

# **Admission Policy of St. Stephen's N.S.**

**School Address: Johnstown, Navan, Co. Meath**

**Roll number: 20179 I**

**School Patron: Reverend Thomas Deenihan of the Diocese of Meath**

## **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 (pending approval date). 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. Stephen's 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. Stephen's N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath.

"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. Stephen's 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. In St. Stephen's N.S. we, the partners in education, are committed to being a caring, learning community where each person is valued and accorded respect and dignity within a catholic environment. Our aims are:

- To provide a calm, friendly, disciplined and safe environment conducive to high standards of achievement and behaviour.
- To provide a broad, diverse curriculum relevant to the needs of all our pupils.
- To promote the development of the whole person and to afford each the opportunity to develop self-image and a sense of responsibility.
- To promote dignity, courtesy and mutual respect for all members of the school community.

St. Stephen's N.S. is a mainstream school with special classes, catering for the full range of classes from Junior Infants to sixth class with four special classes for ASD and a class for children with a Moderate GLD attached.

Students enrolled in St. Stephen's N.S. are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/ren co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way. A copy of the Code of Behaviour is available to all parents and each parent/guardian is expected to uphold the school's Code of Behaviour. St. Stephen's N.S. operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars. It is funded by grants from the Department of Education and Skills and teachers are resourced by the Department of Education and Skills. The school is subject to the Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), Education (Admission to Schools) Act (2018) and all relevant equality legislation.

St. Stephen's N.S. follows the curricular programme laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

The school is managed by a Board of Management. The Board of Management is charged with the governance of the school and the appointment of staff. There are eight members on the Board of Management consisting of:

- Two representatives of the patron.
- Two elected parents.

- Two representatives of the local community.
- An elected member of the teaching staff
- The School Principal.

### 3. Admission Statement

St. Stephen's 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.

#### **All denominational schools**

St. Stephen's 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **Schools with special education class(es)**

St. Stephen's N.S. is a school which has established classes, 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.

St. Stephen's N.S. will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St. Stephen's N.S. will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education ACT 1998.

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

##### **(a) In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN classes attached**

St. Stephen's N.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established 4 classes to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD. From September 2022 the school has been sanctioned to open a special class for children whose primary disability is a Moderate Global Learning Disability (GLD).

##### **Admissions of Pupils and the Admissions Process for Children to the ASD Special Classes**

##### **The priority bandings for enrolment in Cairde Nua, the ASD unit are as follows:**

- 1) Children already enrolled in St. Stephen's N.S. who subsequently receive an Autism Diagnosis with a recommendation that they have access to an ASD Unit.
- 2) Siblings of pupils currently enrolled in St. Stephen's N.S.
- 3) Children who ordinarily reside in Johnstown/Walterstown parish.
- 4) Children who ordinarily reside in the County of Meath.
- 5) Subject to appropriate provision being made for pupils as defined in (1) to (4) pupils who ordinarily reside outside, but contiguous to, those areas, will be offered places subject to availability.

In all cases, places are subject to availability. If the number of places in (1) to (5) above exceeds the number of available places, the principal reserves the right to determine the applicants to be enrolled and suitability for enrolment will consider the needs, ages and abilities of those currently enrolled and those seeking enrolment.

Parents/guardians should notify the NCSE prior to making an application for admission to a special class. Notification should be made before 1st September in the preceding school year to facilitate NCSE planning and to ensure that the NCSE and the Department is provided with sufficient time to plan and provide for additional special class and special school capacity. Parents/guardians engaging with this process will be provided with written confirmation from the NCSE confirming the outcome of the NCSE's review of the supporting evidence provided which they can then give to the school/s as part of their application for enrolment in a special class.

