

Admission Policy of St. Nicholas' National School
Nicholas Street
Dundalk
Co. Louth
Roll Number 183470
School Patron: His Grace, The Archbishop of Armagh

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 JUNE 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hard copy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Nicholas' 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

St. Nicholas's National School is co-educational primary school with a Church of Ireland ethos under the patronage of His Grace, Archbishop of Armagh John McDowell

"Church of Ireland/Anglican" ethos in the context of a Church of Ireland primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Anglican Christian tradition. This seeks to nurture and encourage the formation of the intellectual, academic, sporting, social and religious abilities of each child within the framework of the community of faith. A Church of Ireland ethos encourages intellectual diversity of thought and encourages the individual to seek to understand themselves, the world around them and the connection between the world and the Divine. This understanding of school ethos promotes pluralism in thought and living, in the context of a Christian school community. Drawing on its Anglican tradition, the Church of Ireland School encourages home/family involvement, highlighting the importance of the family/home in the social and emotional development of the child, and more broadly, the community of the school and church.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Nicholas' 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, characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Mission Statement: - ETHOS OF OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Our Church of Ireland school is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, social background, family circumstance, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning. Pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging, they are treated fairly and their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged as is their intellectual, social and academic achievement.
- It is a community where moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others, and civic responsibility are nurtured and protected. The justification for these qualities is based on Biblical teaching and interpreted by the Church.
- The Church of Ireland Primary School is a part of the local church community and has strong links with the Parish. This, for example, is shown by the fact that pupils attend services in the local church and the Rector visits the school on a regular basis.
- The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for religious differences. The admission policy of school often allows those of other faiths or none to become pupils.
- Religious education occupies a central position in the school curriculum and is regarded as a core subject; generally speaking of pupils is the school attend classes in Religious Education. The teaching of religious doctrine is restricted to specific times in the school timetable.
- The Church of Ireland School is one where the traditions and teaching of that Church inform the position taken in regard to moral issues which arise in the teaching of secular subjects.
- The school nurtures freedom of thought and a personal relationship with God. This is most evident in the teaching of Religious Education, and in the prayer life of the school community.

3. Admission Statement

“St, Nicholas National School 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. Nicholas National School 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.”

St. Nicholas' 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 of 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 traveler 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.

All denominational schools

St. Nicholas' 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 Church of Ireland/Anglican and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School with special education class(es)

St. Nicholas' National School is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the Category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the special class and admissions criteria to "The Haven.

If a special class is oversubscribed, we will compile a waiting list for the special class in accordance with our mainstream admissions policies. This list will be used to fill any vacancies that arise throughout the school year. Late applications will be added to the bottom of the waiting list and even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream of the school, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the school.

Review of placements: -

Following successful admission to The Haven (Special classes for children with ASD). Circular 0023/2025 sets out the guidelines for schools on the review of the student's placement in a special class. These are undertaken annually.

In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached

St. Nicholas' National school with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD.

5. Admissions of Students (Mainstream)

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 behavior 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

School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to St. Nicholas' National School provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and 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.

5.1 Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for (insert category of special educational need e.g. autism) when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of special educational needs e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)
And
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports
And
- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with rationale for same
And
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for (insert category of special educational need e.g. autism).

6. Oversubscription (Mainstream & The Haven)

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.

Priority

St. Nicholas' National School 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 (d), as follows:

- a) **Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is member of minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school ⁽¹⁰⁾ and who lives within the boundary of Dundalk Parish within 10 miles radius of the School.
- b) **Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the 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/education which is provided in the school ⁽¹¹⁾ and who lives within the boundary of Dundalk union.
- c) **Priority Category 3:** An Applicant Student who lives within 10 miles radius of the School and who complies with the terms of this Policy.
- d) **Priority Category 4:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy.

In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above, 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.

1. A statement from the Applicant confirming ⁽¹⁰⁾ that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and ⁽¹¹⁾ that the 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

11. 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 baptized as a member of the minority religion

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

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

It is to be noted that where if oversubscription occurs

Where the Applicant Students for both mainstream and The Haven are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in they applied (i.e.) First in basis. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

7. Refusal to Enroll

7.1 The School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where an Applicant does not comply with the terms of this Policy and

1. In the event that the parent(s) refuses to sign the enrolment form to accept the Code of Behaviour and Discipline of St. Nicholas' National School

7.2 Applicants refused on the basis of the above criteria will be advised of their right to appeal the Board's decision as outlined below.

