



Admission Policy of Woodland National School

Rough Park, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

17728V

School Patron: Bishop Alan McGuckian, Diocese of Raphoe

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 5th November 2020. It is published on the school's website www.woodlandns.ie and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Woodland National School 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

Woodland National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe.

'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 Woodland 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 characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Vision Statement

We are a happy, caring school family who inspire, nurture and learn from each other with God by our side.

Mission Statement and General Objectives of the School

We:

- Promote a respectful, caring community where all are welcomed, valued and nurtured
- Embrace creative and innovative approaches to thinking, teaching and learning in a fun, positive and enriching learning environment
- Promote excellence so all are supported to reach their full potential in all areas of learning
- Nourish a faith community by embodying gospel values and teaching the Catholic faith, while welcoming and respecting people of other faiths and none
- Inspire and prepare pupils to be active, caring warriors for their world, now and in the future

3. Admission Statement

Woodland 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.

Woodland 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 faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Woodland National School is a school which has established six classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provide an education exclusively for students with categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to those classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Woodland 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.

Woodland 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 67(4B) of the Education Act.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

Woodland National School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established four classes to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), one of these being an Early Intervention Class. Woodland National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has also established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosed Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD).

5. 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

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

Four of the special classes attached to Woodland National School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, one of these being an Early Intervention Class. The school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in these classes.

Two of the special classes attached to Woodland National School provide an education exclusively for students with Specific Speech and Language Disorder. The school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

6. Oversubscription

Woodland NS operates maximum class size of 56 pupils per mainstream class level. This is designed to accommodate integration from the ASD and Speech and Language classes in the school. Once a class level reaches 56 pupils waiting list places will be offered to eligible applicants.

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:

6.1 Junior Infant Intake

- a. Children from inside the designated school catchment area at the time of application for enrolment. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, dates of birth will apply and oldest children will be allocated places first.
- b. If all the places have not been filled from the above category, places will next be offered to applicants from outside the designated school catchment area who have siblings attending Woodland National School. If the list of eligible applicants in

this group exceeds the number of places available, dates of birth will apply and oldest children will be allocated places first.

- c. Children of staff. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, dates of birth will apply and oldest children will be allocated places first.
- d. All other applications. If the list of applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, dates of birth will apply and oldest children will be allocated places first.

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:

Children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first.

Pupils will only be admitted to Junior Infants during the month of September, except in the case of a pupil transferring from another school. Places will only be offered to pupils who have reached the age of four before 1st September of the year of entry to school.

6.2 Speech and Language Class Intake

All applications are rated according to the Priority Rating Scale for admission to class for children with Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD). If these classes are oversubscribed the school will offer places on a waiting list in accordance with placement on the rating scale with the student with the highest rating being offered places first.

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:

Children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first.

6.3 Early Intervention ASD Class Intake

If the number of applicants for places in the Early Intervention ASD Class exceeds the number of places available the following criteria will be applied to eligible applications in the following order:

- a. Children from inside the designated school catchment area. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available children living geographically closest to Woodland National School will be offered places first.
- b. Children from outside the designated school catchment area. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available children living geographically closest to Woodland National School will be offered places first.

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:

Children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first.

6.4 ASD Class Intake

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied to eligible applications in the following order:

- a. Children from inside the designated school catchment area who are already enrolled in a mainstream class in Woodland National School. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first
- b. Children outside the designated school catchment area who are already enrolled in a mainstream class in Woodland National School. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first
- c. New applications from children who live inside the designated school catchment area. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first
- d. New applications from children who live outside the designated school catchment area. If the list of eligible applicants in this group exceeds the number of places available, children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first

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:

Children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first.

7 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, other than in relation to admission 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, save the inclusion of a selection criteria based on siblings of a student attending the school as per section 6.1 above

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).

8 Decisions on applications

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

- Woodland National School Admission Policy
- Woodland National School 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.

9 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).

10 Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Woodland 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**

- 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.

11 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 Woodland National School 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.

12 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).

13 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 Woodland 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 Woodland 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.

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.

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.

14 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.

15a Procedures for admission of students to other classes at the commencement of 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:

It sometimes happens that a parent/guardian may make application for transfer of his/her child/children to Woodland National School from another primary school in the Republic of Ireland or from a primary school outside of the Republic of Ireland. Applications for transfer to Woodland National School at the start of a school year from any other school are subject to the Admissions Policy of Woodland National School, and must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. An application for transfer enrolment form should be completed for each child who wishes to be considered for enrolment in Woodland National School. As a general principle and in so far as is practicable, having regard to the school's Admissions Policy, children will be enrolled in Woodland National School provided that there are places available in the class grouping to which the child is transferring.

If there are no available places when an application for transfer is made, parents/guardians should notify the Board of Management in writing if they wish to have their child's/children's name(s) placed on a waiting list for the duration of that school year.

Parents/guardians will be notified should a place become available. Places will be allocated to the children on this waiting list as follows in the following order:

- a. Children resident within the school catchment area at the time of application for enrolment. If there is more than one application in this category places will be allocated according to the date on which the application was received.
- b. Children from outside the designated catchment area who have siblings already enrolled in the school. If there is more than one application in this category places will be allocated according to the date on which the application was received.
- c. All other applications. If there is more than one application in this category places will be allocated according to the date on which the application was received.

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:

Children living geographically closest to the school will be allocated places first.

15b Procedures for admission of students during the school year

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:

It sometimes happens that a parent/guardian may make application for transfer of his/her child/children to Woodland National School from another primary school in the Republic of Ireland or from a primary school outside of the Republic of Ireland during the school year. Applications for transfer to Woodland National School from any other school are subject to the Admissions Policy of Woodland National School, and must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. An application for transfer enrolment form should be completed for each child who wishes to be considered for enrolment in Woodland National School. As a general principle and in so far as is practicable, having regard to the school's Admissions Policy, children will be enrolled in Woodland National School provided that there are places available in the appropriate class grouping.

If there are no available places when an application for transfer is made, parents/guardians should notify the Board of Management in writing if they wish to have their child's/children's name(s) placed on a waiting list for the duration of that school year.

Parents/guardians will be notified should a place become available.

16 Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of Woodland 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.

17 Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents of a student 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.

18 Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of a 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.

Signed: *Bishop Alan McGuckian*
School Patron

Date: 30th November 2023