##### **Criteria for admission to ASD Unit:**

The total number of places in the Unit is twenty-four. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- An applicant will not be enrolled in the Unit unless s/he is four years of age on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of April of the academic year for which the application is made.
- No student can be older than thirteen years of age during his/her last year in the Unit.
- A fully signed, completed and dated application form for enrolment has been submitted to the school by the parents and a vacancy exists in the Unit.
- The applicant must have a primary diagnosis of qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder and the applicant must submit a professional report which:
  - Confirms a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/V or ICD 10)

**And**

- Contains a recommendation to attend an ASD class attached to a mainstream school. Such a recommendation cannot be dated more than two years prior to the proposed admission date.  
**And**
  - Confirms that the diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder was made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.  
**And**
  - Contains either an assessment of cognitive functioning OR an assessment of adaptive functioning skills, using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological procedure.
- If the applicant presents with a General Learning Disability (GLD), this should be recorded in a psychological assessment. This diagnosis should be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and the report containing the GLD should be submitted with the application form.
  - If the child is in receipt of HSE or other support services associated with the pupil's learning challenges, confirmation of same (Report or letter from the relevant service) should be submitted with the application form.
  - If the application form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The parents will be notified that the application will not be considered until a complete application is submitted.
  - When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form.
  - The parents and the applicant are invited to a meeting with the ASD Unit coordinator and are encouraged to bring reports from the applicants present educational setting to this meeting.
  - The ASD Enrolment Advisory Board will also visit the pre-school education setting where the child is currently enrolled. If a child is not in the pre-school setting a home visit may be set up with parents.
  - The application will be assessed by the ASD Enrolment Advisory Board, who will advise the principal on the application.
  - The principal will decide on the acceptance or otherwise of the application.
  - If offered a place, the parents must confirm in writing within 7 calendar days that the place is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
  - When an applicant is successful for entry into the ASD Unit, the principal will liaise with the parents and make an application to the SENO regarding school transport, should this be requested by parents for their child.
  - If the applicant fulfils all of the enrolment criteria but is not offered a place due to lack of an available place, the parents may opt to place the child's name on a waiting list for reconsideration when a place becomes available.
  - The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the application was initially made.

### **Admissions of Students and the Admissions Process for Children to the Moderate GLD Special Class**

#### **Admission Statement for Moderate GLD Class**

The school confirms that the school shall not discriminate in its admission of a pupil into the moderate special class on any of the grounds listed in Section 3: 'Admissions Statement' above in accordance with Section 61 of the Education Act, 1998.

- 1) Each child is considered as an individual. The Board of Management strives to ensure that every child accepted into the Moderate GLD Class, St. Stephen's N.S. can benefit from the services on offer.
- 2) In the admissions process, consideration will be given to ensure that a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff prevails and applications for children who might threaten the safety of the children already enrolled (Many of whom are vulnerable by nature of their disability), are likely to be refused.
- 3) The Moderate GLD Special Class in St. Stephen's N.S., which has been set up with the approval of the Minister and Department of Education & Skills provides an education to children with a certain category of special educational need, that being **children whose primary disability is a moderate learning disability**.
- 4) The special class for children with a Moderate GLD provides an education exclusively to children with a certain category of special educational needs, that being children with a moderate learning disability as their primary diagnosis. The school will therefore refuse to admit children whose educational needs do not fall within this category and a refusal to admit a child who does not have these educational needs will not constitute discrimination.

### **Admissions of Students and the Admissions Process**

The moderate class provides an education exclusively for children whose primary descriptor is a moderate general learning disability and may refuse where a child does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this class. The school must verify that all applicants possess this category of need. The steps below are for the purpose of ascertaining if applicants come within the category of special educational needs catered for by the class and the steps **apply to all applications**.

