

Admission Policy : St. Columba's BNS Douglas

School Address: Douglas West, Douglas, Cork

Roll number: 13828f

School Patron/s: Roman Catholic Diocese of Cork and Ross

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 of September]. 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. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS is a Catholic all boys primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross

"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. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS Mission Statement:

St. Columba's BNS is a Catholic, primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. As a Roman Catholic School, the aim of the school is to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development including a living relationship with God. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God, and in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a Catholic School, we provide religious education in accordance with the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church.

While St. Columba's BNS is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also accords due recognition to all other religions. We recognise that some children in our school have other beliefs, religions and ways of life of people of all faiths and of none.

3. Admission Statement

St. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a girl applying for admission to this school. (This applies to mainstream classes only. The ASD classes are open to all sexes.)

St. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS is a school which has established an ASD unit, 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 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

St. Columba's BNS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established an ASD Class to provide an education exclusively for students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis.

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. Columba's BNS provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

School with special education class(es)

The special class ASD Unit attached to St. Columba's BNS provides an education exclusively for students (of all genders) with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder diagnosis 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:

Enrolment Criteria Mainstream

1. Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/ political beliefs & values, family or social circumstances.

2. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the BOM of St. Columba's BNS has a duty to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgments, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children (Consideration is given to optimisation of the teaching/learning process, and the health and welfare of children, including their appropriate supervision). Assisting the school in such circumstances, the BOM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:

- a. size of / available space in classrooms
- b. educational needs of children of a particular age
- c. multi-grade classes
- d. presence of children with special educational/ behavioural needs
- e. DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 27 children)
- f. For enrolment of Jn.Infants the BOM of St. Columba's BNS shall cap our intake to 27 per class, in-line with DES maximum class average.

3. In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/ standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year (due to the BOM being unable to provide suitable accommodation, or recruit the required teaching staff) the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

1. Siblings of present and past pupils and step-siblings and the children of a couple in a legally recognised second partnership resident at the same address. In the event of the number of applications exceeding the number of places available, priority will be given to those who have completed and returned the official St. Columba's BNS application form first.
2. Siblings of children attending St. Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children.
3. Children of staff members of St. Columba's B.N.S
4. Children living within the Douglas parish boundaries;
5. Children of Staff members of St. Columba's GNS
6. Children living outside the parish.
7. In the event of the number of places exceeding the number of places available, a lottery will be drawn to determine the final places and order of the waiting list.

Names of unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, in accordance with the ranking determined by the above criteria, and may be offered a place in Junior Infants for the following school year if/when a place becomes available. Unsuccessful applications for enrolment may be appealed to the BOM in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

Late applications will be put to the bottom of the waiting list in the order of the above criteria/lottery.

Admission into ASD Special Classes:

Enrolment Criteria:

The maximum class size is six pupils. If the number of children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order, beginning with number one, once a definite diagnosis of ASD has been provided by a qualified professional.

1. Siblings of existing pupils
2. Children of Staff Members
3. Siblings of children attending St. Columba's GNS with facility for Deaf Children
4. Children at Junior Infant Level.
5. Children residing within Douglas parish boundaries;
6. Children residing outside Douglas parish boundaries;

7. In the event of the number of applications exceeding the number of places available, a lottery will be drawn to determine admission or place on waiting list.

The Board of Management will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability, (i.e. severity of ASD diagnosis) traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria. Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:

- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
- Sufficient classroom space is not available
- The Admissions Team decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child
- In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, staff or to school property.

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, 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 contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
 - (other than in relation to:
 - admission to (a) a special school or (b) 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.
- (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 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS, 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. Columba's BNS 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.

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. Columba's BNS 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. Columba's BNS 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:

Pupils who transfer into the locality and wish to attend St. Columba's BNS, after being placed on the school register, must furnish class reports and a letter of transfer from the Principal of the previous school. Parents must also sign the enrolment form and include a birth certificate.

Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules governing National Schools, as well as our own school's enrolment policy and local agreements with other schools. Parents and child will also attend for interview.

The BOM has limited the total number of pupils enrolled in any class in St. Columba's BNS to a maximum of 27. Transfer into classes in excess of 27 pupils shall be at the discretion of the BOM.

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:

See above.

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

The board St. Columba's BNS 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

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:

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 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.

Appendix 1:

In the event of a lottery necessity arising, the procedure will be as follows;

The principal, deputy principal and an independent assessor will put all the surplus names into a draw. The names will be picked out first to fill the remaining places available and subsequently in order, and this order will determine where they will be placed on our waiting list.