



St. Ita's N.S.

Admissions Policy

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| Address: | St. Ita's N.S, Cross St., Loughrea, Co. Galway |
| Roll Number: | 16762Q |
| School Patron: | Bishop Michael Duignan |

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 **15th September 2020**. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Ita's N.S. admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website www.stitasloughrea.com 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. Ita's N.S. is a co-educational primary school at infant level and an all-girls primary school from First to Sixth Class with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Clonfert.

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 St. Ita's N.S. 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:

St Ita's National School is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Clonfert. We hold as central, respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each child.

We uphold the teaching of Christian values and education of the child for life.

We commit ourselves to maximise the potential of each child by developing self-esteem, consideration of others and a critical evaluation of life. We acknowledge that education is a partnership and we maintain strong links with parents and see them as the primary educators of their children.

We value a spirit of co-operation and a happy learning environment and welcome partnership with the wider school community.

We are committed to developing right attitudes towards justice and tolerance and we respect the diverging views of minorities within our school.

3. Admission Statement:

St Ita's N.S. 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.
- 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.

Single gender schools:

- St. Ita’s N.S. is a co-educational primary school at infant level and an all-girls school from First to Sixth Class and therefore does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission into First to Sixth Classes in this school.

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion

- St. Ita’s N.S. is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

All denominational schools

- St Ita’s N.S. 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Amendment to the Admissions Statement:

- St. Ita’s N.S. 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. Ita’s N.S. 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:

St Ita’s N.S. is a mainstream primary school. It does not have a special class or an ASD Class. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team.

Note for schools: The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.

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

Additional information must be included (as applicable) in this section.

A school that admits students of one gender only

- St Ita's N.S. provides education exclusively for girls from First Class to Sixth Class and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school in those classes.

All denominational schools

- St Ita's N.S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

6. Oversubscription: (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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:

Note: In the case of a primary school that intends to give priority in admission to a student of a minority religion in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000, the school must include details of the arrangements for same here (see FAQ number 15)

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed/is expected to exceed the number of places available the following decision-making process will apply. The Board will exercise its discretion in the application of the following criteria:

1. Children residing in the parish of Loughrea.
2. Where siblings of the proposed new entrant are or have been pupils at the school.
3. Parents or Grandparents of a student of a proposed new entrant having attended the school.

4. Children residing outside the parish of Loughrea who have not access to a Catholic School.
5. Other children living outside Loughrea parish boundary.

Note The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

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:

- The school will draw lots to assign the place/places.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- 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;
- 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 family attending or having previously attended the school; (other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).
- 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 St Ita's N.S. 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.

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 St Ita's N.S. 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.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn:

- i. An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St Ita's N.S. where—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.
- v. Where an applicant poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the students and staff.
‘The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15 (1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility. An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education’.

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—

- 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 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 St Ita’s N.S. 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 Ita’s N.S. 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.

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.

15. 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 are as follows:

- Parents Guardians complete an applications form
- Application is assessed by the BOM using the criteria in Section 5 of this admissions policy.
- Admission will depend on space in the required class.

At the moment the Board of Management of St Ita's N.S. adheres to a maximum average class size of 26 pupils per class, based on the current staffing circular from the Department of Education and Skills (Circular 18/2020)

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:

The procedures of the school in this instance include those in the table above. However Primary School will recommend to applicants seeking places after September 30 each year and whose children are attending schools in the locality, that where possible, they retain their children in their current schools until the end of the instructional term (i.e. end of October, December, March)

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees:

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St Ita's N.S. 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:

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/guardians have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school.

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s), 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 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.

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: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 29/04/2020