### **Overview of the Application and Admissions Process for Children to the Moderate GLD Class**

1. Parents/ guardians are asked to contact the school to obtain an application form from the school office or download one from the school's website. The form must be completed in full and all requested documentation must be included to be considered for admission. Applications will only be accepted for the following year of entry from October 1<sup>st</sup> onwards. The application form must be returned before the Closing Date for Applications for that particular year of entry. The closing date is set out in the annual Admissions Notice published on the school website. (for example, applications for September 2030 will only be taken from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2029 to the Closing Date).
2. Please note Applications are accepted each year ONLY between 1st October and the Closing Date for the following September. Applications received before that period WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED and will be returned to the sender, who may re-submit the application on or after October 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. St. Stephen's special class for Moderate GLD has a capacity for 8 pupils aged between 4 and 12 years. Please note the class does not have a particular intake group as in mainstream classes. (i.e. the class may be comprised of children of varying ages)
4. Please note that subject to the class not being oversubscribed (i.e. that there are places available in the class) the policy of the school is to admit only applicants - whose special education needs fall within the categories of need catered for by the class,  
 and - who have submitted the appropriate documentation to establish this profile of special educational need  
 and - who **fulfil the Assessment Threshold Criteria set out below, p. 10**  
 and - whose parents/guardians have confirmed that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child.

5. Prior to the commencement of the admissions procedure each year, the Board will appoint The Admissions Committee which will be composed of the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal 1 and a class teacher.

**Who can make an Application?**

1. St. Stephen's special class welcomes applications from parents/guardians. As the Constitution recognises parents as the primary educators of their child, applications will only be accepted from parents, legal guardians or someone acting on foot of a court order or statutory power in a parental role.

**Steps in the Application and Admissions Process**

Parents/guardians should notify the NCSE prior to making an application for admission to a special class. Notification should be made before 1st September in the preceding school year to facilitate NCSE planning and to ensure that the NCSE and the Department is provided with sufficient time to plan and provide for additional special class and special school capacity. Parents/guardians engaging with this process will be provided with written confirmation from the NCSE confirming the outcome of the NCSE's review of the supporting evidence provided which they can then give to the school/s as part of their application for enrolment in a special class.

2. The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement in the Moderate GLD Special Class:

- a) Parents/guardians download a copy of the Admissions Policy and Application Form from the school website or obtain it from the School Office;
- b) Parents are asked to return the following:
  - i. Completed Application form;
  - ii. Full birth certificate;
  - iii. Proof of Address e.g. utility bill; household bill, etc.
  - iv. Recent psychological assessment report (from within the last 24 months and which must contain a detailed recommendation from the Psychologist for the child to attend a special class for children with a moderate GLD as their primary diagnosis with a statement on the report from the Psychologist as to why a special school placement is necessary or advisable.
  - v. Up to date reports from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 24 months) with the details of the learning and social development of the child and any behaviour issues of relevance.
  - vi. Any other professional reports available such as:
    - Psychiatric Assessment,
    - Speech & Language Assessment,
    - Occupational Therapy Report,
    - Social Work Report
    - Doctors/consultants reports outlining medical needs specific to the child
    - N.B All above reports should be from within 2 years of the date of application
    - Formal testing results and/or informal teacher's assessment from previous school
    - I.E.P Document from previous school.
- c) Following receipt of the Application form and submitted materials, the Admissions Committee will arrange a meeting to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria as set out below, p. 10
- d) If all the documents listed at 2 (b)(i)- (vi) are not included with the application, the application will be deemed incomplete and will be returned to the child's parents. If a complete application is not later re- submitted, the application for a place will not be considered. Applications will be checked on receipt and if they are not complete or if they do not enclose all the documents required, the application will be returned to the child's parents/guardians and will not be considered.
- e) The Admissions Committee, having considered each application (in light of the Assessment Threshold Criteria and the criteria set out below, p. 10) submits its recommendations to the Board of Management in respect of each application. This will occur regardless of whether the class is oversubscribed or not. The Assessment Threshold Criteria used to assess applications in case of oversubscription is set out below on p. 10.

