

**ST. MARY'S NATIONAL SCHOOL
COBH**

ENROLMENT/ADMISSION POLICY

Philosophy and Ethos

St. Mary's National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Cloyne. St. Mary's N.S. is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each pupil in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. St. Mary's N.S. is committed to on-going whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents, the Department of Education and Science and the wider community.

The aim of the school is to provide a Catholic education for our pupils, by complementing and supporting the role of parents in developing and fostering religious convictions and moral values in their children while at the same time providing for their developmental and educational needs. Pupils are helped to achieve their full potential so that they may participate fully in all aspects of school and community life.

School Details

St. Mary's NS is a Girls' School with Infant Boys.

There are 19 teachers on staff including the Principal, 13 Mainstream Class Teachers and 5 Learning Support/Resource Teachers. The staff also includes 2 Special Needs Assistants, a full-time Secretary and a full-time Caretaker.

Enrolment Policy

St. Mary's N.S. is funded by the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and it operates within the regulations laid down by that Department. School policy must have regard to the resources and funding available at any given time.

All pupils are welcome to enroll regardless of disability, gender (*subject to terms of this Enrolment Policy*), race, religion, ethnicity, family or social status or Traveller status.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the D.E.S. which may be amended from time to time in accordance with the Education Act (1998). Giving due consideration to the context and parameters of D.E.S. regulations and programmes, Education Act (1998), Education Welfare Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), Equal Status Act (2000) and other relevant legislation, together with the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
- Equality of access and participation in the school;
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

While recognising the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management also has a responsibility 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 acting in the best interests of all children. The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:

- Size of / available space in classrooms
- Educational needs of children of a particular age
- Multi-grade classes
- Presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs
- DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 28 children)

Junior Infant pupils are registered on the first day of the school year and no later than September 30th. All applicants must have attained their 4th birthday by September 1st in the year of admission.

Other pupils are enrolled during the school year (if newly resident in the area or transferring from other schools) subject to school policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the DES.

Selection Criteria

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year (due to the Board of Management being unable to provide suitable accommodation or recruit the required teaching staff) the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:‘

(1) Siblings and step-siblings of present and past pupils who are four years of age on or before 30th June in the year of application, priority to eldest

(2) Children of current school staff who are four years of age on or before 30th June in the year of application, priority to eldest

(3) Children of past pupils of the school who are living in the Parish of Cobh and who are four years of age on or before 30th June in the year of application, priority to eldest

(4) Children living within the Parish of Cobh who are four years of age on or before 30th June in the year of application, priority to eldest

(5) Children from categories (a), (b), (c) and (d) who are four years of age on or before 30th September in the year of application, priority to eldest

(6) Children living outside the Parish of Cobh

(7) In the event of being unable to enrol a child(ren) from categories above in a given class at the beginning of a year, or mid-year, such children will receive priority (in order of the above priorities) for the subsequent school year over other children on the class waiting list

Enrolment Procedure

1. In early February the Parish Office will advertise through appropriate channels e.g. newsletter, parish bulletin that the Primary Schools in the Parish are accepting enrolments.
2. Parents/Guardians wishing to enrol their child(ren) in St. Mary's N.S. are required to return a completed Enrolment Application Form (*available from the school*) with an original Birth/Adoption Certificate and a Baptismal Certificate (*where relevant*) to the school by the advertised closing date .
3. Where specific legal documents outline the family status/custody arrangements relating to the child(ren), details of these arrangements should also be provided. Subsequent legal changes to the name(s) or guardianship of the child(ren) should be communicated in writing to the school..
4. The names of children for whom the necessary documentation has been returned will be placed on a class list in accordance with the selection criteria. The completion of an application form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.
5. Offers of a place in Junior Infants will be posted to parents/guardians as soon as possible after the closing date.
6. Parents will be asked to confirm their acceptance of a place in writing before the date specified in the letter of offer.
7. Parents of children enrolled in Junior Infants will be invited to an open day in the school in June.

Enrolment of children with Special Educational Needs

Children with special needs enrolling in St. Mary's N.S. will be enrolled in accordance with the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) and will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Science to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or request that the child be assessed immediately in order to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child and to profile the support services required. The Board of Management will endeavour to have all resources and support in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, resource teacher, special needs assistants etc, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc.

The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians of the special needs child to discuss the school's suitability for the child. If necessary a full case conference may be called including parents/guardians, class teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher and psychologist or social workers as appropriate.

Code of Behaviour

Children enrolled in St. Mary's N.S. are required to co-operate with and support the School's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. The Board of Management places responsibility on parents/guardians to ensure that their child(ren) co-operate with said policies in an age-appropriate way. These policies may be added to and amended at various times. A copy of the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy will be issued to all parents/guardians on enrolment. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be required to sign an undertaking that their child(ren) will uphold the School Code of Behaviour and policy. Older children will be asked to co-sign with their parents/guardians.

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. The appeal must be addressed in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, stating the grounds for the appeal and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department of Education and Skills. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol. (Circular 22/02 – Processing an Appeal)

Ratified by Board of Management on _____
Date

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management