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Admission Policy of St. Comán's Wood Primary School

Roscommon Town

Roll number: 20498B

School Patron/s: Bishop Kevin Doran

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 (BoM) 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 the 31st January, 2023. 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. Comán's Wood Primary School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website www.comanswoodprimary.ie 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 www.comanswoodprimary.ie

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Comán's Wood Primary School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Elphin, Bishop Kevin Doran. It serves the people in the Roscommon town area and caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class.

"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;
- a living relationship with God and with other people;
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;

- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith, providing 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. Comán's Wood Primary 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 characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Mission Statement and general objectives of the school.

Our school Mission Statement is rooted in gospel values where all in the school community are expected to 'respect self' and 'respect others'. Our Motto is: Live, Love, Laugh, Learn. Our school Vision encapsulates the general objectives of the school i.e. ***St. Comán's Wood Primary School provides children with a well rounded education in a safe, nurturing, inclusive environment where everyone feels happy and respected, facilitating all to reach their full potential.*** Our Vision is visually embodied in the school logo - arms reaching upwards like trunks of trees endowed overhead with multicoloured leaves symbolising growth, working together and vitality. The various colours of the hands represent the variety of the children and staff we are privileged to have in our school, not just their skin colour but all of the colours of their individual personalities, their abilities, their talents and their individual outlook. While the Catholic ethos permeates the everyday life of the school, we also accept and respect the religious beliefs of those of other faiths and none. St. Comán's Wood Primary School encourages the involvement of parents through home/school communication and through participation in the Parents Association. We also endeavour to build and nurture strong links with our parish community.

3. Admission Statement

St. Comán's Wood Primary School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

- (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. Comán's Wood Primary 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 Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in special classes

St. Comán's Wood Primary School has established four special classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills: two special classes for children with Autism, one for children with significant Speech and Language difficulties (Speech and Language Class) and one for children with significant hearing impairment (Class for the Hearing Impaired) as specified by the Minister, and may refuse to admit to the classes a student who does not have the category of particular needs specified by the DES and HSE for entry to the special class.

St. Comán's Wood Primary 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 the provision and operation of special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St. Comán's Wood Primary 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.

A recommendation for placement in a special class in St. Comán's Wood Primary School should be made 24 months in advance of the child's starting date. This would allow the school sufficient time for planning, support and resourcing to be undertaken that is required to facilitate the placement of children with complex additional needs in their local school. This time would also allow the school in consultation with the SENO, to address what needs to be put in place to ensure the child's access to quality inclusive education. In short, it would provide the parents of children with special additional needs with certainty about school placement and would ensure the children with special additional needs will be able to attend the same local national school as their brother or sister.

Applications for Special education class(es)

A maximum of 6 places will be available each year in each of the two special classes for children with Autism. A maximum of 7 places will be available each year in each of the two special classes for children with severe Speech and Language difficulties and the class for children with significant hearing impairment. It is expected that the children in the Special Class for the Hearing Impaired and the classes for children with Autism, will be in the class until the end of 6th class, when the child finishes primary school..

Children in the Speech and Language Class spend 1-2 years in the class depending on the progress of the child. In order to maintain a maximum of 7 pupils in the Speech and Language class, enrolment to the class may fluctuate from year to year depending on the number of children leaving the class and the vacancies that ensue.

Admittance of pupils and continuation of pupils into a second year in the Speech and Language class is decided following interviews and assessment led by HSE professionals and school management. It is expected that children would return to their local school on completing their time in the Speech and Language class.

Children from outside the parish wishing to continue their education in the school, having completed their time in the Speech and Language class must submit an application form to enrol in a mainstream class prior to the closing date in the year they are due to leave the Speech and Language class. Children in the parish will automatically continue their education in the school.

4. Admission of Students

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

St. Comán's Wood Primary School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. Oversubscription

The school is full when it has 602 pupils enrolled, including up to 26 pupils in the two special classes. No infant mainstream class will have more than 24 pupils and no mainstream class 1st to 6th class will have more than 28 pupils. The Board of Management is aiming to have a maximum of 24 pupils in each class in line with the DES pupil:teacher ratio.

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:

Enrolment Criteria

- A. Health, welfare and needs of all pupils currently enrolled. Physical space in relation to class size, staffing provision and accommodation in line with DES class size average directives (24 pupils per mainstream class) with no more than 28 in any one mainstream classroom.
- B. Children whose primary residence is within the boundary of the Sacred Heart Parish Roscommon, priority to oldest, who are 4 years on or before the last day of February in the year of enrolment.
- C. Siblings of children (including step-siblings resident at the same address) already enrolled in the school who are 4 years on or before the last day of February in the year of enrolment.
- D. Children of current school staff who are 4 years on or before the last day of February in the year of enrolment.
- E. Follow the same criteria as above with a cut off date changing to the last day of March, April, May etc. until all places are full.
- F. Children resident outside the boundary of the Sacred Heart Parish, Roscommon, priority to oldest, within the limits stated above.

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:

In the event that priority is required to be given to children within any one of the above categories, older children will be given priority.

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 preschool 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: 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 siblings or step-siblings resident at the same address 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 (up until 31st January 2025 only).

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Comán's Wood Primary School 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 18](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Comán's Wood Primary School, 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.

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. Cománs Wood primary 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 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—

- (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. Comán's Wood Primary 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 St. Comán's Wood Primary 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. 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 a 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

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, and the criteria that apply are as follows:

- Application for enrolment is made on-line.
- Places will be offered using the enrolment criteria above if there is a space available in the required class. The BoM must take into account DES directives on class size.
- In the event of there being no available place pupils will be placed on a waiting list. The list will be live for 1 school year.
- Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000), information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress is to be provided by the school from which the child is transferring.
- If the child is expelled from the previous school the following documents will be requested from the parents/guardians of the child
 - a. a copy of the letter received by the parents/guardians from the previous school clearly stating the reasons for the expulsion.
 - b. Details of interventions and other agencies involved with the child.

Where the BoM is of the view that a student would constitute a danger to the safety and welfare of other pupils or staff, it will refuse to enrol the child. If the child was expelled from another school on these grounds it will be fairly assumed that the child will constitute a similar risk in St. Comán's Wood Primary school.

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:

- Pupils may transfer from other schools during the school year if places are available. The same procedure as outlined above will apply.

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

The board of St. Comán's Wood Primary 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 for such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school by a parent if they do not wish their child to attend religious instruction. 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 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.