



## **Admission Policy of**

Scoil Naomh Fiachra, Illistrin, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Roll number: 12077E

School Patron: Bishop Alan McGuckian, Bishop of Raphoe

### **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 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020. It is published on the school's website, [www.illistrin.town.ie](http://www.illistrin.town.ie) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Scoil Naomh Fiachra admission's 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, formerly known as enrolment application form, 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

Scoil Naomh Fiachra is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe.

"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:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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.

### **Mission Statement and general objectives of the school:**

**Ag Cothú an tSíol** - nurturing the seed is our school motto. It encapsulates our mission to enable each pupil to grow and develop to the best of their ability.

The yellow iris is our symbol. Our school is situated in an area where the flower grew in abundance. It symbolises growth and reminds us of the history of the area.

The revised curriculum (1999) and the new Primary Language Curriculum incorporate the child centred principles of their predecessor, *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (1971). It identifies three primary aims of primary education:

- to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society

- to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

These three aims are the aims of our school.

We seek to create a friendly, relaxed and non-pressurised environment within which the children can happily perform to the maximum of their abilities. Every pupil will be afforded the opportunity to learn in a friendly stress-free environment. No member of the school community will be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of any ethnic grouping.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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.

Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school**

Scoil Naomh Fiachra is not a Special School. The school does not have any special class attached. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team.

#### **5. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where -

- a) the school is oversubscribed. A maximum class size of 28 is allowed in Junior and Senior Infants. A maximum class size of 32 is allowed in classes from 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class. (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.

Scoil Naomh Fiachra is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **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:

- a) siblings (including step-siblings) of children already enrolled in the school
- b) siblings (including step- siblings) of past pupils of the school
- c) children living within the catchment area. The catchment area is the Parish of Conwal & Leck and the Parish of Aughanishin.

d) children who are resident outside the catchment area.

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:

- a) age -priority to oldest in accordance with the above criteria
- b) an independently verified random selection by lottery in the presence of the Board of Management

## **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) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (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 in the case of siblings of a student attending or 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.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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 13 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 14 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra, 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra 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. 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 12.

#### **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:

- Parents may apply to enrol such pupils at any time during the school year.
- Applications will be processed and replied to within 21 days.
- The criteria for acceptance or otherwise are as outlined in Sections 5 & 6 above.
- A maximum class size of 28 is applicable in Senior Infants
- A maximum class size of 32 is applicable in classes from 1st to 6th.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

Such applications will be considered subject to school policy, available space and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.

- Parents may apply to enrol such pupils at any time during the school year.
- Applications will be processed and replied to within 21 days.
- The criteria for acceptance or otherwise are as outlined in Sections 5 & 6 above.
- Such pupils may only start at the beginning of a term unless newly resident in the area



- A maximum class size of 28 is applicable in Junior and Senior Infants
- A maximum class size of 32 is applicable in classes from 1st to 6th.

#### **16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of Scoil Naomh Fiachra or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

#### **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

#### **18. Reviews/appeals**

Review of decisions by the board of Management:

The parent of 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 and Skills.

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 of that decision within 3 weeks by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. In such circumstances, the Board will authorise one of its members to review all the circumstances and all documentation related to the refusal and said member shall then report to the full Board to determine the outcome.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision within 3 weeks of refusal by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. In such circumstances, the Board will authorise one of its members to review all the circumstances and all documentation related to the refusal and said member shall then report to the full Board to determine the outcome.

### 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 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 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 and Skills.

### **19. Implementation and Review**

This Policy will be reviewed, as deemed necessary, by the Board of Management.

**20. Policy Ratification**

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Fiachra on 15.10.2020

Signed: *Fr Kevin Gillespie*  
Fr Kevin Gillespie  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 5.10.2021

*Luke Kilcoyne*  
Luke Kilcoyne, Principal Teacher

The contents of the policy have been approved by the Patron of the school, Bishop Alan McGuckian.

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