

St. Declan's National School

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School Patron: Bishop of Meath

Admission Policy

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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 originally approved by the school patron on 24th June 2020 and updated thereafter as required. 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. Declan's National School'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 for the intake group of Junior Infants.

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

The application form for admission is available on the school's website. Alternatively, the application form can be requested in hardcopy to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Declan's N.S. is a co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath.

"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 St. Declan's 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.

St . Declans N.S. Mission Statement

**Our school cherishes all pupils equally.
We aim, with the involvement and
co-operation of the entire school
community, to assist each child to
reach their full potential as individuals.**

Our ethos also permeates the school day through our actions, attitudes and practices:

- We provide opportunities for prayer, the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments.
- We strive to create a learning environment where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings.
- We seek to form pupils who will unselfishly use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work for a more just and caring society.
- We provide a welcoming and inclusive community that is respectful of all religious traditions and beliefs.

While St. Declan's N.S. promotes the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic Faith, we also acknowledge and respect the diverse beliefs of a number of pupils in our school. Similarly, all pupils and parents/guardians must respect the ethos of the school.

3. Admission Statement

St. Declan's 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.

St. Declan's N.S. 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.

St. Declan's N.S. will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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 required to do so by the Council.

St. Declan's N.S., will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) if the school is oversubscribed (please see section 5 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.
- c) a student has not reached their 4th birthday on or before the 31st March in the year of admission.

St. Declan's N.S. is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not a Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. Oversubscription

From June 2025 forward classes will be limited to 25 pupils and the school will aim to reduce all class sizes to this figure. Children who leave the school will not be replaced in classes where this number is exceeded.

Where there are places available and 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:

1. Siblings or step-siblings* of students currently attending St. Declan's N.S.
2. Children who live within the Parish boundary (see map Appendix A)
3. Children living outside the Parish Boundary

** For the purpose of this policy the term siblings includes children who are step-siblings, half-siblings and children who are being fostered by a family of current students of St. Declan's N.S.*

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:

Children will be prioritised in order of age, beginning with the eldest. If in the event that two or more children are tied for the last remaining place, the place will be allocated by conducting a lottery which will be conducted and observed by the principal, another staff member and an officer of the Parents' Association. If twins are tied for the last remaining place, both will be admitted by way of exception.

6. 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 preschool 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 the school wishing to give preference to siblings of a student currently attending the school)
- (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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Declan's N.S. 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 13 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 14 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.

8. 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 17 below for further details).

9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Declan's N.S., 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 are 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.

10. 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. Declan's N.S. 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 and time 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 9 above.

11. 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).

12. 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 St. Declan's N.S. 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 St. Declan's N.S. 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.

13. 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 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 12.

14. 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:

Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child/ren in St. Declan's N.S. are requested to complete an Application Form for Admission.

The Application Form for Admission can be accessed on the school's website at www.decsash.ie

In the event that you cannot access the online form, please email info@decsash.ie or write to St. Declan's N.S. Office, Bourne Avenue, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, A84KT02.

Applications will be accepted at any stage during the year. A response will be given by the school within 21 days of receiving the application. Places, if available, will be allocated by applying the criteria below and offers will be sent by letter. If there are no school places available, the names of children for whom an application form has been submitted will be placed on a class waiting list. When accepting an offer of a school place parents/guardians must accept by returning the registration form to the school **within 10 calendar days from the date indicated on the letter**. In order to complete the registration process an original Birth/Adoption certificate and proof of address (utility bill issued within the past three months) must be brought into the school with the completed registration form. Copies of the Birth/Adoption certificate and proof of address will be retained by the school. Failure to return the relevant documentation to the school within the 10 calendar days will result in the withdrawal of the offer and the place being offered to the next eligible child. Please note it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to update the school of any change to their personal details (address, phone number, email etc.) as necessary.

Children's names will not be kept on any waiting list past August 31st of any year. Therefore a parent/guardian who was not offered a place must reapply if they wish to seek a place for their child again in the following year i.e. waiting lists are **not** carried over from year to year.

Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school.

The maximum number of children in each classroom will be 25. Therefore, children who leave the school will not be replaced in classes where there are 25 or more pupils. An exception to this are classes in Rooms 7, 8, 24 and 25 where the Board of Management has determined the maximum number of pupils in these

classrooms based on the size of the classrooms and the size of furniture required for those particular class levels:

- Room 7 (maximum number of pupils is 24)
- Room 8 (maximum number of pupils is 18)
- Room 24 (maximum number of pupils is 24)
- Room 25 (maximum number of pupils is 24)

In the event of there being more than one application on a waiting list for any class other than Junior Infants the following will be the criteria, in order of preference, for selection:

- a) Siblings or step-siblings* of children currently attending St. Declan's N.S.
- b) Children who live within the Parish boundary (see map Appendix 2)
- c) Children living outside the Parish Boundary

** For the purpose of this policy the term siblings includes children who are step-siblings, half-siblings and children who are being fostered by a family of current students of St. Declan's N.S.*

Children seeking admission in classes other than junior infants will be enrolled at the same class level as the class they are transferring from. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a child to be enrolled in a class that is either above or below the level at which they are currently in. This will be done in consultation with parents/guardians and age appropriateness will be considered for the class level in which the pupil is being placed in.

If two or more children qualify under any of the above categories, selection will be made by conducting a lottery. This lottery will be carried out in a fair and transparent manner and will be observed and conducted by the principal, another staff member and an officer of the Parents' Association.

Pupils may be enrolled during the school year where space allows. Pupils wishing to transfer from another school are enrolled subject to the Rules governing National Schools, as well as our school's Admission Policy. Under the terms of The Education Welfare Act (2000) information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress are to be provided by the school from which the child is transferring upon acceptance of a place in St. Declan's N.S.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Declan's N.S. 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.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who 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:

Children who are not participating in religious instruction remain with their class group during these lessons. Children may be assigned other curricular work to be completed independently during this time. It is not possible to arrange alternative teaching or supervision for children who are not participating in religious instruction. A written request should be made to the Principal of the school to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

17. Reviews/appeals

a) 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. This review must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the review and lodged within 21 calendar days of the date indicated on the initial refusal letter. A Board of Management meeting will be convened upon receipt of the review and a decision will be communicated in writing within 21 calendar days of receipt of the review.

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.

b) 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 to 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 above)

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.

18. Exceptional Circumstances

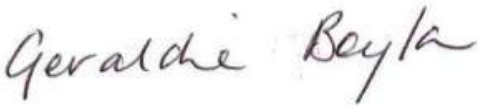

In cases where a student who is currently enrolled in the school and on foot of a professional assessment which recommends the student attends a special school or a school with a special class for a short-term* placement, then the student may be readmitted after reapplying to the school to an age-appropriate mainstream class. This exception will also include children who had accepted a place in Junior Infants.

** short-term placement is considered to be up to three years*

19. Ratification and Review of Policy

The Board of Management has the right to review and propose amendments to this policy. Amendments proposed require the Patron's approval before they become operative. This policy was devised by St. Declan's National School and was ratified by the Board of Management on 21st July 2020. It was subsequently updated and ratified by the Board on the 6th December 2022 and again in August 2023. A review will take place in 2026, or sooner if necessary.

Signed and dated:

	
Ms. Geraldine Boylan	Mr. Cian Kearins
Chairperson of the Board of Management	Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date: 17/6/2025	Date: 17/6/2025

Appendix A (Map of Parish Boundary)

