



## St Francis School

New Road  
Portlaoise  
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Roll No. 19337Q



## Enrolment and Admissions Policy

### Review Dates:

Staff	January 2019	Reviewed
Parents	January 2019	Reviewed
Student Council	January 2019	Reviewed
Board of Management	January 2019	Ratified

Due for next review: January 2021

## **ENROLMENT AND ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**Reviewed:**

**January 2003**

**January 2019**

### **INTRODUCTION**

St. Francis School, Portlaoise, is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

In line with the four Provisions of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, with effect from the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018:

- religion will not be used as a criterion for school admissions, and as a result priority may not be given to a Catholic Student
- admission Fees, Payments, and Contributions are not a 'condition' of admission to or continuation at St. Francis
- the Minister for Education and Skills may, in certain circumstances and in consultation with Patrons and Boards of Management, direct Boards to cooperate in relation to their admission processes

With effect from the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018:

- the Minister for Education and Skills has the power to compel a school to open a special class, where the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has identified the need for such class and no school is willing to make such provision available. This will be after a process of engagement by the Minister with the NCSE, The Patron, and the Board of Management of a school.

St. Francis School is a designated Special School, operating under the Rules for Schools laid down by the Department of Education and Skills. The students for whom this school caters are described by the Department of Education and Skills as students with a mild general learning disability, and students with a moderate general learning disability.

The above students are described as children who "have been assessed by a psychologist as having a mild, or moderate, learning disability" (Appendix 2 to Circular on Special Education 08/02). In an accompanying note, Mild General Learning Disability is described where "the student's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 50 – 69", and Moderate General Learning Disability is described where "the student's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 35 – 49". +

This enrolment/admissions policy has been prepared by the Board of Management to comply with the provisions of the Education Act (1998) and is subject to specific directions from the Patron, and to such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister

of Education & Skills (as noted above in the Provisions of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018).

Parents' right to send their child to the school of their choice is acknowledged and the Board of Management will endeavour to ensure that they will be provided with adequate information to assist them in relation to enrolment matters.

It is the policy of this school that prospective students should reside within the school's catchment area. Parents/guardians are encouraged to apply to special schools closest to their residences and to work in collaboration with their local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). Transport distances and logistics should always be taken into consideration when making an application.

### **ENROLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) A student whose primary disability is assessed as a mild or a moderate intellectual disability may be considered for enrolment**
- 2) It is also a pre-requisite that there is a specific recommendation, made by a qualified psychologist, for the student to be placed in a special school**
- 3) St. Francis school does not provide an educational service to pupils whose primary disability is one or more of the following areas.**
  - a. Physical/Sensory**
  - b. Emotional/Behavioural**
  - c. Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
  - d. Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder**

### **ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

The enrolment of students is then delegated to the Principal who will consult with the Board and appropriate professionals, in particular the local SENO.

Parents/guardians who indicate an interest in enrolling children at St. Francis School will be furnished with a copy of the School Plan and an Application Form. They will also be furnished with the NCSE enrolment and transport forms which will in turn be forwarded to the local SENO for processing.

The School Plan sets out the Board of Management's policies. Parents/guardians are requested to study the policies carefully and are encouraged to seek clarification on aspects of them about which they have any doubts, particularly with regard to the School Profile and to the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

On receipt of the completed Application Forms, the Principal will meet with parents/guardians at the school to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability to meet those needs. They will also be invited to inspect the school and its facilities.

Following this meeting, if the Principal is satisfied that all the relevant information has been received, that the school is capable of meeting the student's needs, and that a place is available, the child will be offered a place.

In some cases, it may be felt that the student would benefit more from a fresh start at the beginning of a term, and with this in mind, a start date may be postponed to the beginning of the first or second term.

It is the school's policy not to admit a student after the second term has commenced, as it is felt that the school community at St. Francis will have settled at that stage. Students admitted after the second term may occur under exceptional circumstances (see below).

### **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

#### **The school may allow enrolment to any pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where:**

1. Students with a **borderline mild general learning disability** (Borderline Mild General Learning Disability is described as where "the student's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 70 – 79") may be considered eligible for admission, but only after all other avenues have been explored and placement within mainstream education has completely broken-down. A decision for admission here will be made where a full consensus is reached between all stakeholders, where a detailed account is made available stating all has been tried at mainstream level, where a specific recommendation for attendance at a special school is made by a qualified psychologist, and where it is finally sanctioned by the local SENO.
2. A student who applies after the second term has commenced is eligible for a place where his/her residential circumstance is such that he/she is moving home and can no longer attend his/her present school due to transport issues. In this case, we at St. Francis will do all we can to accommodate the student.

#### **The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where:**

3. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education,

**and/or**

4. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, to school staff or to school property.

The parents of any child who has been refused enrolment, for any reason, are entitled to appeal that refusal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and in such circumstances will be advised in writing of their entitlement to such an appeal.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson, Board of Management) Date: \_\_\_\_\_