

Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró-Naofa

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An Ráth
Bailebriotás,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois
R32Y510

SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

Name of School: Sacred Heart National School, Rath

Address: Ballybrittas, Co. Laois

Roll Number: 13741Q

Charity Number: 20204033

Patron: Most Reverend Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin

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 24th 2025. 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 our 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

Rath N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos. The Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin is the Patron of this school.

‘Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all’.

‘The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15’

‘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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and

- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and 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 Rath 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.

3. ADMISSION STATEMENT

Rath 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, 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.

Rath 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.

Rath 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.

All denominational schools

Rath 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with special education class(es)

Rath N.S. is a school which has established two classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provides an education exclusively for students with autism 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 School/Special Class

Rath N.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with autism. The criteria for admission in the special classes, incorporating the Department of Education and the HSE's policies is as follows:

Each child must have:

- 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 the 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 children with autism

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

All denominational schools

Rath N.S. is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School with special education class(es)

The special classes attached to Rath N.S. provide an education exclusively for students with autism 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.

6 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:

Criteria to be used:

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 a permanent 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.**)

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:

- If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.**
- If, in the event that one place is available and the next two children are twins; both will be taken.

Special Classes

When the applications for our special classes exceed places available, the Board of Management will follow the following selection criteria:

Criteria to be used:

1. Children presently enrolled in the school with a recommendation for a placement in a special class attached to a mainstream school and who comply with the criteria stated in Section 4. (If the applications within this category exceed the number of places available, **younger pupils** will have precedence.)

2. Criteria 1-6 above will be used for children with a recommendation for a placement in a special class attached to a mainstream school and who comply with the criteria stated in Section 4.

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:

- a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at -
 - an early intervention class, or
 - an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;

- c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude other than in relation to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned
- 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: siblings already enrolled (including step-siblings, resident at the same address) and parents of a student having 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 applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned. (In other words, there is no advantage if the admission forms are handed in to the school on the first or last day of the specified days for admission. However, late applications will affect enrolment if the school is oversubscribed).

8 DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS

All decisions on applications for admission to Rath 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 junior infants).

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 Rath 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

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Rath N.S. 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 10 above.

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 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).

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 Rath 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 Rath 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 a place available. Junior Infants must be enrolled by September 30th each year. 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:

- An admission 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 admission.
- In the event of children seeking admission 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 admission of Junior Infants above.
- A pupil who leaves the school and who is struck off the roll, and who subsequently wishes to return to the school must reapply to the Board of Management in writing.

16 DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES

The board of management of Rath 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 admission of a student in the school.

17 ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

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. Written requests by parents/guardians will be considered on a case by case basis.

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.

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, in writing,** 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, in writing,** 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, in writing,** 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, in writing,** 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.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

This Admission Policy was approved by the Patron; Bishop Denis Nulty on September 1st 2025.

This Admission Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on September 24th 2025.


(Chairperson)


(Principal)

24-09-2025

Appendix 1

Rath N.S. Catchment Area

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

Ballybrittas/Ballyshaneduff/Graigavern/Tullaghan

Rath/Rathshronin

Bellgrove/Rossmore

Ballyadden

Jamestown/Killaglish/Woodenbridge

Ballintogher

Fisherstown/Sallysfort/Kilbracken/Belin

Coolroe

Courtwood