

Admission Policy of Newtown N.S

School Address: Newtown, Ardee, Co. Louth

Roll number: 03275H

School Patron/s: Bishop of Meath



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 5/8/20. 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 Newtown N.S'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

Newtown N.S is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath – Bishop Tom Deenihan.

Characteristic Spirit

"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 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 Newtown N.S. 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.

"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 all and appreciation of all".

The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum" p.15

Ethos of Newtown N.S.

The 'ethos' of Newtown N.S. encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practices which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school 'ethos', the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive 'ethos'.

In Newtown NS , where the ethos is that of a Christian Catholic School, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church.

The pupils are prepared for the reception of the following sacraments – First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with the arrangement of the Diocese of Meath.

Prayer is a feature of the school Day

The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his / her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.

The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment.

A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.

Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents / guardians and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages.

The ancillary staff of our school are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.

Mission Statement of Newtown NS

Newtown N.S is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

While Newtown N.S.is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions and will strive to accommodate all.

Newtown N.S. will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

Newtown N.S. will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Parents Association.

Newtown N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Newtown N.S. will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils, and promote respect for all minority and ethnic groups.

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt

3. Admission Statement

Newtown N.S. 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.

All denominational schools

Newtown NS 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with special education class(es)

Newtown NS is a school which is establishing a class (Sept. 2020), 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

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

Newtown NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, will establish (Sept 2020) a class to provide an education exclusively for students with an assessed diagnosis of Autism or autism spectrum disorder using the DSM-V or ICD 10. A diagnostic report prepared by a Psychologist, Psychiatrist or Multi-Disciplinary Team must be provided. (dated within the last 2 years). The report must have assessed and classified the child as having autism or autism spectrum disorder using the DSM-V or ICD 10, including a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child. This class is for all pupils who meet these criteria irrespective of cognitive ability

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

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

Newtown NS is a Roman Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholicism, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to Newtown NS (from Sept 2020) will provide an education exclusively for students with an assessed diagnosis of Autism or autism spectrum disorder using the DSM-V or ICD 10, including a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child (as described in Section 4 above) 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.

6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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:

Mainstream Class:

1. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of the academic year who have **siblings currently** enrolled in the school (priority to the eldest)
2. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of the academic year and whose primary residence is in the **immediate catchment area**, which is determined as **in the Catholic Parish of Lobinstown** (priority to the eldest)
3. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of academic year who live **outside the Parish of Lobinstown**. (priority to the eldest)

Special Class Unit

Children applying for this class are four years of age before the first day of the academic year **with an assessed diagnosis** of Autism or autism spectrum disorder using the DSM-V or ICD 10, including a recommendation that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child. (This will require a professional report dated within the last two years). The following criteria will then apply

- 1 Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of the academic year who have **siblings currently** enrolled in the school. (priority to the eldest)
2. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of the academic year before the first day of the academic year whose primary residence is in the **immediate catchment area**, which is determined as **in the Catholic Parish of Lobinstown** (priority to the eldest)
3. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of the academic year who live **outside the Parish of Lobinstown**. (priority to the eldest)

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:

- If the applications within one of the above categories exceeds the number of places available, the places will be allocated beginning with the oldest and proceeding in descending order of age until all remaining available places have been allocated.
- If in the event that one remaining place is available and the next two applicants share the same date of birth, the place will be awarded to the oldest as determined by the earlier time of birth recorded on their birth cert
- Where one remaining place is available and the next two children are twins, both will be admitted, by way of exception. (in mainstream class only)

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, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
 - (I) an early intervention class for Special Education Class
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to:
 - admission to (a) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned
- (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 the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admissions to Newtown NS 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 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 Newtown NS, 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 Newtown NS 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 Newtown NS 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 Newtown NS 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 OR/AND, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought are as follows:

- Pupils apply during the school year can only be admitted on the first day of each school term to manage school transfers during the school year.
- An applicant will be enrolled in an age appropriate class where the foregoing and following criteria have been met and provided there is not a refusal to enrol:
 - The School is provided with a fully completed, signed and dated enrolment application form which is available from the School Office and on the School's website together with all required documentation.
 - A separate form must be completed for each applicant, if applicable.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Newtown NS 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, whose parent 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) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Written requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

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, 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.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary in light of experience. This policy was approved by the school's Board of Management on 29th April 2020.

Signed: John Lynch

Mr. John Lynch (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 12th May 2020

