

ENROLMENT AND ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admission Policy of Ratoath Senior National School

Fairyhouse Road, Ratoath, Co. Meath, A85 ET29
Roll number: 20200T

School Patron: Most Reverend Thomas Deenihan, Bishop 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 in September 2020. 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 Ratoath Senior National School'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

Ratoath Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos School 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 Ratoath Senior National School 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 characteristics of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Mission Statement and general objectives of the school

Ratoath Senior National School promotes Gospel values in a Christian learning community, where children can grow in knowledge and understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

We are fully committed to offering excellence in education by:

- Promoting the highest possible achievement for our pupils
- Encouraging children to grow within the Catholic faith
- Establishing the foundations for lifelong learning
- Welcoming input from partners to complement the skills and experience of our professional staff
- Ensuring that our school is central to the parish, reaching out to embrace the wider community
- Uniting all children, staff, parents, and Board of Management in our aim to be a leading school in the Diocese of Meath.

Our aim is that all children should leave Ratoath Senior National School with the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, an enthusiasm for learning, a thirst for knowledge, an appreciation of their religion and the world they live in and, above all, many happy memories.

The Board of Management declares that, within the content and parameters of the Department regulations and programmes, the Rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act, 1998, and the funding and resources available, the school supports the following principles:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational needs
- Equality of access and participation
- Parental choice in relation to the school, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school (Section 15 (d) of the Education Act, 1998)
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life of all its pupils.

The school year normally runs from 1st September – 30th June.

3. Admission Statement

Ratoath Senior National School 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.

Ratoath Senior National School 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 of the Roman Catholic denomination and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Ratoath Senior National School 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."

Ratoath Senior National School 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. 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

Ratoath Senior National School is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Roman Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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:

- a) Children transitioning from 2nd Class in Ratoath Junior National School into Ratoath Senior National School
- b) Siblings (including step-siblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled – priority to oldest on the date of commencement of the school year (as per birth cert).
- c) Children ordinarily resident at an address within the parish boundaries, with priority to the oldest on the date of commencement of the school year (as per birth cert).
- d) All other applicants

The principal shall have due regard for any relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size or staffing provisions. Where any given class size has reached DES guideline numbers, the principal reserves the right to refuse admission.

These criteria may need to be amended or added to by the Board of Management from time to time in response to prevailing circumstances.

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:

- a) Where the number of applicants within any one of the criteria categories listed above exceeds the number of school places available, the applicants within that category will be prioritised on the grounds of age, beginning with the eldest and proceeding in descending order of age until all remaining places have been allocated.
- b) Where two or more pupils are tied for the last remaining available school place (on grounds of shared date of birth), that place will be awarded to the applicant who is oldest by virtue of the time of birth recorded on their birth certificate. In the event that siblings (multiple birth) remain tied for the last available place both/all will be admitted by way of exception.

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, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
 - (I) an early intervention class, or
 - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (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,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Ratoath Senior National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's 'Notification for Enrolment Form'

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

- (i) In accepting an offer of admission from Ratoath Senior National School 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
- (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.

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 Ratoath Senior National School 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 in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

- (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 Ratoath Senior National School 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 Ratoath Senior National School 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.

13. Late Applications

All applications for admission received 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.

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

- (i) 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:
 - a) Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Principal of the school in accordance with school policy.
 - b) As a general principle, and in so far as practicable having regard to the school's enrolment policy and the agreement between the Patron and the Department of Education and Skills children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is space available in the appropriate class.
 - c) Priority will be given to children transferring from Second Class in Ratoath Junior National School – all children who have satisfactorily completed Second Class in Ratoath Junior National School are guaranteed a place in Third Class in Ratoath Senior National School.
 - d) The Principal shall have due regard for any relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size or staffing provisions. Where any given class

size has reached Department of Education and Skills guideline numbers, the Principal reserves the right to refuse admission.

- e) The Principal shall have due regard for any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, physical space, or the health and welfare of children.
- f) The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could include the following:
 - 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.

- (ii) 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 stated in Section 14(i)

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

The Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School 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 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:

Children who do not participate in religious education will be provided with appropriate learning activities for the duration of the religious instruction

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)

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 adopted by the Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School on 29th June 2020.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and has been provided to the Parents' Association.