement and development of values such as faith, hope and charity; as demonstrated by honesty, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility.

Whitechurch National School is a part of the local church community and has strong links with the Parish. Pupils take part in services in the local church (eg. Advent, Easter etc.) Special events take place in the school to mark religious festivals and celebrations eg. Christmas, Easter etc. The Rector visits the school and takes part in Assembly on a regular basis.

The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of inclusion, tolerance and respect for religious differences. The admission policy of the school allows those of other faiths or none to enrol as pupils. Whitechurch National School values and recognises the contribution that pupils of different faiths bring to the life of the school.

Time spent teaching Religious Education is per Department of Education guidelines. All pupils generally take part in Religious Education lessons. The 'Follow Me' programme (developed by the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education) is in use throughout all the classes. Please see the Religious Education Policy for further details.

Whitechurch National School nurtures the freedom of thought, reflection, and a personal, self determined relationship with God. This is most evident in the teaching of Religious Education and in the prayer life of the school community.

3. Admission Statement

Whitechurch National 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.

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion

Whitechurch National School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

All denominational schools

Whitechurch National 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 a member of the Church of Ireland/ other Anglican faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) A student has not reached their 4th birthday by the 31st May immediately prior to the date of expected entry into Junior Infants

- b) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 5](#) below for further details)
- c) 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

All denominational schools

Whitechurch National School is a Church of Ireland school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not a member of the Church of Ireland/ other Anglican faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. Oversubscription

Whitechurch National School is committed to ensuring the best possible standard of provision for its pupils. To that end, the school's Board of Management will endeavour to keep the number of pupils in each class as low as possible. Numbers admitted each year shall be determined by taking into account the overall numbers of pupils enrolled at the school and then also within each classroom so as to ensure that the minimum pupil:teacher ratios set out by the DES are maintained and allowing for a small excess to safeguard against the loss of teaching staff and the ability to have eight single mainstream classes. Where there are a high number of pupils with additional/ special educational needs and/or access to an SNA in a given class, the school may decide not to enrol additional pupils into that class to ensure the health and safety and educational provision for all pupils within the class along with the class teacher.

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:

Selection Criteria

Whitechurch National School is a Church of Ireland school. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d) , as follows:

- (a) **Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school¹ and who lives within the boundary of **Whitechurch Parish/ has access to the School Transport Scheme for the School.**
- (b) **Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school² and who **lives**

¹ As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act

² As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act

outside the boundary of Whitechurch Parish but within 5 kilometres radius of the School/ has access to the School Transport Scheme for the School.

- (c) **Priority Category 3:** An Applicant Student who lives within **the boundary of Whitechurch Parish** and who complies with the terms of this Policy
- (d) **Priority Category 4:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy

In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) a statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

and

- (ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:
 - a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

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:

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students who have siblings currently enrolled in the School ("Sibling Applicant Students"). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system (give details of agreed method). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not exceed the number places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system (names are pulled from a hat by a member of staff unrelated to any of the applicants, and the order recorded for the allocating of places).

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

6. 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, 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) 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 having previously attended the school;
(Please note that siblings of currently attending pupils will be given priority within each priority category for enrolment as described above).
- (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).

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Whitechurch National School 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 13](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 14](#) 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.

8. 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Whitechurch National School, 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.

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 Whitechurch National 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 9](#) above.

11. 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).

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 Whitechurch National 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 Whitechurch National 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.

Applicant students 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.

13. 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. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. 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.

14. 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:

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. 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 13 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:

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. 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.

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

The board of Whitechurch National 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.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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)/guardians or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be reasonably accommodated by the school. Accommodations made will

not result in the loss of tuition time for pupils with special educational needs. A pupil not attending religious instruction may still remain in their classroom but complete other independent work set by the class teacher.

17. Reviews/appeals

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.

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.

18. Ratification and Review

This Policy was ratified by the Board on xxx 2020 and follows guidelines issued by the Patron in respect of admissions.

This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

19. Appendices

App1- Intention to Enrol Form

App2- Full Enrolment Application Form

Reg1- Registration Form

Map of Parish boundaries

Admissions Notice Template