

## **Admissions Policy for Students with a Moderate General Learning Disability:**

### **Section 1: Scope, Rationale & Legal Framework**

**Scope:** This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of admissions to the school in the following circumstances:

- Students applying for a place in the Special Class for students with a Moderate General Learning Disability (ModGLD) in the Resource Centre.

**Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:** The policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement, the Presentation Ethos (as set out in the Educational Philosophy of Presentation Schools (Ireland 2002 - Schedule 2 of the Articles of Management) and the CEIST Charter.

**Rationale:** This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school:

- to make decisions on all applications for a place in the Special Class for students with a Moderate General Learning Disability in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Presentation Ethos, the Mission Statement of the School, the CEIST Charter and legislative requirements
- to make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it
- to put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents/guardians and teachers where a parent/guardian is considering applying for or has applied for a place in the special class for their son/daughter.

**Legal Framework:** Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that "A recognised school shall ..... Subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2)

(d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school".

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall " publish..... the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected".

Section 27 (1) states that "A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school" and (2) that "the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school, having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers".

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Section 19 (1)] requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school's Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management shall, as soon as possible ( but no later than 21 days ) after receiving such information "make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof"

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of "gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community" regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values [Section 7 (3)].

Goals: The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- to inform parents/guardians about the school, it's programmes, activities, and procedures
- to enable applications for admission to the Special Class to be handled in an open transparent manner
- to put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- to ensure that these criteria are informed by Presentation Ethos, our Mission Statement, the CEIST Charter & current legislation
- to specify what information is required by the school at the time of application.

## SECTION 2: Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum

Context: The school is a voluntary secondary school which was formerly under the trusteeship of The Presentation Sisters Northern Province and is now under the trusteeship of CEIST.

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant while bearing in mind the needs of students already in the school.

The school is managed by a Board of Management which operates under the Articles of Management for Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools. The membership is listed each year in the Circular sent to parents at the start of the school year.

The school has an active Parents' Association and Student Council.

Mission Statement: Killina Presentation Secondary School is an inclusive Christian Community aimed at the holistic development of each student.

Management, Teaching & Financial Resources: The school is funded by the Department of Education & Skills as part of the free education scheme. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil - teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

In order to better provide for the needs of students, the school encourages all parents to make a voluntary contribution to the school each year - the suggested amount is determined by the Board of Management each year. From time to time the school or its Parents Association or its Student Council may, with the permission of the Board, engage in fundraising activities for a specified purpose. All parents/guardians are encouraged to contribute to such fundraising.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

Organisation: The Newsletter sent to parents/guardians at the start of the school year contains relevant information about the organisation of the school. In addition the school issues a number of Information Bulletins for parents/guardians each year setting out relevant information for the current year including holiday dates, dates of house examinations, dates of Parent-Teacher meetings etc.

Curriculum: The school offers a broad curriculum designed to meet the needs of a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. The curriculum for students in the special class is designed to meet the educational needs of each student.

### Section 3: Procedures - Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision, Appeal

#### Application Process:

- As the special class is designated for students with a Moderate General Learning Disability (ModGLD) then only students with a ModGLD as diagnosed in a psychological assessment will be considered for a place
- The special class will provide placement for a maximum of 16 students each year
- The number of vacancies for places each year will be determined by a combination of the number of students leaving at the end of the year in addition to any unfilled vacancies in the current year to an overall maximum of 16 students
- The co-ordinator of the special class will consult with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) in relation to identifying possible applicants for a place in the special class
- A comprehensive review of all prospective applicants will be carried out during the academic year prior to proposed entry to Killina. A current psychological report, **i.e. carried out within the past two years**, must be part of this review.

This will include reviewing:

- (i) the level of general ability, with re-assessment where necessary, (a full re-assessment may not be needed if the child's cognitive ability is well established)

- (ii) Social adaptation and general adjustment and behaviour
- (iii) Degree of autistic or serious emotional/behavioural features
- (iv) Review of other relevant areas e.g. medical problems, speech and language difficulties, physical disabilities etc
- (v) Previous I.E.P.

This review ensures that all relevant information is available to inform the school in deciding on enrolment applications.

