



GOWRAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

DIOCESE OF OSSORY

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR ENROLMENT INTO MAINSTREAM AND ASD SPECIAL CLASS

Address: Chapel Road, Gowran, Co.Kilkenny
Roll Number: 18064c
Patron: Bishop of Ossory

1. INTRODUCTION

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the following statutory instruments:

- Education Act 1998
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Disabilities Act 2002
- Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004

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 23rd of July 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Gowran National 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

Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos. The Bishop of Ossory is the Patron of this school.

‘Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all’. *‘The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15’*

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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and 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 Scoil Mhuire 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

Gowran NS recognises the central role of the family as the primary educator of each child. The school accepts and supports the constitutional right and duty of parents to provide for the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their child/ren.

The school’s ethos is committed to providing a caring environment for pupils and to enabling their holistic development towards personal excellence in all areas- personal and curricular. We endeavour to challenge the gifted child and to give special support, care and attention to children with any level of additional needs.

The characteristic spirit of the school is manifest in the welcoming atmosphere and the supportive interactions between teachers, parents and pupils. We welcome children of all faiths and none. The characteristic spirit of the school reflects the important role of the parish community while acknowledging and respecting pupils of other denominations.

Our focus is to enable each child to realise his/her potential as a unique individual. We also want every student to develop morally and socially through living and cooperating with others in a Christian environment.

Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, Principal, staff, parents and pupils

will strive to prepare every student in our school for further education and lifelong learning.

Your child's happiness and self-esteem is foremost in our minds at all times. When parents, students, school staff and management work together for these common goals great things can be achieved. We look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

3. ADMISSION STATEMENT

Scoil Mhuire, Gowran 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.

Scoil Mhuire, Gowran 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.

Scoil Mhuire 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.

Scoil Mhuire 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Scoil Mhuire is a school which has established a class, 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

Scoil Mhuire NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established special classes to provide an education **exclusively for students with Autism**. To be considered for enrolment in the Special (ASD) Class, a child must fulfil all the following requirements as prescribed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Department of Education & Skills.

In order to access a place in our Autism Class a pupil must have a recent psychological report from a relevant professional or team of professionals stating :-

1. **Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)**
- AND**
2. **A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports**
- AND**
3. **Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same**
- AND**
4. **A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.**

5. ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

The board of management will use the School Admissions Notice to communicate the number of places available in our mainstream classes and our special classes.

a) Admission of students to a Mainstream classes

This school shall admit each student seeking **admission in a mainstream class** except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
2. 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

Scoil Mhuire NS is a co-education Roman Catholic primary school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

b) Admission of students to an ASD special classes

The special classes attached to Scoil Mhuire NS provides an educational support exclusively for students with Autism.

Gowran NS, as a mainstream school with special classes for children with autism and in the spirit of inclusion, endeavours to integrate all children enrolled in our ASD special classes into their mainstream class environment as often as possible. This always takes place in consultation with parents and guardians of children.

NCSE guidelines allow a maximum of 6 pupils in each ASD special class.

Enrolment in our Autism Class will be considered where it has been demonstrated that a pupil requires the support of an autism Class because they are unable to learn effectively in a mainstream class for most or all of the school day even with appropriate supports.

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- 1. Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)**
AND
- 2. A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports**
AND
- 3. Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same**
AND
- 4. A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.**

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Enrolment Procedure for ASD special classes

- The application must be accompanied by all relevant documentation
- Applications will be dated and numbered in order of receipt
- At closing date (as per Admissions Notice) each application will be considered by the Special Class Admission Team (Principal, member of ISM team, SET Teacher) who may seek advice from our local SENO or other professionals.
- Accompanying reports will be examined to determine suitability of placement.
- The Admissions team will then advise the BOM on the suitability of each application
- The BOM will then ratify the successful applicants.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing
- Parents/guardians will then have to sign and return an Acceptance Form which will be enclosed along with a return date

- Unsuccessful candidates will be placed on a waiting list for 1 school year only
- If the school receive late applications for the special class, these applicants should be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These late applicants, even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream classes of the school or are local children and young people, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the special class.

6.OVERSUBSCRIPTION

a) Oversubscription to a mainstream Class

In the event that a mainstream 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:

1. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled in the school.
2. Sons/Daughters of past pupils *, priority eldest; (*see Section 7 F (2))
3. Children residing in the parish of Gowran, priority eldest.
4. Applicants from outside of parish, priority eldest.
5. A random selection, independently verified.

