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| ***Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró-Naofa*** |

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**Policy on Enrolment & Admissions**

**This policy refers to all applicants from 28th November 2018 and subsequent years until further notice. It supersedes all previous policies on Enrolment & Admissions.**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy was formulated by the Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents. It is reviewed regularly, most recently in November 2018, in line with guidance from the CPSMA, the DES and our patron, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin, Denis Nulty. The Board of Management trusts that, by doing so, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board, Fr. Pat Hughes and the Principal, Mr. Tommy Fitzgerald, will be happy to clarify any matters arising from the policy.

**Rationale and Aim**

It is a requirement under the Education Act 1998 that every Board of Management formulate a policy on enrolment. This policy fulfils that requirement. It also recognises the provisions of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, which will amend the Education Act 1998, and are caused by amending the Equal Status Act, 2000. This policy aims to provide a clear framework for enrolment applications so that all parties understand the procedures and criteria involved. This framework should ensure that all applications are dealt with in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

**General Information**

• Scoil Náisiúnta Chroí Ró-Naofa, Rath, Ballybrittas, Co. Laois is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

• The word ‘Patronage’ refers to the values and beliefs which underpin our school’s Catholic ethos and which permeates every aspect of life in our school throughout every school day.

• Our school is part of the Catholic tradition of education and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. Our school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our school provides religious education for our pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of our pupils in the Catholic faith in partnership with their parents and the parish community.

• Our school depends on grants provided by the Department of Education & Skills, administration and class resource funding from parents at the start of each year and funds raised by the Parents’ Association. All school policies must have regard to the resources and funding available.

• The school operates within the regulations laid down by, and follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

• Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeking/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

• A child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in the school before his/her fourth birthday (Rules for National Schools 64.1).

• While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child/children in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and health and safety. Acting in the best interests of all children, the Board reserves the right to refuse applications and/or determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom, bearing in mind:

(a) Size of / available space in classrooms/school (b) Educational needs of children of a particular age (c) Multi-grade classes (d) Presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs. (e) DES pupil/teacher ratio (currently 26 pupils to 1 teacher)

• Rath N.S. opens each morning at 9.20 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. The Infant classes finish each day at 2 p.m. and children from these classes must be met by a parent or guardian at the school gate and taken home at that time.

• We are a vertical school with eight mainstream classrooms and two special classrooms for children with Autism.

**Application Procedure**

Enrolment is by way of written application only. Application forms are available from the school or via the school website. All applicable areas of the application form must be completed in full. All completed Enrolment Application forms must be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate (if applicable and if baptised outside of the parishes of Emo and Portarlington) and proof of present address in the form of a current utility bill. Children’s religious or baptismal status will not affect enrolment. Acceptable utility bills are: gas, water, electricity, home insurance within two months of date of application. It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian to ensure that all necessary documentation requested by the school accompanies their application. Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned. Completed forms should be returned to The Board of Management, Rath N.S., Ballybrittas, Co. Laois. All envelopes should be clearly marked ‘Enrolment Application’. The closing date for applications is **31st January @ 3pm annually**. **Applications will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information has been received.**

The Principal will inform parents of the outcome of their application for enrolment of their child. Decisions made in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy. The Board will notify parents of their decision within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of applications (**i.e. 21 days after 31st January annually**). The Board will have regard to Department of Education & Skills circular letters in relation to class size or staffing provisions and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space and the health and welfare of the pupils.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment exceeding the number of places available, the Principal, who has been delegated authority to act on behalf of the Board of Management in this matter, **will apply the following criteria in order to identify which children should be admitted at initial admission to Junior Infants**.