8. Appeals Procedure

8.1 Applicants who are unhappy with an enrolment decision may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the DES on the Official Section 29 Appeal Application Form which can be downloaded from www.education.ie This appeal must be submitted to the DES within 42 days of receipt of the decision of the Board to refuse enrolment.

9. Ratification and Review

9.1 This Policy was ratified by the Board on 24/09/2025 and follows guidelines issued by the Patron in respect of admissions.

9.2 This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board.

10. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7) (3) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applicants for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) A student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service;b) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;c) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; <p>Other than in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Admission to The special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student had the category of special educational needs concerned, |
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- 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 conditions 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 application 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).

11. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Nicholas' National 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 admissions notice for receiving applications

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.

12. 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Nicholas's National 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 provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

14. 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. Nicholas' 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 behavior of the school is acceptable to him or her and 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.

15. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission of 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. And 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)

16. 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. Nicholas' 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 St. Nicholas's 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.

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 becomes 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.

17. 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 13 of this policy.

18. 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
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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 6 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 13 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 13 of this policy.

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

The board of St. Nicholas' 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

20. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents 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) guardians or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

21. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the 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.

Split or Multi-Grade classes:

Currently, there are six class teachers and eight class groupings in St. Nicholas' National School, as currently sanctioned by the Department of Education. Therefore, split classes are an inevitable consequence at some stage during a child's primary education here with us. However, it should be noted that over 70% of children in Irish primary schools are taught in split classes. At the time of planning classes for the coming year, the Principal, together with the class teacher and SEN team will consult and the Principal will then decide how best to organise the mixed class. At the time of planning the classes for the coming year, the Principal will look at the overall numbers in each year group and the number of teachers available to teach them. She will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children. Every effort is made to ensure that siblings are not placed in the same multi-grade class group. Where this is unavoidable, parents will be consulted. Parents are informed of their child's class as soon as the decision on class splits is made. Booklists are issued in June with the name of the child's class teacher for the coming academic year on top.

Friendships

A positive and supportive attitude from parents regarding friendship groups is key to a successful outcome for all children in their new groups. The process of forming new friends and friendship groups is a life skill which is important to develop. Children in split classes will be able to maintain existing friendships as well as make new friends in a new group, increasing both their circle of friends and their ability to form new friendships.

Other Factors

Children who have a special learning, behavioural or social needs may be exempted from the above processes, as the school/Principal will determine the appropriate class for them. The decision for splitting the class will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class. The allocation of teachers to split/mixed classes is the duty of the Principal as per Circular 16/73 to assign teaching duties.

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 to 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 with 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.

St. Nicholas' National School
Annual Admission Notice
In respect of admissions to the 2026/2027 school year

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 with 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.

Shirley Murphy
24/9/25

St. Nicholas' National School
Annual Admission Notice
In respect of admissions to the 2026/2027 school year

Note:

- This Notice must be published no later than 1 week before the date on which a school shall commence accepting applications for admission to the school for the school year concerned
- This Notice must be published on the school's website and must remain there for the duration of the school year
- A copy of this Notice must be made available on written request

Admission Policy and Application Form

A copy of the school's Admission Policy and the Application Form for Admission for the 2026/2027 is available as follow: -

On request: By emailing sannioclas.ns@hotmail.com or writing to School Office, St. Nicholas' National, Nicholas St. Dundalk, Co. Louth. A91 CR24

Part 1 Admissions to the 2026 school year

Application and Decision Dates for admission to 2026

The following are the dates applicable for admission to all classes

The school will commence accepting applications for admission on (This date cannot be before October 1 st of the year preceding the start of the school year for which admission is being sought)	1 st October
The school shall cease accepting applications for admission on (There must be a minimum period of 3 weeks between this date and the commencement date for accepting applications for admission)	3 rd November
The date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application is (This date must be no later than 3 weeks after the closing date for the submission of applications)	14 th November
The period within which applicants must confirm acceptance of an offer of admission is (This date is to be determined by the school)	21 st November

Note: the school consider and issue decisions on late applications in accordance with the school's admission policy.

***Failure to accept an offer within the prescribed period above may result in the offer being withdrawn**

Number of places being made available in St. Nicholas' National School

The number of places being made available in Junior Infants	15
The number of places being made available in the special classes	4

(*Note: If school has a number of classes that cater for different categories of SEN, details of the numbers of places for each SEN class must be provided)

