

## **Admission Policy of St. Columbanus N.S.**

**Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin, A96OXD1**

**Roll number: 20218P**

**School Patron: Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell**

### **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 31/7/20. 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 St. Columbanus N.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**

St. Columbanus N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin

"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. Columbanus 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. Columbanus National School aims to teach the skills that are needed to develop each child's intellect. Its aims are also to imbue the children with appropriate spiritual, moral and cultural values and to develop their awareness and understanding of their environment at a local, national and global level. The school seeks to promote the physical and emotional wellbeing of all pupils, and to develop their expressive, artistic, creative and intellectual abilities to each pupil's full capacity. In partnership with the whole school community we aim to make the school a happy and effective place for learning

### **3. Admission Statement**

St. Columbanus 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. Columbanus 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Columbanus N.S. is a school which has established two special classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with the category of ASD as specified by the Minister and will 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**

Pupils with special educational needs will be catered for within the relevant class and a 'Continuum of Support' will be opened. Pupils may also avail of support from the SET team.

St. Columbanus N.S., with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. (ASD)

The following criteria will apply when making an application for one of these classes

Enrolment of Children in the Special Classes for children with Autism

Each child must have a full current Psychological & Cognitive Assessment, which must specify a diagnosis of 'Autism' i.e. DSMV or ICD10 and a recommendation for a special class placement in a mainstream school from such a professional report.

The parents/guardians must fill in and return St. Columbanus N.S. Application Form for placement in the A.S.D Class. This application form must be sent to the school in hard copy format, email applications for the ASD Class will not be accepted. All reports and assessments must accompany the application form, including O.T. and/or Speech and Language report

The child must be able to use a regular toilet with or without assistance.

A child with behavioural difficulties should be in receipt of ongoing support from an ASD team

Satisfactory Attendance for at least one academic year at a pre-school, preferably a pre-school for children with autism is desirable.

As per DES instruction, the school will accommodate special classes for children with Autism, covering the age range of the primary school.

The Department of Education & Skills states that the ratio for each class is a maximum six pupils to one teacher and two SNAs. There must be more than three pupils to access the second SNA.

Prior to enrolment, The parents/guardians (and the prospective candidates for the class if required) may be invited to meet the principal, the class teacher and any other

relevant parties before the child starts school. An Induction meeting of new parents will be held prior to commencement in the school.

- The class is not designed for children with multiple disabilities.
- Prior to enrolment, all potential applicants may be visited by a member of the ASD Team to observe the student in their existing placement and to provide feedback to the School Management.
- The classes will be co-educational and will cater for children of primary school age only – i.e. four years to thirteen years.
- In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act a parent/guardian must confirm compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if this confirmation is not received prior to the pupil attending the school. The Board also reserves the right to continue to suspend or expel a child under 'Health & Safety' regulations and in conjunction with the school 'Code of Behaviour' as per the National Education Welfare document if the need should arise.
- A placement breakdown can sometimes occur. All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents and/ or the school. The review will include input from all agencies involved (through a multi-disciplinary team meeting), the parents/guardians and the school. Following the review a recommendation may be made to the parents/guardians that the child be enrolled in a school that can better meet his/her needs.
- First preference will be given to pupils attending St. Columbanus N.S. where a transfer will take place from mainstream to special classes where criteria have been satisfied.

Integration will be determined based on the individual needs of the child, and through discussion with the parents/guardians and the relevant class/support teacher. Following agreement, phased integration will take place.

#### Admission of Pupils to an A.S.D. Class

Decisions in relation to enrolment of pupils are made by School Management in accordance with the school policy. The school will, where possible notify parents in writing of its decision within 21 days of the closing date for receipt of applications.

The number of spaces in the ASD class for children with autism may not be finalised until later in the school year and parents will be notified accordingly.

If the number of children who meet the enrolment criteria exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be considered

A Siblings of current pupils of the school

B Children of current school staff

C Children living within the St. Columbanus N.S. Parish area.

D Children living outside the St. Columbanus Parish area.

All applications within each category will be considered in chronological order of date of receipt of completed and valid A.S.D. Class Application forms. Application Forms for the ASD Class are only valid once Criteria for Enrolment in the ASD Class have been fulfilled. (See Criteria for Enrolment).

Any available, places will be allocated, and offers made, once an assessment has been made by the school. A placement in the ASD Class are subject to approval of the N.C.S.E Special Educational Needs Organiser.

On acceptance of a placement offer the parent/guardian must recognise and acknowledge that the school may terminate a placement should the school, in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team, deem the placement unsuccessful.

## 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. Columbanus N.S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to St. Columbanus N.S. provide an education exclusively for students with ASD 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

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 and step siblings of children attending St. Columbanus N.S. and Children living in the Parish of St. Columbanus, Loughlinstown (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)**
- 2. Children of current school staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)**
- 3. Children residing outside the parish of St. Columbanus (the eldest child will also have priority)**
- 4. In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category in order of date of birth, starting with 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:

**In the event of two or more children being tied for a place, the oldest student will be given priority. If two applicants have the same date of birth, then a lottery will apply with an independent party present.**

## 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;  
other than in relation to:
  - admission to 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 and/or
- (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 siblings of a student attending or having attended 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.

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. Columbanus N.S. will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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. Columbanus 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 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. Columbanus N.S. where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is incomplete, 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 St. Columbanus 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. Columbanus 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.

### **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 are as follows:

All applications for admission received for any class as outlined in the annual admission notice/Sections 5 and 6 above, 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.

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:

All applications for admission after the commencement of the school year as outlined in the annual admission notice/Sections 5 and 6 above, 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.

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

The board of St. Columbanus 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.

## **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 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:

- students will be assigned an activity within the classroom.

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.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent of the child 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.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ 20/8/20  
Joe Kenny, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ 20/8/20  
Carmel Murphy, Principal