

**Admission Policy of
St Columba's NS, North Strand, Dublin 3
Roll number: 14463T**

**School Patron: Church of Ireland Archbishop of
Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough**

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 December 15th 2022. 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 NS admission process are set out in the school's 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

Ethos & Mission Statement:

St Columba's NS is a co-education primary school under Church of Ireland management. The Archbishop of Dublin & Bishop of Glendalough is the school's Patron. The school endeavours to promote the moral, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development of all the pupils in its care. The school reflects the ethos of the Church of Ireland and values of honesty, charity, kindness, patience and personal responsibility are encouraged. Equally it encourages and practises respect for the traditions and teachings of other churches and spiritual communities. The teaching of Religious Education (RE) in this school does not involve religious formation or specifically confessional teaching as this is a matter for each family and their Church. The constitutional right of parents to withdraw their child from RE is acknowledged. However, the attention of parents is drawn to the fact that due to accommodation constraints and the limited availability of staff a child who is withdrawn from RE may have to remain in the classroom for the duration of the lesson.

Children of other faiths and none are welcomed and affirmed.

St Columba's NS is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, social or ethnic background, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual capacity.

St Columba's NS is a community where the traditions and teaching of the Church of Ireland inform the position taken regarding moral issues which arise in the teaching of secular subjects.

The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of inclusion, tolerance and respect for religious differences. The admission policy of the school allows those of other faiths or none to enrol as pupils. St Columba's NS values and recognises the contribution that pupils of different faiths bring to the life of the school.

St Columba's NS is a part of the local church community and has strong links with the Parish of Drumcondra, North Strand & St Barnabas. Pupils take part in services in the local church. Special events take place in the school and church to mark religious festivals and celebrations e.g. Christmas, Harvest etc. The Rector visits the school on a regular basis.

Time spent teaching RE is per Department of Education guidelines. All pupils generally take part in RE lessons. The 'Follow Me' programme (developed by the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education) is in use throughout all the classes. Please see the Religious Education Policy for further details.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St Columba's NS 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.

3. Admission Statement

St Columba's NS 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 NS 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 NS 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 Church of Ireland and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St Columba's NS will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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 requested to do so by the Council.

St Columba's NS will comply with any direction served on the Patron or the Board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the Board under section 68(4B) of the Education Act.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see Section 5 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.

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:

St Columba's NS is a Church of Ireland school. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (c) as follows:

- (a) Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/ed which is provided in the school¹ and who lives within the boundary of **the parish of Drumcondra, St Barnabas & North Strand, and the parish of St George and St Thomas.**

¹ As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act

- (b) **Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who lives within **the parish of Drumcondra North Strand and St Barnabas, and the parish of St George and St Thomas** and who complies with the terms of this Policy.
- (c) **Priority Category 3:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy.

In respect of Priority Categories 1 and 2, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) a statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student

and

- (ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:
- a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

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:

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students who have siblings currently enrolled in the school ("Sibling Applicant Students"). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not exceed the number of places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system.

The school shall invite a person of good character who does not have any direct connection with the school, to draw the names of applicants to create a list of successful candidates. This process will also be used to create a numbered waiting list which will be used to fill any allocated places which may become available due to non-acceptance of places which are offered.

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were

drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category. The school shall notify those on the waiting list when and if a change occurs.

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) 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,
- (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, selection criteria based on siblings of a student attending or having attended the school,
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, (this is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned).

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Columba's NS 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 13 in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and Section 14 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 for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St Columba's NS 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 are 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 St Columba's NS 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 9 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 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).

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 St Columba's NS 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 NS 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.

Applicant students 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. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

14. 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:

- 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.
- Applicant students will be offered a place in the relevant class if a place is available.

- In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places in the relevant class, the school will apply the selection criteria set out in Section 5 of this policy to those applications.
- In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this 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 as follows:

- 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.
- Applicant students will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

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

The board of St Columba's NS 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.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents of a student have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardians 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 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 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.

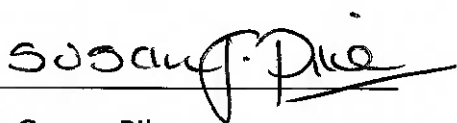
An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

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 above). 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 above).

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed:



Dr Susan Pike

Chairperson of the Board of Management, St Columba's NS

Reviewed and approved at a board meeting held on September 26th 2023