

Admission Policy of Rathgar National School

School Address: Rathgar Avenue, Dublin 6

Roll number: 14717B

School Patron/s: Methodist Board of Education

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 September 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 Rathgar 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

The overall characteristic spirit of Rathgar National School is drawn from the principles constituting the School Ethos. It consists of the following principles:

1. The Christian faith underpins all school life.
2. All pupils are equally valued and respected.
3. All staff, teaching and ancillary are equally esteemed and respected.
4. Christian moral values are promoted and nurtured.
5. Religious differences are appreciated and respected.
6. Parental cooperation and support is recognised as being vital to children's progress in school.

The objectives of Rathgar National School are:

1. To preserve the Christian values on which the school is based, especially as reflected by the Methodist Church.
2. To create a happy and safe environment in which children may learn, teachers may teach and parents feel welcome.
3. To nurture a good work ethic and encourage each child to reach an academic standard suitable to their capabilities.
4. To ensure that the Revised Curriculum (1999) as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills is taught and new ideas/strategies/teaching practices encompassed as appropriate.
5. To encourage consultation between the Board of Management, teachers and parents as necessary and to provide support for teachers as professionals.
6. To ensure that each child acquires socially acceptable behaviour, respecting the school's Code of Behaviour while in school.

3. Admission Statement

Rathgar 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 religious 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.

Rathgar National School 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.

Rathgar 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 a Protestant denomination and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Rathgar National 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 by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

Rathgar National 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.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 5 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.

Rathgar National School is a school of Methodist denomination and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of a Protestant denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. Oversubscription

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:

5.1 Priority

Rathgar National School is a primary school under the sole Patronage of the Methodist Church in Ireland. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories listed below are used to determine the order given to applications.

Priority Category 1*: An Applicant Student who is a member of 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.

***In respect of priority Category 1 above, the Applicant's Parent/Guardian 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 understands that the school 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 letter from the Applicant's Parent/Guardian confirming that:

- i) the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion
- ii) the Parent/Guardian wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a 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

2. A separate letter from the relevant religious leader confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion

Priority Category 2: An Applicant Student who has siblings currently attending the school.

Priority Category 3: Siblings of Past Pupils who have left the school within the last 8 years.

Priority Category 4: An Applicant Student who has a parent who is a current permanent staff member of Rathgar National School.

Priority Category 5*: An Applicant Student who lives in proximity to Rathgar National School, with places allocated in this category by reference to the Applicant Students distance from their home to the school.

*In respect of Category 5 above, the Applicant's Parent/Guardian must provide proof of address of the family home in which the Applicant Student is ordinarily resident. Such proof should be a utility bill or similar. The ranking will be determined based on the absolute distance (i.e as the crow flies) from the school to this address, as measured by Rathgar National School using Google Maps or other such mapping tool as it may determine to be suitable from time to time. Applicant Students will be prioritised in order of those living the closest distance to the school.

Priority Category 6: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this policy.

PLEASE NOTE:

In cases where the number of valid applications within any one category exceeds the number of places available for the particular category, siblings will be prioritised. A process of random selection will then be implemented. In this instance, ONE unaffiliated person e.g. An Garda Siochana, will observe the selection of applicants. This process will be witnessed by THREE members of the School's Board of Management.

Where the Applicant Student(s) in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category.

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:

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 or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
(other than in the case of the Priority Categories 2,3,4 listed above under Section 5)
- (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 Rathgar 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 admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 13 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 14 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 (which may include email) 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 17 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Rathgar 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 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 Rathgar 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 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 9 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 Rathgar 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 Rathgar 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.

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.

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 are as follows:

1. Parents/Guardians who wish to enrol their child/children are required to complete an application form and return it to the school. A copy of this form can be:
 - Downloaded from the school website www.rathgarns.ie
 - Emailed
 - Collected from the school office between 8.20am and 1.30pm
 - Posted
2. On receipt of a completed application form, it will be marked with the date of receipt and filed in the Waiting List for the respective class. Parents/Guardians will be issued with an acknowledgement of receipt.
3. Should a place become available, those on the waiting list for that class will be contacted in rank order of receipt.
4. Parents/Guardians of applicant children will be informed in writing (Decision Letter) of the decision of the Board in respect of their application as soon as is reasonably possible.
5. Acceptance of a place in the school must be confirmed in writing within 14 days of the date on the Decision Letter. If no "Letter of Acceptance" is received within this period, it is understood by the school that the place is not being accepted.
6. Steps 3-6 as above will be followed for each class from Senior Infants to Sixth class until all "available" and "offered" places have been filled.

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:

Should a place come available it will be offered to the first name on the list and continue to be offered to subsequent names in order until the place is filled.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Rathgar 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.

16. 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 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 of such students:

Where a parent/guardian has requested an exemption from religious instruction, Rathgar National School will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss available arrangements on how the child can be accommodated.

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.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on: 25 / 9 / 23

Signed: A. J. Dougherty

Rev. Andrew Dougherty

Chairperson, Board of Management

Rathgar National School

This policy will be reviewed annually.