

Scoil Mhuire na nGael
Bay Estate, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Roll Number: 19598V
School Patron: Archbishop Eamon Martin



School Admissions Policy

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 the 11th of September, 2023. 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 Scoil Mhuire na nGael'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

Scoil Mhuire na nGael is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Armagh.

“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 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 na nGael shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the religious education cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

While respect is paid to all religions and/or value systems, as a Catholic school we are concerned with the education of the whole person hence prominence is given to the quality of relationships alongside academic achievement. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and of participation in school life, with respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society, whilst working with the context of the rules and regulations of the Department of Education and Science.

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Mhuire na nGael 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 na nGael 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 na nGael 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 na nGael is a school with three special classes. 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 na nGael, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, established three classes to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD.

Children with special needs enrolling in Scoil Mhuire na nGael will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided to the school by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or request that the child be assessed immediately in order to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child and to profile the support services required.

The Board of Management will endeavour to have all resources and support in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, resource teacher, special needs assistants etc., specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc. The school may meet with the parents of the special needs child to discuss the school's suitability for the child as appropriate. If necessary a full

case conference may be called, including parents, class teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher and psychologist or social workers as appropriate.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

a) a student seeking a place in Junior Infants has not reached his/her fourth birthday on or before June 30th of their year of entry. An original birth certificate must be included with each application.

The application process is initiated on receipt of the fully completed and appropriately signed 'Application for Admission' form together with a copy of the child's birth certificate by the school. A utility bill in the name of one of the parents/guardians dated not later than three months prior to the date of submission of the application is also required.

b) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

c) The special class attached to Scoil Mhuire na nGael provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. The only separate requirement is that a completed NCSE Form 7 (Notification to NCSE of Enrolment in a Special School/Special Class) and a copy of the psychological report recommending the placement of the child in an ASD class is submitted with the Application for Admission. The report must state a diagnosis in accordance with DSM IV/V or ICD diagnostic criteria.

d) 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

Please note:

Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage

Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

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:

Places in mainstream classes will be decided on the following criteria:

1. Siblings (including step-siblings or foster siblings) of children already enrolled in the school or who have attended the school in the past.
2. Children whose main residence is in the Holy Family Parish or in St Joseph's Redemptorist Parish (current proof of address will be required with all applications e.g. a utility bill dated within the past 3 months. The electoral register or other confirmation may also be requested as proof of address).
3. All other applicants

The above criteria are listed in order of priority. When places are allocated under 'Criterion 1' and more places are available, then 'Criterion 2' comes into play, and so on until no places remain. Priority will be given to older child i.e. time of birth as recorded on birth certificate.

The special class for students with ASD caters for a maximum of 6 students. Places in ASD classes will be decided based on the following criteria:

1. Pupils currently enrolled in Scoil Mhuire na nGael who have been formally diagnosed with ASD and who have been recommended as suitable pupils for placement in an ASD class.
2. Siblings (including step-siblings or foster siblings) of children already enrolled in the school or who have attended the school in the past and who have been formally diagnosed with ASD and who have been recommended as suitable pupils for placement in an ASD class.
3. Children whose main residence is in the Holy Family Parish or in St Joseph's Redemptorist Parish (current proof of address will be required with all applications e.g. a utility bill dated within the past 3 months. The electoral register or other confirmation may also be requested as proof of address) who have been formally diagnosed with ASD and who have been recommended as suitable pupils for placement in an ASD class.
4. All other applicants outside criterion 1,2, and 3 who have been formally diagnosed with ASD and who have been recommended as suitable pupils for placement in an ASD class.

The above criteria are listed in order of priority. When places are allocated under 'Criterion 1' and more places are available, then 'Criterion 2' comes into play, and so on until no places remain. Priority will be given to older child i.e. time of birth as recorded on birth certificate.

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) 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 na nGael 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 na nGael, 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/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 na nGael 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 na nGael 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 na nGael 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 a 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:

1. All reports and relevant documentation from the pupil's previous school must be forwarded.
2. The transfer is considered to be in the best interests of the child.
3. A cap of 26 pupils is in place in all Senior Infant classes.
4. A decision will be made and parents will be advised of same within 21 days of receipt of the completed transfer request form as per section 9 above
5. 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 na nGael 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.

The above procedures will 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.

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

The Board of Scoil Mhuire na nGael 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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

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

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

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

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

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. on the 12th of September, 2023.

Signed:



Proinsias ÓCuanaigh
Chairperson B.O.M.

Signed:



Lisa Jones
Principal Teacher