- A waiting list may be then generated for places applicable for that year only
- f) If the Board of Management decides to admit a child, a letter of offer will be sent to parents along with the school's Code of Behaviour and the DES application form for school transport. This letter of offer will be issued within 21 days of the Closing Date for applications (or **no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>** each year whichever is the later). The offer will be subject to parents providing written agreement for their child to adhere to the school's Code of behaviour and the other policies listed on the Application Form.
  - g) If the Board decides not to enrol a child the parents of the child will also be informed within 21 days and will be provided with reasons for non-admission. If the Board of Management have accepted the child for admission, the Board will then inform the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and seek its approval for the placement and its sanction for school transport arrangement.
  - h) Parents/guardians will be requested to respond to the offer of a place by a specified date (failure to respond by that date will result in the offer lapsing) and will return to the school the completed application forms including the NCSE school transport and SNA support forms, if applicable.
  - i) If the child meets the Assessment Threshold Criteria below but admission is refused on the basis of over-subscription, parents/guardians will be informed that there is currently no place available but will be asked if they wish their child to be placed on the Waiting List (described below on p. 12 for the Moderate GLD class. The school will also advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.
  - j) If the child does not meet the Assessment Threshold Criteria below, the parents/guardians will be advised that the school is formally declining a place to their child in the school and will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

### **3. Principles applying to the Application and Enrolment Process**

Parents should note the following principles which apply to all applications for enrolment to the school:

1. Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. Consideration will be given to an application during the school year where a vacancy arises and there is no applicant listed on the waiting list for the class. It should be noted that the school operates a waiting list for the class and that there may be one or more children on the waiting list for a place to open up during the school year.
2. The receipt by the school of a completed Application Form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the class or school. The school does not operate its applications process on a first come, first served basis - each application will be considered on its merits and in light of the places available in the Moderate GLD class.
3. Children already attending the school's mainstream classes and who subsequently receive a diagnosis of a moderate GLD coupled with a recommendation from a psychologist for a place in a special class for children with a moderate GLD; this application will be **prioritized for a place BEFORE applications from children NOT already enrolled in the school.**
4. Siblings of students in the school are not automatically entitled to a place in the moderate GLD class.
5. Please note that all reports relating to a child which have been drafted by a psychologist, psychiatrist, behavioural therapist, paediatrician or other relevant

medical practitioner (who has produced a report relating to the child's cognitive development, learning ability or educational development) within the three years preceding application must be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Committee and subsequently the Board of Management. The withholding of reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an Admission Application at any time. If, after admission, it later becomes apparent that reports or relevant information has been withheld from the school, this may result in an application being invalidated or, if it becomes apparent after admission, in the child involved losing their place in the class. (Circumstances where places may not be made or withdrawn, p. 11)

#### **4. Consideration of applications – Assessment Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application:**

i) Applications will only be considered where the psychologist's report included in the child's application confirms that the child has a Moderate GLD with a full scale IQ of between 35 - 49 points and adaptive ability in the moderate range AND where ALL the following conditions are met:

1. The application form was fully completed and included all enclosures appropriate to the application.
2. The child is aged between 4 – 12 years of age on the 1st April of the year of entry.
3. There is sufficient space in the Moderate GLD classroom and the class has not reached full capacity (i.e. that the class is not oversubscribed).
4. The psychological report is from within the last 24 months (2 years) and all of the assessment reports are from within 2 years of the date of application.
5. That there is no evidence from previous school reports or from the assessment reports that the student has been expelled from a previous school for behaviour that caused injury to others. If there is such evidence, given the vulnerable nature of students enrolled in in our special class, the application will not be considered.
6. The child's primary diagnosis is not any of following
  - Emotional and Behaviour Disorder.
  - Physical or Sensory
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorder
  - Attention Deficit Disorder,
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,
  - Oppositional Defiance Disorder
  - Any other recognised disorder that can co-occur with a Moderate GLD.

#### **5. Exceptional Circumstances warranting refusal of an admission –**

Even where the child would otherwise be eligible for admission, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

- The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and/or the NCSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education;
- The members of the Board of Management are reasonably clear from reports, that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property.
- The pupil has previously been expelled from St. Stephen's N.S. or any other school in circumstances where the Board of Management feels that placement in St. Stephen's N.S. would not be appropriate for the child.

