

# **Enrolment and Class Placement Policy for Scoil Mhuire Soisearach 2016**

## **1. General Information.**

This policy of Scoil Mhuire Soisearach, Ballymany, Newbridge, County Kildare is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and other legislation relevant to schools.

- 1.1. Scoil Mhuire Soisearach is located at Ballymany, Newbridge, County Kildare on the Standhouse Road.
- 1.2. Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.
- 1.3. Scoil Mhuire depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and it operates within the regulations laid down from time to time by the DES. The school is designated special funding status by the DES for funding purposes.
- 1.4. The school follows the curriculum as laid down by the DES. This may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 & 30 of the Education Act. (1998)
- 1.5. Within the context and the parameters of a) the Department's regulations and programmes, b) the rights of the Patron as set out in legislation, c) the funding and resources available and d) the school's enrolment and class placement policy, the school supports the principles of:
  - i) Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
  - ii) Equality of access and participation in the school;
  - iii) Parental choice in relation to enrolment;
  - iv) Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society;
  - v) The educational needs of all the children in the school;
  - vi) Health and safety considerations for staff and pupils.

## **Applications**

- 1.6. The Board of Management will accept (subject as hereinafter set out) applications on behalf of children who wish to enter the school.
- 1.7. Families moving into the area during the school year are asked to apply at the parish centre from where a parish central applications committee with representatives from each of the seven parish schools will consider their applications on a monthly basis
- 1.8. The basis for consideration of these applications will be as follows:
  - 1.8.1. places will be allocated where classes are empty
  - 1.8.2. children will be ranked for each space according to chronology
  - 1.8.3. children who have been in the school will be taken back
  - 1.8.4. staffing levels will be protected in the schools
- 1.9. For Junior Infant applications notices will be placed in the local newspapers, the parish newsletter and the school newsletter each year in December/January inviting applications to the school.
- 1.10. Application can be acquired by: -

- (a) Contacting the Parish Centre 00 353 45 431121 where an application form to be considered by the parish enrollment committee. It meets at regular intervals of approximately three weeks.

**NOTE:** The issuing of an Application form does not constitute an offer of a place in the school.

- 1.11. All Applicants must complete and submit the following: -

- (a) In the first instance An Application Form to the Parish Centre thereafter
- (b) A school application form
- (c) A State Birth Certificate or Passport

**NOTE:** Application Forms and supporting documentation must be submitted by a specified date of the year prior to the child starting school for junior infants. (hereinafter referred to as “the Submission Date” which may change from year to year depending on circumstances).

- 1.12. The attention of Parents is drawn to the fact that the filing of multiple Applications to different schools on behalf of a child/children can result in a place not being offered to a child.
- 1.13. Once an Applicant has been notified of an offer of a place in the school the payment of the deposit to the school is required. This deposit will be deemed to be an acceptance of the offer of a place and furthermore as a sign of a commitment on behalf of the Applicant. €35 of the deposit will be forfeited towards administration costs if the child does not subsequently attend the school or in the alternative if the offer is subsequently declined. The deposit will be transferred towards the child’s requisite payments .

## 2. Criteria for assessing Applications.

1. In considering Applications for the 2018/2019 school year priority will be given to the following Applicants: -
  - (a) Children who have attained six years of age.
  - (b) Siblings who have attained four years of age by the end of **June 30th** (this date is subject to change see 4.2.2 below)
2. In assessing an Application this year on behalf of a child who wishes to enter the school, the Board of Management will have regard to one or more of the following criteria: -
  - (a) The total number of children offered places in the school must not exceed an average of the maximum number of 28 children in each of the streams of classes in Junior Infants.
  - (b) Children must have attained the age of four years by the **June 30th** in the year in which the child is to attend school.
  - (c) Siblings of children in the school will be offered places first.
  - (d) The oldest of the non-sibling children will be offered places next.
  - (e) The Preservation of the Catholic Ethos of Scoil Mhuire having due regard to the ratio of Catholic and Non-Catholic children attending the school will be given consideration. If a child who has not presented a baptismal certificate can get a place in another school in the parish priority will be given to children presenting baptismal certificates.

## 3. Managing Intake.

1. The Board of Management will have regard to the effect of having children in classes in excess of the average maximum class size of 28. The basis for this concern is twofold: -
  - (a) Past experience with managing pupil behaviour.
  - (b) The concerns of teachers in relation to meeting the educational needs of individual children.

**NOTE:** This policy of not allowing the average maximum class size of 28 to be exceeded is based on Circular 0007/2016 Regulations Governing the Appointment and Retention of Teachers in Primary Schools. It will be amended in the light of reductions in the pupil teacher ratio.

### 3.1 Junior infant intake considerations.

- (1) Under the terms of the Education Act 1998 children cannot be taken into school in junior infants unless they are four years old in the year in which they are coming to school. The Board is aware that potentially **children could be six before they begin infant schooling.** The Board of Management has set a maximum class size of 28 for the children in junior infant classes on the following basis:
  - (a) Smaller numbers are desirable in junior infants.
  - (b) It is felt that any number in excess of 28 children per class would have adverse implications for class size, for the capacity of the existing buildings and for the overall size of the school campus.
- (2) In order to facilitate this maximum class size of 28 as referred to above the Board of Management will use a cut off date by which any child must be four years old. This cut off date will be a date prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> September in any school year. The actual cut off date will be decided annually and will be based on the number of applicants and other considerations

relevant to the decision making process relating thereto. For the school year 2017 – 2018 there was no cut off date as numbers enrolled were very small.