**1.** Children who have **siblings** currently enrolled in the school. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**2**. Children who live within the **traditional geographical catchment area of the school**, (see Appendix 1). Evidence of residency may be requested in the form of a recent (within two months) utility bill such as ESB, house insurance etc. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**3.** Children **whose parent is an employee of the school**. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**4.** Children who live **closest to the school**. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**5.** Children of past pupils. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**6**.Children not in the above named categories. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

**Please note the following:**

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Department and Education & Skills Guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions **(currently 26 pupils to one teacher)**. Rath N.S. has undergone four extensions in recent years. As a school, the Board of Management has decided not to extend the school building into the future nor accept any prefabs due to an increased enrolment. Therefore, the Board of Management has decided, there shall be no more than **26 pupils enrolled in Junior Infants each year**. Other factors that may be considered are:

1. Size and available space in classrooms.
2. Educational needs of children of a particular age.
3. Multi-grade classes.
4. Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.
5. Health and Safety.

**The B.O.M. reserves the right to refuse enrolment based on number and 1-5 and a-e above.**

If the school’s admission and enrolment numbers have not been reached, the school will admit all children of the appropriate age whose parents wish them to attend the school until the maximum quota is reached.

The school should be made aware in writing of any court order which affects the child’s welfare stating the exact nature of the order and where appropriate stating the child’s legal guardian.

**Admission Date**

Junior Infants will only be admitted to the school on the first school day of each new school year. However, if the pupil has commenced formal education in another school, the Board of Management has the discretion to approve enrolment in Junior Infants.

**Pupils Transferring**

Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing national schools, the Management Board’s school policies and the provision of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Normally transfers are only considered for the start of each new term. In the case of such pupils, an enrolment application form must be completed and returned with an original birth certificate. Families intending to take up residence in the area should contact the school well in advance regarding enrolment.

Our school will contact the former school to ensure information supplied is accurate and request an attendance report and any relevant documents pertaining to the child's educational progress.

In the event of children seeking enrolment in any given class exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year, they will be placed on a class waiting list and contacted when a place becomes available. It should be noted that children will be prioritised on waiting lists according to the criteria outlined for the enrolment of Junior Infants above.

A pupil who leaves the school and who is struck off the rolla, and who subsequently wishes to return to the school must reapply to the Board of Management in writing.

**Children with Special Needs**

The Board may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report. Where such a report is not available, the Board may request that the child be assessed immediately. Following receipt of this report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Should the Board deem that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request that the Special Educational Needs Organiser provide them. The school will meet with the child's parents to discuss his/her needs and the school's ability to meet these needs. If necessary, a full case conference involving all relevant parties (school, parents, psychologist or other professionals) will be convened.

**Code of Behaviour**

Children who enrol in our school are required to comply with our Code of Behaviour, as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. Parents must agree to the Board of Management’s Code of Behaviour, a copy of which can be read on the school website www.rathns.ie. The Board of Management places parents responsible for ensuring that their children comply with all school rules and regulations in an age appropriate way.

**Refusal to Enrol**

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse to enrol applicants in certain exceptional circumstances:

• There are no places available.

• The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.

• In the opinion of the BoM, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

Right of Appeal Under Section 29 of the Education Act means that parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision to refuse an application to the Department of Education and Skills. Parents/guardians can appeal in the first instance if they so wish to the Board of Management. Such appeals must be made in writing within 7 days of receipt of the letter of refusal to the Secretary of the Board of Management.

**Review**

This policy has been drawn up by The Management Board of Rath N.S. It will be monitored by the principal and reviewed on a regular basis by the Board and, depending on circumstances, may be amended accordingly.

**Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management after approval by the patron at a meeting of the Board on 28th November 2018.

**Communication of Policy**

This policy will be available to parents in the school office. It will also be available to download from the school website. Changes to the policy will be communicated to parents through the school newsletter and to staff at a staff meeting. All applicants will be provided with a hard copy of the policy on request.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**

**Rath N.S. Catchment Area**

The catchment area of the school includes all of the following townslands;

Ballybrittas/Ballyshaneduff/Graigavern/Tullaghan

Rath/Rathshronin

Bellgrove/Rossmore

Ballyadden

Jamestown/Killaglish/Woodenbridge

Ballintogher

Fisherstown/Sallysfort/Kilbracken/Belin

Coolroe

Courtwood