

Enrolment Policy

This enrolment policy has been prepared by the Board of Management (BOM) of Knock National School and is being set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998). The chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal teacher will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Knock National School is a Catholic Co-Educational primary school based in the village of Knock. It is a parish based school and is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. The school is committed to providing an education for the children who attend the school, in addition to promoting inclusivity and diversity while, at the same time, protecting the Catholic ethos of the school. Our aim is the full and harmonious development of each child, including his/her relationship with God, with others and with the environment, as exemplified by the Gospel Values (School Ethos Policy).

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- inclusiveness
- equality of access and participation in school life for all children
- parental choice in relation to enrolment
- respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Catholic Ethos

Knock National School is a Catholic primary school. Images pertaining to the Catholic faith are displayed throughout the school, in addition to this events relating to the Catholic faith are celebrated in the school e.g. Catholic Schools Week, Assemblies, Celebration of Mass etc. The Alive O Catholic faith religious programme is taught in all classes, preparation for sacraments also takes place. The schedule of a Catholic school is displayed in the school.

Children from all faiths are welcome in our school, and children are not discriminated against on grounds of religious/non religious beliefs. Children who are not members of the Catholic faith are not required to participate in events pertaining specifically to the Catholic faith. Children who are not Catholic do not have to participate in religious education classes and they may be assigned other work. The school does not possess the necessary teaching resources to allow children who are not Catholic to leave their class while religious education is taking place.

Application Procedure

- Parents/guardians who wish to enrol children will be invited to an enrolment information evening in the second term.

- Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child(ren) in this school are requested to return a completed Application for Enrolment form (available from the Secretary's office and the school website – www.knockns.ie) together with original Birth/Adoption Certificate and Baptismal Certificate (if applicable). Parents/guardians of applicant children with special educational needs are required to provide up to date copies of reports relevant to the child's special needs e.g. Medical Assessment Report, Psychological Assessment Report, Occupational Therapy Assessment Report, Speech and Language Assessment Report etc. All information provided on the Enrolment Application Form should be accurate. Applications containing inaccurate information will be rendered null and void. Parents/guardians will receive a copy of the school enrolment policy and Code of Behaviour. Parents/guardians should note that completion of an Application for Enrolment form does not guarantee a place in the school.
- All decisions made relating to the acceptance or non acceptance of applicant children are made by the BOM based on the selection criteria as outlined in this document. Parents/guardians will be informed of the decision within twenty one days of receipt of a completed Application for Enrolment form.
- Parents/guardians of successful applicant children will be sent an Acceptance/Non Acceptance form in addition to a Registration form. They will be required to complete these and return them to the school.
- Parents/ guardians of unsuccessful applicant children will be notified in writing within twenty one days of receipt of a completed application for enrolment form. Names of unsuccessful applicant children will be retained on a waiting list by request.

Application for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Class

The ASD Class is a special class attached to the school for children with autism. The registration process for the class commences with a referral from a specialist or contact from the parents.

- Parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child(ren) in this class are requested to complete an Application for Enrolment form (available from the Secretary's office and the school website www.knockns.ie) together with original Birth/Adoption Certificate and Baptismal Certificate (if applicable). Applications will only be processed on the basis of an up to date (less than one year old) diagnostic or psychological assessment, whereby children have a diagnosis of autism according to DSM IV/V or ICD diagnostic criteria, and that there is a recommendation that the child attend an ASD class attached to a mainstream school.
- Parents must also complete the NCSE Notification of Enrolment Form which will be forwarded to the SENO on behalf of those seeking to enrol in the class. This form is available on www.ncse.ie
- All decisions made relating to the acceptance or non acceptance of applicant children are made by the BOM based on the selection criteria as outlined in this document. Parents/guardians will be informed of the decision within twenty one days of receipt of a completed Application for Enrolment form.
- Parents/guardians of successful applicant children will be sent an Acceptance/Non Acceptance form in addition to a Registration form. They will be required to complete these and return them to the school.
- Parents/ guardians of unsuccessful applicant children will be notified in writing within twenty one days of receipt of a completed application for enrolment form. Names of unsuccessful applicant children will be retained on a waiting list by request.

Code of Behaviour

In Knock National School we promote an atmosphere of trust, respect and empathy. The Board of Management and staff are committed to maintaining and nurturing this atmosphere and promoting positive behavior, as we believe this is most conducive to teaching and learning. For this reason it is

important for the parents/guardians of applicant children to understand that we follow the school's Code of Behaviour strictly in the interests of all our pupils and staff members.

