



St Fergal's National School
Ballywaltrim
Bray
Co. Wicklow
A98A521
Reg. charity no. 20139292

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Admission Policy of St Fergal's National School

School Address: Boghall Road, Bray, County Wicklow.

Eircode: A98 A521.

Roll No: 20466L.

School Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

General Information.

St Fergal's National School is a mixed school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It caters for children from Junior Infants to 6th class. We also have 2 Early Start classes. At present, there are 30 full time teachers employed in the school:

Principal

19 Mainstream teachers

8 SEN teachers

2 Permanent Early Start teachers.

1 HSCL teacher.

The school is funded by grants that are paid to the Board of Management (BOM) by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

1. Introduction:

The 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 13th October 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St Fergal's School admission process are set out in the school's **annual admission notice** which is published annually on the school's website at least **one** week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school:

St Fergal's National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

“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 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 St Fergal's 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, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Ethos Statement-St Fergal's National School

St Fergal's National School is a Catholic Primary School under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school models and promotes a philosophy inspired by belief in God and the core values of life- long learning, respect, inclusion, justice, truth and joy.

It aspires to be a positive place of openness and acceptance, where children will feel safe and be listened to, where we wish them to grow physically, mentally and spiritually through actively relating to self, others the earth and spirit.

These values find expression in our daily work, our processes for decision making, planning and policy making and in the implementation of all school policies: curricular, pastoral and organisational.

3. Admission Statement:

St Fergal's 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 religious 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’, ‘ground of race’, ‘religion ground’, ‘sexual orientation ground’, and ‘Traveller community ground’ shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St. Fergal’s 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with Special Education Classes:

St. Fergal’s National School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provide an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills and may refuse to admit to those classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

4.(a) Enrolment of Children with Special Needs:

St Fergal’s National School welcomes children with special needs. Our school supports the principles of inclusiveness and equality of access and participation, within the context of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes and within the funding and resources available. Each case will be examined carefully, as every child with special needs has specific educational and/or physical requirement(s). However, the teaching capacity and resources of the school may not be sufficient to respond adequately to the needs of some pupils.

Parent(s)/ guardian(s) of children with special educational needs should advise the principal of St Fergal’s National School of their child’s specific needs so that the most appropriate learning environment/ supports for their child are established before commencing in the school.

Subject to the following, no distinction is made between children with special educational needs and applicant children with no such needs.

The Board of Management requests that medical/psychological assessments (additionally, reports/ test results for children already enrolled in primary school) be made

available to assist the school in establishing the educational and any other needs of the child relevant to his/her special needs and to profile the support services required (Circular 0056/2011). Where such supports are not available the Board of Management may request that the child be immediately assessed for the purpose of assisting the school in establishing the specific needs of the child relevant to his/her special needs, A profile of the relevant support services necessary may need to be furnished by the relevant authorities.

Following receipt of such reports the Board of Management will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required it will request the Department of Education and Skills and/or The National Council for Special Education to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the relevant report(S).

The Principal acting on behalf of the Board will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability in meeting these needs. If necessary, a full case conference involving all relevant parties (which may include parents/guardians, Principal, class teacher, psychologist, SEN coordinator(s) and other professionals as appropriate) will be held.

St. Fergal's National School is a mainstream school but is also inclusive and will educate pupils with special needs in the mainstream system.

4.(b) Categories of Special/Additional Educational Needs catered for in the Special Class :-

In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN Class attached

St. Fergal's National School, with the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/ Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

5. Admission of Students :

The school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed.
- b) a parent of a pupil 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 will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.

- c) The Special Classes attached to St. Fergal's National School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic spectrum Disorders and the school may refuse admission to those classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in those classes.

6. Procedures when school is oversubscribed:

In the event that our school is oversubscribed, St Fergal's National School will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following criteria in 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.

- a) Children of Early Start classes
- b) Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and children resident in the parish (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
- c) Children of staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
- d) Children residing outside the parish (the eldest child will also have priority).

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories listed above (e.g. have the same D.O.B), a lottery will decide which child is to be offered a place first.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account:

- a) **A student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service.**
- b) **The payment of fees or contributions (however 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.** The exception being in the case of St Fergal's National School, the selection criteria listed in S 6 (a) 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 means that a school cannot apply a selection criterion based on the date of application, but it does not prevent the school from requiring applications to be submitted within the timeframe set out in the **Annual Admission Notice**.

8. Decisions on applications:

All decisions on applications for admission to St Fergal's National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy.
- Our 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.

NOTE- (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 admission 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 a place in St Fergal's National School you must indicate –

- a) 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
- b) 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 St. Fergal's National School where –

- a) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- b) An applicant fails to confirm acceptance of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- c) 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
- d) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of acceptance of an offer as set out in section 10 above.

12. Sharing 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 students in relation to whom -

- a) an application for admission to the school has been received.
- b) an offer of admission to the school has been made; or
- c) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any of the following:

- a) The date on which an application for admission was received by the school.
- b) The date on which an offer of admission was made by the school.
- c) The date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant.
- d) 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 that there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St Fergal's National School were unsuccessful, due to the school being oversubscribed, will be completed and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St Fergal's 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in 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 admission policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under the 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:

Students may transfer to St. Fergal's National School from other schools subject to the school's Admission Policy, the availability of places and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Skills. The Principal will also contact the Principal of the other school for a report as required by the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000 and the parents/guardians will be notified of the BOM's decision in writing within 21 days. The Principal shall request the pupil's PPS number to facilitate the update of the POD system.

The procedure 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 is as follows:

Students may be admitted to St Fergal's National School after a school year has commenced subject to the school's Admission Policy, the availability of places and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Skills. The Principal will also contact the Principal of the other school for a report as required by the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000 and the parents/ guardians will be notified of the BOM's decision within 21 days. The Principal shall request the pupil's PPS number to facilitate the update of the POD system.

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

The Board of Management of St Fergal's National School or any person 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 parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in the 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), 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 a 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 appeal must be addressed in writing to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the reasons for the appeal and it must be lodged within **10** calendar days of receiving the refusal. Parent(s), if unhappy with the result of this appeal may appeal to the Department of Education & Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act. There is an official form provided by the Department for this purpose. This appeal must be lodged within **42** calendar days of receipt of the refusal from the school to grant admission.

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 BOM prior to making an appeal under Section **29** of the Education Act 1998.

Signed: *Joe Behan* Date: *03/10/2022*

Joe Behan
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Tom Sargent* Date: *03/10/2022*

Tom Sargent
Principal