The criteria are listed in order of priority. When spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of any criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age within that criterion, starting with the oldest applicant

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 will be given to the oldest students for Junior Infant class. If this does not separate the candidates, any available places will be allocated by lottery. Lottery will be overseen by 2 members of the Board of Management, along with the principal and parents will be informed. This procedure will be fully recorded and will form part of the minutes of the next meeting of the board of management.

b) Oversubscription to ASD Class

In the event that an ASD special class is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission (***subject to all applications having satisfied criteria 1-4 listed above***), 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. Children already enrolled in the school-*priority given to those who have been enrolled in the school for the longest period of time.*
2. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled in the school.
3. Children residing in the parish of Gowran, priority eldest.
4. Sons/Daughters of past pupils *, priority eldest; (*see Section 7 F (2))
5. Applicants from outside of parish, priority eldest.
6. A random selection, independently verified.

The criteria are listed in order of priority. When spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of any criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age within that criterion, starting with the oldest applicant

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Priority will be given to the oldest students for Junior Infant class. If this does not separate the candidates, any available places will be allocated by lottery. Lottery will be overseen by 2 members of the Board of Management, along with the principal and parents will be informed. This procedure will be fully recorded and will form part of the minutes of the next meeting of the board of management.

c) Annual Review of a student's placement in an ASD special class

As learning needs may change over time, a pupil's enrolment in an autism class will be kept under continual review by the school. A review will take place once a year and will include a careful examination of the pupil's progress in achieving their learning targets.

This review will consider the views of parents/guardians, teachers and other relevant professionals. It will also examine the suitability of the special class placement and whether the pupil's needs might be better addressed in a mainstream or more supported setting (special school). Following a decision that the autism Class is no longer the most appropriate place for a pupil they may move to a mainstream class in our school if that is recommended by professionals involved, agreed with the child's parents and deemed to be in the best interests of the child.

7. WHAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED OR TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

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

- (a) a student’s prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí.
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission,
- (f) a student’s connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school other than in the case of this school including the selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and (2) parents of a student having attended the school. **In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school’s annual admission notice).**
- (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.

8. DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Mhuire will be based on the following:

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

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

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, 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 18 below for further details).

10. ACCEPTANCE OF AN OFFER OF A PLACE BY AN APPLICANT

In accepting an offer of admission from Scoil Mhuire 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.

11. CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH OFFERS MAY NOT BE MADE OR MAY BE WITHDRAWN

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Scoil Mhuire where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in section 10 above.

12. SHARING OF DATA WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student’s personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

13. WAITING LIST IN THE EVENT OF OVERSUBSCRIPTION

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Scoil Mhuire 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 Scoil Mhuire 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.

14. LATE APPLICATIONS

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school’s admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

15 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:

Pupils from other schools may transfer into the school at any time subject to the school’s Admission Policy.

However, enrolment of children during the school year will depend on the availability of places in the requested class. The maximum number of students in a mainstream class from Junior Infants to 6th Class in Gowran NS is 26.

The decision to enrol is at the discretion of the Board of Management, which will be mindful of the following:

- Staffing and accommodation
- The physical space in each classroom
- Multigrade classes
- The educational needs of children already enrolled in that class
- DES maximum class average directives

These procedures also apply 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.

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 a new term unless the applicant is new resident in the area.

Applications for the ASD class will be accepted in the timeframe as per Admissions Notice. Specific dates will be published in the Annual Admissions Notice.

The parent(s) of a student enrolling, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, must 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

16. DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Scoil Mhuire or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

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

17. ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

A written request should be made to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. REVIEWS/APPEALS

Review of decisions by the Board of Management Application for places in all schools are made in the first instance to the Principal, and only thereafter discussed at Board level. Parents can apply for a place during the year, and must receive a reply within three weeks.

The BOM must give a reason if the application is refused.

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 of Management 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 of Management 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.

Note: 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.

Gowran NS

www.gowranns.ie

‘Promoting full personal, moral and social development in caring Christian communities of learning and teaching.’

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. 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 This Policy may be reviewed and amended subject to any specific directions of the Patron and/or Minister for Education

This document states the Admissions Policy of our school at the present time. It will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to adjustments and changes in the future according to DES directives and/or those of the patron. Such changes and adjustments will be contained in an updated version of the school’s Admissions Policy.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____ Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ Principal/Secretary of Board of Management