- (3) The date is to be decided at the end of January or afterwards subject to the number of places accepted.
- (4) In the event of the overall enrolment being below the average of 28 up to September 30<sup>th</sup>, pupils who are four after the cut off date will be offered places in the school up to the point where the figure of 28 per class is arrived at. Once a child is offered a place in the School such an offer will not be withdrawn apart from exceptional circumstances.
- (5) Where a child is not accepted in a given year because of a cut off date that child will be offered a place in the school for the following school year. The parents of such a child will be sent a letter after the 30<sup>th</sup>. September but before the 31<sup>st</sup>. October confirming the making of the offer.
- (6) The school has stand alone special funding status referred to at 1.3. above which allows it concessions in relation to funding. This status is gained based on the following criteria:
  - (i) The number of families dependent on social welfare as a source of income.
  - (ii) The status of the relationship between the guardians of the children.
  - (iii) The status of housing of the children.

#### **4. Children with special needs.**

4.1. Due consideration will be given to children who have special needs. In this regard the Board of Management will apply a policy of inclusiveness (see 1.5) above. The Board will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report. Where such a report is not available the Board may request that a child be assessed. The purpose of such an assessment is: -

- (a) To establish the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs.
- (b) To provide evidence of need for support services for the child in order to seek the support of the Special Education Needs Council.

Prior to such a child being offered a place in the school the Board will have to be satisfied that the appropriate services will be in place before the child commences schooling.

#### **5. Transfers from other schools.**

5.1. The Board of Management will consider (subject to the terms and conditions of the Schools Admission and Class Placement Policy) Applications on behalf of children who wish to transfer from other schools. The Board of Management will have consideration for and deem relevant the following factors in assessing such an Application: -

- (a) The availability of places in the school for the child.
- (b) The approval of the Department of Education & Skills.
- (c) The Applicants and/or the Parents reasons for seeking the Transfer.
- (d) The provision of stability for the child and the desire to ensure that the child stays at his/her current school if the school is more proximate to where he/she lives.

5.2 When a parent of a child from another school in the area applies for a place for that child during term time, and there has not been a relocation of the family home the following procedure will be used in assessing any such application: -

- (a) The parent will be advised to discuss the matter with the teacher or the principal in the child's existing school.
- (b) A meeting may then take place with the principal of Scoil Mhuire.

- (c) If after a) and b) above the parent still wishes to apply for a place in Scoil Mhuire permission will be sought from the parents for the Principals of the two schools to discuss the matter.
- (d) If, after due discussion, a parent continues to seek a transfer on behalf of a child a formal application must then be made to Scoil Mhuire. This Application will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Admissions and Class Placement Policy.
- (e) Applications for admission that will result in the number of pupils in any one class exceeding 28 pupils will be referred to the monthly meeting of the Board of Management for its consideration.

### 5.3. Applications that will cause class sizes to exceed 28.

It is Board of Management policy that applications that will result in the number of students in any one class exceeding 28 will be referred for specific consideration at the subsequent monthly meeting of the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has adopted this policy because it is of the opinion that: -

- i) That 28 children or more in classes can be detrimental to the educational progress of the children.
- ii) Teaching staff find it impossible to cater for the individual needs of children in classes with high numbers. The consequences of coping with such difficulties are that both staff and pupils experience stress and anxiety.

**5.4. Criteria.** The Board of Management in considering such applications for transfer may take account of one or more of the following: -

- i) The Schools Enrolment and Class Placement Policy.
- ii) The reasons given by the Applicant for the transfer.
- iii) The space that is available in classrooms to accommodate the Child/Children.
- iv) The constitutional rights of the Child/Children to an education and the rights of Parents to send their children to a school of their choice.

### **6. Policy for the placement of children in classes.**

Children will be placed in classes using the following criteria.

1. **Average age.** An average age for pupils in the four classes will be calculated. Children will be placed in classes to ensure that the average age of the children in each class is as close to the overall average age as possible.
2. **Mix of Children.** In so far as the status of the housing can be ascertained there will be a mix of children in each class from private, rented and local authority housing in the area.
3. **Gender Balance.** There will be gender balance in each class in proportion to the number of boys and girls who are to be allocated places.
4. **Friendship groups.** Where parents submit four names of children with whom they would like to have their child placed then the Board will endeavour to place the child in a class with one of those named children. This criteria will be applied after the three criteria above has been applied.

## **7. Changing of children from one class to another.**

1. The allocation of children to classes is the responsibility of the Principal and Teacher. Only in very exceptional circumstances, after places are allocated, and after due consideration by the Principal and the Teacher will children be changed from one class to another.

In the event of a request being made by a parent:

- i) A consultation will take place between the Principal and the class Teacher in the school who knows the child best.
- ii) Consideration will be given by the Principal and Teacher to the following:-
  - (a) The child's needs.
  - (b) The child's capacity, educational and otherwise, to cope with a change of class or teacher.
  - (c) The emotional and physical well being of individual children and the relative health and well being of all the children in the group.
  - (d) Whether or not the child has moved into the school or class in the recent past.
  - (e) The relative ability of the children in a class.
  - (f) The friendship groups in the class.

## **8. School Policies**

Acceptance of a place in the school implies acceptance of the School Enrolment and Class Placement Policy and such other policies as agreed and revised by the Board of Management from time to time.

## **9. Section 29 Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 a parent can appeal the decision of a Board of Management in relation to admission. This appeal can be made through the Secretary General, Department of Education and Science, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.

## **10. Conclusion**

This Policy was reviewed and revised by the Board of Management in 2016. Any reviews and/or revisions will be subject to the terms of the Education Act 1998 and any other relevant and amending legislation. Any such reviews and/or revisions will also take account of any further issues (Educational or otherwise), which might arise on an ongoing basis.