## **6. Oversubscription**

### ***Priority of Applications***

Where the Moderate GLD class is oversubscribed, places will be offered each September to qualifying applicants (i.e. those who meet all the Threshold Criteria) based on a marking of their application on the following Assessment Threshold Criteria.

The Moderate GLD class has a limited number of places and must prioritise its available places for those students who would most benefit from them. Where the documentation provided is not adequate or is not in accordance with the requirements of this policy, this may result in an applicant receiving a nil score in a particular category. The Admissions Committee will rate each application and will make a recommendation to the Board in respect of each such application.

### **Assessment Threshold Criteria:**

1. Children already enrolled in a mainstream class who subsequently receive a diagnosis of a Moderate GLD as the primary diagnosis. **(rated out of 10)**
2. The extent to which the child would benefit from a place in the school, given the child's primary needs, age and educational history, taking into account any other needs the child may have, for example, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, physical and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions **(rated out of 20)**
3. The availability of expertise within the school to deal with any other needs the child may have, for example, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, physical and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions **(rated out of 10)**.
4. Siblings of children who are already currently enrolled within the school **(rated out of 10, based on number of siblings currently enrolled in the school)**.
5. The pupil/teacher ratio will be appropriate to the needs of the child; **(rated out of 10)**
6. The child will be able to tolerate a classroom environment containing other children. **(rated out of 10)**
7. The composition, special needs and ages of the pupils currently enrolled in the Moderate GLD class into which the child would be admitted; **(rated out of 10)**
8. There is sufficient physical space in the classroom for that child and the class has not reached full capacity. **(rated out of 10)**
9. The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent/guardian) within the catchment area;
  - (i) County Meath Area
  - (ii) Subject to appropriate provision being made for students as defined in (i) above, pupils who ordinarily reside outside, but contiguous to, those areas, will be offered places subject to availability.

and has provided 2 proofs of address with an Eircode from one of the area listed above. **(rated out of 10)**

10. In the event of two or more children who are candidates for the same place having the same marks, the Board will first review the marking again for each such child. If the respective marks remain the same after this review, the children's names will be picked at random by an independent person (who is not on the Board or connected with any person applying for a place in the school) and the first such name picked will be offered the place. Unsuccessful applicants whose applications are ranked with the

same marks will be placed on the Waiting List for the Moderate GLD class in the order that they are picked at random by the independent person referred to above.

**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 to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs catered for by St. Stephen's N.S
- (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;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

**8. Decisions on applications**

8.1 As noted above, the Board will appoint an Admissions Committee to advise the Board in relation to applications.

8.2. The Board of Management will meet shortly after the Closing Date to consider all applications and the recommendations of the Admissions Committee in relation to each application.

8.3. All decisions on applications for admission to St. Stephen's N.S. 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 (together with the documentation submitted therewith) received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

**9. Notifying applicants of decisions**

9.1. Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

9.2. 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.

9.3. Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision, p. 18

**10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Stephen's 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 the Board of Management of St. Stephen's N.S where—

(i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading (including through the omission of any medical or psychological report, or the submission of out of date or inaccurate reports).

(ii) Where an applicant has submitted an interim psychologist's certificate or letter but has not submitted a **full report by the end of June** in the year of entry.

(iii) 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.

(iv) 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

(v) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 of this policy above.

(vi) The school has been designated by the National Council for Special Education or the Child and Family Agency under S.67 of the Education Act, 1998 (when commenced) to admit a particular child and the only way to comply with the designation is to withdraw an offer of a place to another child.

#### **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**

#### ***Waiting List***

13.1. Where a place is not available for a particular child who otherwise meets the Assessment Threshold Criteria listed above on p. 9 and the Board of Management is refusing to enrol the child in the Moderate GLD class due to the class being full, the parents will be asked if they wish their child be placed on the Waiting List.