**Applicants may not be eligible for consideration for a place in Killina if this review is not completed in full at the closing date for receipt of completed application forms.**

- Parents/guardians will be requested to share all available information about previous referrals, assessments and progress, and written permission, where necessary will be sought from parents/guardians allowing the school to obtain copies of all relevant reports, including psychological, medical and school reports
- The necessary primary schools, principals and teachers will be asked to share all available relevant information about each prospective applicants academic progress, social behaviour, care needs, attainment levels and general ability, etc
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- Application forms are available from the co-ordinator of the special class and parents/guardians must make contact with the co-ordinator of the special class when seeking an enrolment application form
- The closing date for receipt of completed application forms shall be the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday in January of the year in which the student wishes to take up a place in the special class
- Failure to fully complete forms may result in a delay in processing the application.
- The Board of Management, normally through the Principal in consultation with the co-ordinator of the special class and following agreed guidelines will decide who to admit.
- In line with criteria set out by the Department of Education and Skills students must have reached the age of 12 by the end of the calendar year in which they are admitted into the special class
- The school is co-educational
- Admission to the special class is subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission
- Killina Presentation Secondary School welcomes students with special needs and will use the resources, both financial and personnel provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs

up to a nominal cost so that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable.

While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being provided by the DES.

The school welcomes applications from students with special educational needs, unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated, or in the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to themselves, to other students, to school staff or to school property.

- Contact will be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding special needs resources to which the student may be entitled.
- The Principal and/or the co-ordinator of the resource centre may request a meeting with the parents/guardians of a student to discuss the application and the student's needs.
- The parents/guardians of a student may request a meeting with the Principal and/or the co-ordinator of the resource centre to discuss the student's educational or other needs.
- As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided all relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof. (Education Welfare Act (Section 19(3))).
- In the event that places are being allocated by lottery, male/female gender balance will apply and places will be offered alternatively to boys and girls. The 1<sup>st</sup> place in the lottery will be allocated to the gender with the lowest number in the special class at that point. The lottery will be conducted by the Board of Management. For students being placed on a waiting list similar arrangements will apply.
- The school acknowledges that young people in the Moderate General Learning Disability range often have accompanying additional disabilities. The degree of disability and its implication for the success of a placement in Killina will be considered in each individual case. A student may be refused a place if it is felt that the special class in Killina is not the most appropriate placement for that student.

- Following the closing date for receipt of completed application forms all applications will be considered and places will be offered to students deemed suitable for a place in the special class in Killina in descending order beginning with Category 1

#### Category 1

Siblings of current or past students and children of staff.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Category 2

Students attending the special class in St Joseph's National School, Tullamore.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Category 3

Students attending primary school in the Tullamore catchment area as defined by the DES for transport purposes.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Category 4

Students attending primary school outside the Tullamore catchment area.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Category 5

Students attending Post Primary school in the Tullamore catchment area as defined by the DES for transport purposes.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Category 6

Students attending Post Primary school outside the Tullamore catchment area as defined by the DES for transport purposes.

In the event that the number to be admitted on this basis exceeds the number of places available, places will be filled by lottery and the remaining students will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be conducted as outlined in section 3.

#### Late Applications:

Applications received after the closing date for receipt of completed application forms will be considered for a place where a vacancy exists. Where no vacancy exists the applicant will be placed on a waiting list if deemed suitable for a place in the special class in Killina.

Any vacancies that arise will be filled from the waiting list. This waiting list will be effective up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September following application to enrol in the special class.

#### Applications for admission in the current school year:

Applications for admission in the current school year, received prior to the closing date for receipt of application forms for the following school year, will be considered in line with the procedures and criteria set out above.

Where an application for admission in the current school year is received after the closing date for receipt of applications for the following school year, then the application will be considered in light of vacancies that may exist in the following school year and in line with the procedures and criteria set out above.

#### Appeals Procedure:

All applicants will receive a written answer to their application within 21 days of the closing date for receipt of completed applications or within 21 days of receipt of all relevant information in relation to their application, whichever is the later.

A decision to refuse admission may be appealed to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act. The name and address of the persons to whom the appeal should be made and the relevant application form will be available on request from the school secretary.

#### Success Criteria:

The application process is managed effectively every year. There is clarity and transparency about the process. Applicants are informed in good time about the status of their application and, where an application is refused in accordance with this policy, have reasonable opportunity to make alternative arrangements for their child(ren).

#### Review Procedure:

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the co-ordinator of the Resource Centre and Board of Management every five years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Next review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2016/17

#### Trustee Approval:

On adoption of the policy by the Board and on each subsequent review, the policy will be forwarded to the Trustees for approval.

#### Monitoring Procedures:

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board of Management at the appropriate time. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment at its next meeting following closing date for enrolment each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on *6th December 2011*

Signed: Sr Mary McDermott

Dated; 6th December 2011

Chairperson,  
Board of Management