



# Gaelscoil na Ríthe Enrolment and Admission Policy

## Aibreán 2020

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 [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 Gaelscoil na Ríthe 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.

### 1. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Gaelscoil na Ríthe is an All Irish Medium School under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. It was founded in 1985 by a group of parents who wanted the option of having children educated through the medium of Irish in the local community. It is mixed one stream vertical school, (there may be multi-grade classes depending on teacher allocations for that particular year.)

The school operates with the sanction of, and according to rules laid down by, the Department of Education & Skills ('DES') who fund and resource the school. It follows the recognised revised curriculum of the DES which is implemented through Irish.

As we are a Gaelscoil all subjects, with the exception of English, will be taught through Irish. We would hope that the children would develop a love and respect for the Irish language. We would also expect support from home on this issue. We have a policy of complete immersion in the Infant Cycle to raise the children's proficiency in Irish to a level that enables them to benefit fully from the education available here. Complete immersion is recognised throughout the world as the most effective means to acquire a second language in an educational context. Reading/literacy in English will begin in Senior Infants.

It is our Mission here in Gaelscoil na Ríthe to provide an excellent all-Irish Catholic education for the pupils as a co-educational primary school. We will do this by:

- Treating the school community justly in a friendly, equitable and fair manner.
- By emphasizing the development of the school community intellectually, emotionally, physically, spiritually, aesthetically and socially as citizens of Ireland and the world.
- By encouraging respect for ourselves and for others, for our Gaelic/Irish heritage and for other cultures.
- Emphasizing the safety and happiness of our pupils.
- Preparing our pupils for post-primary education and for their future lives.

While Gaelscoil na Ríthe promotes the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic Faith, we also acknowledge and respect the diverse beliefs other pupils in our school. A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities. Close contact is maintained between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the children to the



fullness of their potential at the different stages of their development. We wish to create a supportive school environment, through the medium of Irish, which supports the principles of inclusiveness and equality.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Gaelscoil na Ríthe 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. "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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- 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.

We believe this Statement is true to the vision of the founding committee of Gaelscoil na Ríthe.

## 2. Admission Statement

Gaelscoil na Ríthe will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- 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.

## 3. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 5](#) below for further details)
- 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

## 4. Class Size

The Board of Management may set down the number of pupils in any class and in the school in total. In making its decision *An Bord Bainistíochta* will have regard to the relevant Department of Education and Science guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation,



including physical space and the health, safety and welfare of the child, and that of other children. These can vary from year to year. This requires balanced judgements, guided by the principles of natural justice and the Board must act in the best interests of all children. The Board reserves the right therefore, to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind: - size of / available space in classrooms - educational needs of children of a particular age - presence of children with special educational /behavioural needs - DES class average directives - availability of trained teachers to meet the educational needs of the children. The maximum number of students for Junior Infants will be communicated in the Annual Admission Notice.

## 5. 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.

### Selection Criteria for Junior Infants

- Applicants for Junior Infants must be due to be 4 years of age before the 30<sup>th</sup> April for the year for which they are applying.
- Applications received before 1/2/20 for the years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 will be dealt with under the Enrolment Policy in force at that time.
- If there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated as follows:
  - **A sibling of a pupil who is attending the school or of a pastpupil who attended the school for at least two years** who complete the age criterion as set out above. (including step-siblings, foster-children or adopted children, resident at the same address), and to children of current staff members who complete the age criterion as set out above.
  - Children will be 4 years of age before 30<sup>th</sup> April in the year for which they are applying for a place who have attained **a level of fluency in the Irish language indicative of what would be expected of a student who uses the Irish language as a normal means of communication in a non-educational environment, taking into account the age and any special educational needs of the student concerned** and that the said fluency would be likely to regress were the student not admitted to an Irish language school.
  - **Other applicants whose applications were received in the timeframe outlined in our Annual Admission Notice** who will be 4 years of age before 30<sup>th</sup> April in the year for which they are applying for a place.
  - Children who will be 4 years of age on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> May but before the 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year for which they are applying who have attained **a level of fluency in the Irish language indicative of what would be expected of a student who uses the Irish language as a normal means of communication in a non-educational environment, taking into account the age and any special educational needs of the student concerned** and that the said fluency would be likely to regress were the student not admitted to an Irish language school.
  - **A sibling of a pupil who is attending the school or of a pastpupil who attended the school for at least two years** who will be 4 years of age after the 30<sup>th</sup> April but before the 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year for which they are applying.
  - **Other applicants whose applications were received in the timeframe outlined in our Annual Statement** who will be 4 years of age after the 30<sup>th</sup> April but before the 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year for which they are applying.
  - Applications received outside the timeframe outlined in our Annual Statement.

Where parent wish their child to be considered under the 'level of fluency in the Irish language' provision above, that parent is invited to provide evidence that displays the fluency to the Board of Management's representatives. This evidence must be provided with the application; except for evidence provided by attending



**a meeting at the school, if such is requested by the parents/ guardians, which opportunity will be arranged by the Board of Management.** If the evidence provided is not deemed sufficient, the applicant will be placed in another category according to the Enrolment Policy. An appeal may be made by email to the Board of Management within three working days/ a week of receiving the decision. The Board will nominate two different representatives to review the evidence of fluency provided. New evidence of fluency will not be accepted. The Board of Management's decision will be final.

**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) children will be prioritised in order of age, beginning with the eldest.**

## 6. 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 student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude other than in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act
- the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- 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 siblings of a student attending or having attended the school for a minimum of two years.
- the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.
  - 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.
  - also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Gaelscoil na Ríthe 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.

## 8. 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 17](#) below for further details).

## 9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from [school name], you must indicate—

- 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
- 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.

## 10. 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 [school name] where:

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- 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.
- 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
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

## 11. 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:

- an application for admission to the school has been received,
- an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- 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).

## 12. 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 Gaelscoil na Ríthe 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 Gaelscoil na Ríthe 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.

### 13. 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.

### 14. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

#### Applications for classes other than infants

Newly registered children may be accepted in classes other than junior infants:

- If there is a space available in the class
- And if, in the opinion of the Board of Management, the child's fluency in Irish is sufficient to let her/him take part in the class and learn and let other pupils communicate with her/him in Irish.

Applications for places in classes other than Naíonáin Shóisireach must be submitted in writing to An Cathaoirleach. The decision to accept a child in any other class other than Junior Infants is made by the Board of Management and their decision is binding.

Applications for September are dealt with at a meeting of the Board of Management. Subsequent applications will be dealt with at any meetings before the summer break. Further applications will be dealt with by the principal or another member of the Board, in accordance with the policy.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are the same as above.

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

The board of Gaelscoil na Ríthe or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of:

- an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.



## 16. 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.

## 17. 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.