**13.2.** The Waiting List will operate for one school year. It will run until the end of the Academic Year for which the offers were made in that Applications Process. **On the last of day in June of each year, the Waiting list will cease to operate.**

13.3. If a child is entered on the Waiting List for a particular academic year, this will not give them any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September. A new application for the child will be required for the following academic year even if they are placed on the Waiting List and his/her application will be processed again under the Admissions and Participation Policy.

13.4. The child will be listed on the Waiting List only in respect of the Moderate GLD class for which his/her application was considered and each child will be listed on the Waiting List in the order of their ranking according to the Assessment Threshold Criteria. Late and Mid-Year applications which fulfil the Assessment Threshold Criteria will be added to the end of the Waiting List. If a place becomes available during the Academic Year in the Moderate GLD class, the place will be offered first to qualifying children in the order they are listed on the school's Waiting List for that class and only after the to children who make Mid-Year Applications.

13.5. If the child's parents/guardians wish to reapply for entry the following Academic year, they may do so. Their child will continue to be listed on the Waiting List in the interim until the end of June of that the Academic Year.

13.6. Parents should note that if during the Academic Year in question, the child ceases for any reason to meet all the Assessment Threshold Criteria, the child will be removed from the Waiting List and will be formally refused a place in the school.

## **5. Admission of Students to Mainstream Classes**

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
- c) any applicant who has not reached their fourth birthday on or before April 1st of the year of admission.

**All denominational schools**

St. Stephen's N.S. is a Roman Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic religion where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

**School with special education class(es)**

The special class attached to St. Stephen's N.S. provides an education exclusively for pupils with ASD (4 classes) and a Moderate GLD as their primary disability (1 class); the school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

## 6. Oversubscription in Mainstream Classes

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 of pupils currently enrolled in St. Stephen's N.S. with preference given to older pupils according to their date of birth. (Siblings to include step-siblings and fostered children living at the same address.)
- 2) Pupils living within the Johnstown/ Walterstown parish boundary with preference given to older pupils according to their date of birth.
- 3) All other applicants not included in categories (1) to (2) with preference given to older pupils according to their date of birth.

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:

- 1) In all categories, preference will be given to the oldest pupil first.
- 2) If two or more pupils in the same category have the same date of birth the place will be allocated by the drawing of lots.
- 3) In the rare event that twins are tied for the last remaining available place, both will be admitted by way of exception.

## 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) 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 pupils currently enrolled in 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 for  
mainstream classes only (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Stephen's N.S. will be based on the  
following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form  
received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving  
applications

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions  
period and [section 15](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake  
group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a  
decision on an application for a place in our school.

## **9. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined  
in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be  
communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of

the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

## **10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Stephen's 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. Stephen's N.S. 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. Stephen's 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. Stephen's 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.

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**

Students may be enrolled in other classes in the school at the beginning of, or during the school year. Students wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules for National Schools Education Welfare Act, the school's Enrolment Policy and the spaces available in existing classes.

The following criteria apply when an application for enrolment into a mainstream class at the beginning of, or during the academic year is under consideration:

- 1) The capacity of St. Stephen's N.S. will not exceed that of a thirty-two teacher mainstream school.

2) The number of pupils in each class will not exceed 23 pupils.

Students wishing to transfer must submit a completed application to enrol to the school. The application must be accompanied by the pupil's birth certificate and a recent utility bill to confirm address. The principal is not obliged to consider incomplete applications.

Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to parents within 21 calendar days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form. Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school of their decision by completing and returning an enrolment acceptance form within fourteen calendar days. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and then reallocated. Applicants who are not successful in securing a place will be placed on a waiting list in date order of receipt of completed application. A place on the waiting list expires at the end of the academic year for which the application was made.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of St. Stephen' 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 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)/guardian(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## **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.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2026 and approved by the Patron on 21/09/2026**