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Admission Policy

School Patron

Right Rev'd Michael Burrows

Church of Ireland (Anglican Bishop of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe)

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 15th June, 2021. 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 Saint Michael's National 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 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.

0. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Saint Michael's N.S. is a co-educational National School under the patronage of the Church of Ireland (Anglican Bishop of the United Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe), the present Patron being the Right Reverend Doctor Kenneth Kearon.

"Church of Ireland/Anglican" ethos in the context of a Church of Ireland primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Anglican Christian tradition. This seeks to nurture and encourage the formation of the intellectual, academic, sporting, social and religious abilities of each child within the framework of the community of faith. A Church of Ireland ethos encourages intellectual diversity of thought and encourages the individual to seek to understand themselves, the world around them and the connection between the world and the Divine. This understanding of school ethos promotes pluralism in thought and living, in the context

Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland

Saint Michael's National School, 11, Barrington Street, Limerick V94 A0K7

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of a Christian school community. Drawing on its Anglican tradition, the Church of Ireland School encourages home/family involvement, highlighting the importance of the family/home in the social and emotional development of the child, and more broadly, the community of the school and church.

In line with DES advice in **Rules for National Schools**, that "... a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school ...", the Board of Management of Saint Michael's N.S. and the staff seek to promote the development of honesty, truthfulness, courtesy, punctuality and responsibility in each individual pupil attending the school. A proper regard for the rights and views of others is encouraged. A caring and tolerant attitude to other people and to the environment is nurtured.

It is expected that pupils extend these values and attitudes in their dealings with other children in the school, with members of school staff, with parents, friends and others who may have occasion to visit the school.

It is the formal policy of the school to foster these attitudes both by explicit teaching in the classroom and in the informal life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as members of a community where all are entitled to live irrespective of gender, age, socio-economic background, religion, and ability or family circumstances. It is advocated that Senior pupils adopt a caring and responsible attitude to the Junior pupils. The ethos is also fostered through regular assemblies and at the end of each term, is marked by a service to which all parents and friends are invited.

One of the primary functions of the Board of Management is to foster and uphold the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school as a Church of Ireland primary school. Determining the admission of children to the school is an essential aspect of the discharging of this function of the Board.

N.B. This school is under the patronage of the Church of Ireland. In accordance with the Department of Education & Science's advice that "a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school ..." the Board of Management and the staff seek to create a Christian ethos and spirit within the school. Children are expected to take part in the whole life of the school.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Saint Michael'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, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Our Mission Statement

Saint Michael's National School is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of sex, social background, family circumstances, education achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning. Pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging, they are

treated fairly and their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged as is their intellectual, social and academic development.

It is a community where moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others, and civic responsibility are nurtured and protected. The justification of these qualities is based on Biblical teaching.

Saint Michael's National School is a part of the local church community and has strong links with the Parish. This, for example, is shown by the fact that pupils attend services in the local church and members of the clergy visit the school on a regular basis.

The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for religious differences. The admission policy of this school allows those of other religions or none to become pupils.

Religious Education occupies a central position in the school curriculum and is regarded as a core subject; generally speaking, all pupils in the school attend classes in Religious Education.

Saint Michael's National School is one where the traditions and teaching of the Church inform the position taken in regard to moral issues which arise in the teaching of secular subjects.

The school nurtures freedom of thought and a personal relationship with God. This is most evident in the teaching of Religious Education and in the prayer life of the school community. An important aspect of school life in Saint Michael's is the weekly assembly which involves the entire student body along with all staff and various members of the clergy (who attend on a rotation) from various churches in Limerick.

3.Admission Statement

Saint Michael'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,
- a. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- b. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- c. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- d. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- e. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- f. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

- g. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- h. 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.

Saint Michael's National School 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.

Saint Michael'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 Church of Ireland 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

Saint Michael's N.S. does not have a Special Class exclusively for students with Special Educational Needs.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a. 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

Saint Michael's National School is a Church of Ireland school and may refuse to admit as a student, a person who is not Church of Ireland or a member of a Protestant reformed church, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

In order to maintain a quality teaching environment and for the health and safety of pupils and staff, The Board of Management of Saint Michael's National School will set school capacity each June, taking into consideration the current pupil/teacher ratio, class sizes within the school and projected enrollments or any other consideration that may be considered relevant by the Board of Management.

6. Oversubscription

Saint Michael's National School is a Church of Ireland school. 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:

(a) Priority Category 1: An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school (*As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act*) and who lives within the boundaries of Limerick City Parish. Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for **Junior Infants**, must have attained their 4th birthday by the 1st April of the year of entry. In the event of oversubscription of Applicant Students within Priority Category 1, priority will be given to siblings of existing pupils of the school.

(b) Priority Category 2: An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school, outside the boundaries of Limerick City Parish (*As defined in Section 7(A) (2) of the Equal Status Act*). Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for **Junior Infants**, must have attained their 4th birthday by the 1st April of the year of entry. In the event of oversubscription of Applicant Students within Priority Category 2, priority will be given to siblings of existing pupils of the school.

(c) Priority Category 3: An Applicant Student who lives within a one-mile radius of the School and who complies with the terms of this Policy. Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for **Junior Infants**, must have attained their 4th birthday by the 1st April of the year of entry. In the event of oversubscription of Applicant Students within Priority Category 3, priority will be given to siblings of existing pupils of the school.

(d) Priority Category 4: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy. Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for **Junior Infants**, must have attained their 4th birthday by the 1st April of the year of entry. In the event of oversubscription of Applicant Students within Priority Category 4, priority will be given to siblings of existing pupils of the school.

In respect of **Priority categories 1 and 2 above**, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious

instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

(i) a statement from the Applicant confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

and

(ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:

- a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion **or**
- the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion **or**
- A baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

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:

Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category does not exceed the available number of places, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system. Applicants from the relevant priority category will be invited to attend a lottery in the school on a given date as witnesses.

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

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,
- 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. the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, siblings of an applicant student attending the school are prioritised as part of our selection criteria as outlined in Section 6).

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 admission to Saint Michael's National School 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, accompanied by the supporting documentation listed on the annual admission notice and application form.

(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.

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 Saint Michael's National School, 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.

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 Saint Michael's National School where—
.it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.

- i.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.
- ii.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
- iii.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 Saint Michael's National School 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 Saint Michael'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.

Applicant students 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. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

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 to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

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. Applicant students will be offered a place in the relevant class if a place is available. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places in the relevant class, the school will apply the selection criteria set out in Section 6 of this policy to those applications. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

The procedures 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, are as follows:

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. Applicant students 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 student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of this policy.

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

The Board of Saint Michael's National School 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
- a. 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 a student, whose parents have 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:

The school is not in a position to provide supervision of children who do not wish to engage in religious instruction/assemblies and similar events. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child, a written request should be made to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the principal, the parent(s)/guardians and the Chairperson of the Board of Management to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of 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 applicant 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)

All appeals to the Board of Saint Michael's National School should be sought within 3 weeks by the parents of the applicant child/children. The Board of Management will revert to the appellant within 3 weeks.

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 was ratified by the Board on the 15th June 2021.

This Policy was ratified by the Bishop on the 16th June 2021.

This Admission Policy will be reviewed as the need arises by the Board.

Signature: *Niall Sloane*

The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 15th June, 2021