Parents/Guardians of all applicant children are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour. It is assumed that parents/guardians who enrol their child in the school automatically provide a commitment that they will support the school's Code of Behaviour. Essentially, this means that they will discuss the code with their child and encourage them to co-operate with school staff and fellow pupils and adhere to the Code of Behaviour. It is important that all parents make themselves aware of the strategies used by the school to promote positive behavior and to discuss these strategies with their child. It is equally important that parents/guardians of applicant children make themselves aware of the consequences and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour.

Enrolment Criteria

Decisions 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 receiving such information. As a general principle and in so far as practicable having regard to the school's enrolment policy, children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is space available.

There are five mainstream classes in Knock National School. A decision has been made by the Board of Management of Knock NS that the school will be full at a maximum of 145 pupils. In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of available places, applicant children will be enrolled in accordance with the following criteria, and in the following order:

1. Catholic children applying for places in Knock N.S and living in the Parish will be given priority over children from bordering/neighbouring parishes.
2. Children applying for places who have siblings already in the school will be facilitated within the limits stated above and depending on the needs of the child.
3. Children of staff working in the school and applying for places will be facilitated keeping within the limits stated above and depending on the needs of the child.
4. Catholic children living outside the parish boundary who do not have a Catholic School within their own parish boundary
5. Children living within the parish boundary
6. Children living outside the parish boundary

Admission of Junior Infants normally takes place on the first day of the academic year. Any child who has not reached his/her fourth birthday cannot be enrolled at any time. If the number of applicants for Junior Infants exceeds the number of places available a 'cut-off birth date' may apply.

Enrolment Criteria for ASD Class

The ASD class caters for a maximum of six pupils. The purpose of the ASD class attached to a mainstream school is to provide an opportunity for children with autism to integrate in mainstream classes. Applications for enrolment to this class will not be considered unless accompanied by and up to date psychological assessment, whereby the child(ren) has a diagnosis of autism according to DSM IV/V or ICD diagnostic criteria.

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of available places, applicant children will be enrolled in accordance with the following criteria, and in the following order:

1. Catholic children living within the parish boundary
2. Children who have siblings already enrolled in Knock NS
3. Children of current staff, including ancillary staff working in the school
4. Other children living in the parish
5. Other children living outside the parish boundary

The ASD class attached to Knock NS is for primary school children only. Children enrolled in the class must, therefore, transfer to post-primary school in the August/September immediately following their twelfth birthday.

Enrolment of children with Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Needs will be allocated a place in the school based on the enrolment criteria outlined in this policy, and in some cases depending on the level of resources sanctioned by the National Council for Special Education and provided by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management. For instance, in some cases it may be necessary to delay enrolment until:

- The parents/guardians of the applicant child provide an up to date assessment report relevant to the applicant child's special educational needs
- Essential resources are put in place to meet the needs of the child and to ensure the safety and welfare of the child and/or the school's staff and pupils

Parents/guardians of applicant children with special educational needs will be required to sign an application for resources to the National Council for Special Education, in order to apply for the necessary resources to support their child's learning.

Refusal to enrol on grounds of exceptional circumstances

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment in the following exceptional circumstances:

1. An applicant child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, an applicant child poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property

Enrolment during the school year

Children may be enrolled during the school year if places are available. The enrolment criteria as outlined in this document will apply.

Transfer from other schools

Applications for enrolment for children transferring from other schools will be subject to the rules governing National Schools and the criteria for enrolment set out in this policy.

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000), information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress is to be provided by the school from which the child is transferring.

The following documents will be requested from parents/guardians of applicant children who have been expelled or encouraged to leave the school they are transferring from:

1. A copy of the letter received by the parents/guardians from the previous school clearly stating the reasons for the expulsion
2. Details of interventions and other agencies involved with the child

Where the Board of Management is of the view that acceptance of a student would constitute a danger to the safety and welfare of other students, or staff, it will refuse to enroll the child. It is clear, therefore, that if a child was expelled from another school on the grounds that she/he presented as a danger to the health and safety of other pupils or staff members, the Board will refuse to enroll him/her as it will be fairly assumed that the applicant will constitute a similar risk in Knock National School.

Right to appeal

Parents/guardians of unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the Board's decision to refuse to enrol their child. Parents will also be made aware of the following documentation on the school website www.knockns.ie

1. Section 29 Information Letter for Parents
2. Procedures for hearing and determining appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998
3. Section 29 Application Form

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in advance of the February enrolment period.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Knock National School on 2nd May 2016 subject to approval from the school Patron, Most Rev. Archbishop Michael Neary.