

## **Admission Statement of St. Peter's NS**

**School Address: Excise Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 XY50**

**Roll number: 07722D**

**School Patron/s: Bishop Kevin Doran (Diocese of Elphin)**

### **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 18<sup>th</sup> January 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 St. Peter's NS 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**

St. Peter's NS is a Catholic Senior Girls Primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Elphin, Kevin Doran. The school also caters for boys and girls with Mild General Learning Disability in a special class setting.

"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 St. Peter's NS 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. Peter's NS is a Catholic school embracing a multicultural community, committed to a holistic education, nurturing the dignity and value of each individual in an atmosphere of harmony, friendship and mutual respect.

St. Peter's NS promotes inclusiveness particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need. We promote respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

In partnership with parents, Board of Management and the wider school community we strive to provide a well ordered, happy and secure environment for all students where they can be encouraged to reach their full potential.

### **3. Admission Statement**

*St. Peter's NS will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its 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 the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.*

*St. Peter's NS will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).*

St. Peter's NS 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. Peter's NS is a Senior Girls School. It caters for girls from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit persons of a gender that cannot be catered for in the mainstream classes of this school.

St. Peter's NS also caters for boys and girls with Mild General Learning Disability in Special Class settings 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 classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

St. Peter's NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St. Peter's 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 catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

St. Peter's NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Mild General Learning Disability.

Applications to these classes are made by submitting NCSE FORM 7 Notification to NCSE of Enrolment in Special Class together with the standard application form for admission to St. Peter's NS. Parents will be made aware of the Code of Behaviour for Special Classes and be requested to sign the acceptance form.

**Note for schools:** The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.

## 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

St. Peter's NS provides education exclusively for girls in the mainstream setting and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

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

The special classes attached to St. Peter's NS provide an education exclusively for students with Mild General Learning Disability and the school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in these classes.

**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:

Where the number of applications for St.Peter's NS Intake class (2<sup>nd</sup> class), exceeds the number of places available, the school will offer places in the priority order of 1 through 7 of the categories outlined below in order to determine admission into 2<sup>nd</sup> class for up to and including 30<sup>th</sup> September of the year of admission.

1. DES maximum of 20 pupils per class (DEIS Band 1 Vertical school guidelines).
2. Brothers and sisters (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled in the school.
3. Children transferring & enrolling from our cluster schools, St. Paul's Infant School & Dean Kelly National School.
4. Children whose home address is closest to the school
5. Applicants whose primary residence is in Ss. Peter and Paul's Parish, Athlone.
6. Children of past pupils.
7. Children of current school staff.

Where the number of applications for the special classes exceeds the number available, the school will offer places in the priority order of 1 through 7 of the categories outlined below in order to determine admission into the special classes for up to and including 30<sup>th</sup> September of the year of admission.

1. DES designation of Mild General Learning Disability.
2. Brothers and sisters (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled in the school.
3. Children transferring & enrolling from our cluster schools, St. Paul's Infant School & Dean Kelly National School.
4. Children whose home address is closest to the school
5. Applicants whose primary residence is in Ss. Peter and Paul's parish, Athlone.
6. Children of past pupils.
7. Children of current school staff.

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:

- In the Intake class (2<sup>nd</sup> class)/Special classes priority will be given to the oldest children in allocating places proceeding in descending order of age from oldest to youngest until all remaining available places have been filled. If two or more applicants have the same date of birth, the school will apply a random selection process to these applicants only, in order to establish to whom places in that category will be offered. This random selection process will be witnessed by the Board of Management.

## 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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (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, or
  - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contribution to the school.
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to St. Peter's NS Mild General Learning Disability classes.
- (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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Peter's 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 St. Peter's 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 St. Peter's 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.

### **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 St. Peter's 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 St. Peter's 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.

Waiting lists will expire at the end of the school year.

### **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:

An application for a place in St Peter's NS will only be considered should a vacancy exist.

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of pupils enrolled in each class as 24.

Should a vacancy exist the applicant will be enrolled in an age appropriate class provided that;

(1) The school is provided with a fully completed, signed and dated enrolment application form which is available from the school office and the school's website together with all required documentation.

(2) The applicant will be required to provide all relevant reports from the school from which the applicant proposes to transfer or the school last attended by the applicant.

(3) A separate form must be completed for each applicant.

(4) Acceptance by the school office of an application does not mean that same will be processed.

(5) Applications that are incomplete, not signed/dated and do not include the required documentation will not be processed.

(6) Submitting inaccurate information on form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn and the place being reallocated. In the case of a placement on a waiting list, it will result in removal from the waiting list.

(7) Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to the parent(s) of the applicant within 21 days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form provided all requested documentation has also been provided.

(8) Parent(s) of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school in writing of the acceptance of the place, by completing and returning to the school an admission acceptance form within 10 days. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and reallocated.

(9) Any contact or lobbying of school personnel or Board of Management members regarding admission will disqualify an applicant

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Peter's 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

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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:

- **Students will be given independent work during religious instruction time.**
- **In the event of a whole school religious ceremony/event in the school or church the pupils will be present in the venue but will not be asked to participate in the ceremony/event.**



## 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.

