

ENROLMENT POLICY

Coolfancy N.S. is a Roman Catholic school under the Patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Ferns.

As a Roman Catholic school, the school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

Legal Framework

Section 9(j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that "A recognised school shall ...Subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school".

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall "publish...The policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of parents' choice are respected".

Section 27 (1) states that "A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school" and (2) that "the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the School having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers".

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 (Section 19 (1)) requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the Schools Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management, shall as soon as possible (but no later than 21days) after receiving such information "make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof".

The Equal Status Act, 2000 (Sections 5 & 7 (2)) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of "gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community" regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are

limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values (Section 7 (3))

Enrolment Procedures

1. Application Procedure:

The Board of Management, through the Principal, will conduct a census of prospective pupils as per Parish records and through parents of existing pupils in the school. Notification of Enrolment Application Closing Date shall be by way of Mass announcements; by circular to parents and in local newspaper.

- 1.1 Parents seeking to enrol their child(ren) in the Junior Infant Class in our school, are requested to return a completed Enrolment Application Form (available in the office) to the school by 31st May each year. - *Copy of Enrolment Application form is appended.*
- 1.2 The names of children for whom Enrolment Application forms have been returned, will be placed on a class enrolment waiting list.
- 1.3 Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious / political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.
- 1.4 The Board of Management makes decisions in relation to applications for enrolment in accordance with school policy.
- 1.5 While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Mary's N.S. has responsibility to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind -
 - (a) Size of / available space in classrooms.
 - (b) Educational needs of children of a particular age.
 - (c) Multi-grade classes.
 - (d) Presence of children of a particular age.
 - (e) DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 30 children)
- 1.6 The Board will have regard for relevant Department of Education and Science guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and/or any other relevant

requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of children.

1.7 The Board is bound by the Department of Education and Science's Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years. A copy of the child's birth certificate will be requested on enrolment.

2. Criteria for Enrolment: -

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year (due to the Board of Management being unable to provide suitable accommodation, or recruit the required teaching staff) the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

- 2.1 Brother and sisters (including step-siblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled - priority to oldest
- 2.2 All children who live within the Parish boundaries of any, or no, religious denomination.
- 2.3 Children of current school staff - priority to oldest.
- 2.4 All children who are not resident within the Parish are entitled to a place in the school if there are vacancies in the school after groups 2.1 to 2.4 have been allocated places.
- 2.5 In the event of being unable to enrol a child / children from categories 2.1 to 2.4 in a given class at the beginning of a year, or mid-year, such children will receive priority in order of 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 for the subsequent school year over other children on the class waiting list.

3. Enrolment Procedure

- 3.1 The Board, through the Principal, will notify parents of their decision regarding the enrolment acceptance or refusal (as per Education Welfare Act 2000). As a general principle and in so far as practicable having regard to the school's enrolment policy, children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is space available.
- 3.2 The prospective Junior Infants will spend one informal period, 10 am to 12:15 in school on the Induction Morning held in June each year, to familiarise themselves with their new environment. Parents of children to be enrolled in the school are requested to return a completed Enrolment Form (available in the

office or from the website) with an original Birth/Adoption Certificate with the application before 31st May - *Copy of Enrolment Form is appended.*

- 3.3 Applications for enrolment of a child will only be considered for a maximum of one academic year in advance. Enrolment criteria at the time of acceptance of the application are the only criteria that will be considered.
- 3.4 Children enrolled in our school are required to co-operate with and support the School/Board of Management's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation & management. The Board of Management places Parents/Guardians responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate with said policies in an age-appropriate way, and in accordance with the Department of Education's rules for National Schools. Parents are requested to read and accept the Code of Behaviour and the Acceptable Use of the Internet policies on enrolment.

4. Enrolment of Children with Special Needs

- 4.1 In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.
- 4.2 Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Science to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: access to Special Educational Needs teacher, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.
- 4.3 The school will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include parents, principal, class teacher, S.E.T., psychologist and other relevant professionals, as appropriate.

- 4.4 It may be necessary for the Board of Management to defer enrolment of a particular child pending:
- The receipt of an assessment report
 - The provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Science to meet the needs specified in the psychological and /or medical report.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the availability of such resources, parents of children who are unsatisfied with the level of educational provision in our school, are advised to consider a special school which is designed and resourced to specifically cater for the needs of children with special educational needs.

5. Pupils Transferring to St.Mary's N.S. from another school.

- 5.1 Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to schools Admission and Enrolment policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Science
- 5.2 It is a requirement of the Board of Management that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress be communicated between schools (as per Education Welfare Act 2000).
- 5.3 The school shall receive copies of all annual school reports, educational screening tests, reports from N.E.P.S. and any other relevant information.

6. Admission Day / Date

- 6.1 The Board of Management specify that Junior Infants may only be admitted to the school up to and including 30th September.
- 6.2 Pupils to all other classes who have already been enrolled in another school if newly resident in the area, may be admitted throughout the year. Parents of children with specific educational and/or physical disabilities should notify the school in advance of the proposed enrolment date so that application may be made to the Department of Education and Science for the provision of appropriate learning support services.

7. Pupils Transferring from St. Mary's N.S. to another school.

- 7.1 The school to which the child is transferring shall receive copies of the most recent annual school report plus an up to date report by the class teacher for the transferring child.
- 7.2 The receiving school shall also receive reports of educational screening tests, with the consent of the child's parent(s).
- 7.3 The Principal of this school shall make a courtesy phone call to the Principal of the transferring child's new school.
- 7.4 The principal of the receiving school will be requested to confirm in writing that the transferred pupil has been enrolled in that school.

The above policy, which may be added to and revised on an on-going basis, was approved and sanctioned by the current Board of Management at a meeting on _____

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

_____ (Chairperson)