



Ashbourne Community School Admissions Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School wishes to set down its Admissions policy as required by the Education Act, 1998. This policy is prepared in the context of relevant legislation including the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board hopes that this policy will assist parents & students in their choice of school and in respect of admissions and enrolment issues. The school welcomes queries from parents in respect of applications. Any queries arising from the Admissions policy should be addressed to: The Chairperson, Board of Management or to The Principal, Ashbourne Community School. Parents/Guardians are advised to telephone in advance to arrange an appointment when seeking to meet school personnel. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management at appropriate intervals. The policy is available on the school website and on request from the school office. The Primary School Liaison person will advise the feeder schools of this availability.

Contact details for the school

Ashbourne Community School,
1 Deerpark, Ashbourne, Co. Meath.

Telephone: 01-8353066, Fax: 01-8353083. E-mail: admin@ashcom.ie www.ashcom.ie

The Education Act 1998

Ashbourne Community School is a recognised school under the Education Act 1998, (section 10) and is provided with staff in accordance with the teacher allocation system of the DES. The 2008/09 staffing allocation includes Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Tutors, Subject Teachers, Learning Support and Resource Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain and Special Need Assistants together with Administrative and Maintenance Personnel. The school operates in accordance with the regulations as set down from time to time by the DES and is dependent on the resources provided by the DES. Accordingly, school policy and expenditure must necessarily have regard to such resources and funding. Ashbourne Community School follows the curricular programme set down by the DES in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

School Ethos

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School has regard to the principles of a democratic society and respects and promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society while it also upholds and is responsible for upholding the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. The ethos of the school is outlined in the mission statement of the school. (Pg.2)

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School is supportive of the principle of inclusiveness in particular in regard to students with a disability or another Special Educational Need. The curriculum includes support programmes for students with a disability or other special educational needs. Parents/Guardians are invited to look at our SEN model of provision as outlined in our SEN policy which is available on the school website and on request from the school office.

Ashbourne Community School has a policy of having a maximum of 30 students per class with a maximum of 24 students per practical class. In managing the resources approved by the DES, the Board of Management reserves the right to maintain reduced numbers in some Junior Cycle classes for the benefit of special needs students in mixed ability classes. Likewise in the case of senior cycle programmes the Board may maintain reduced numbers in some classes also.

Ashbourne Community School is a designated Community School, which is multi denominational as per Deed of Trust of Community Schools. This means that the school will seek to provide religious instruction and worship in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching ethos of the religious denomination to which a pupil belongs. Religious education is delivered in the school for those students who wish to avail of it. Parents/Guardians who wish to have their children withdrawn from religious education classes should request such withdrawal in writing to the Board of Management. The school is allocated an ex quota Chaplain Post which is filled with the nomination of the Bishop of Meath. (Trustee)

Uniform/Dress Code

The Parents, Staff and Students of Ashbourne Community School have worked together to design the school uniform. The Uniform Policy is set out in the school journal which student and parents/guardians are required to sign on admission to school and thereafter each year. We are proud to have a uniform, which identifies and distinguishes our students. It is understood that students choosing to enrol in the school accept that the full school uniform (including plain black shoes) must be worn during the school day and to and from school.

Mission Statement

1. We would like our school to be a place where we stress such values as hope, justice, compassion, forgiveness and care. We would strive to have these values evident in both our school policy and practice.
2. We facilitate the active involvement of parents and community representatives in the school mission.
3. We recognise that each pupil is unique and has different needs and different gifts. By offering a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we shall endeavour to help each pupil achieve her/his full potential.
4. Through positive staff/student relationships, an integrated and challenging curriculum and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, we hope to foster in each student a healthy self-image, a confidence which allows each to take her/his place in society and a certain independence of mind and spirit.
5. We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important. Therefore, we shall endeavour to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to the personal and spiritual development of all. We acknowledge and respect the religious faith of each individual student. We co-operate with parents and religious leaders to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.
6. We encourage student involvement in decision making, in the day-to-day life and running of the school and in projects directed towards student welfare. Thus, we would hope to enable students to make their contribution for the betterment of an ever-changing society and to share fully in promoting the school's basic philosophy.

This statement embodies the caring ethos in the school which is also evident in the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme run in conjunction with the NEHB.

Curriculum

Junior Certificate

- **Core Subjects**
English, Irish, Mathematics, History, Geography, C.S.P.E., Religion, P.E., S.P.H.E.
- **Optional Subjects**
Art, Business Studies, French, German, Home Economics, Music, Materials Technology Metal, Materials Technology Wood, Technical Graphics, Science, Spanish.

Traditional Leaving Certificate

- **Core Subjects**
English, Irish, Mathematics, Religion, S.P.H.E
- **Optional Subjects**
Accountancy, Agricultural Science, Applied Maths, Architectural Technology, Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Design, Communications and Graphics, Economics, Engineering, French, Geography, German, History, Home Economics, Japanese, Music, P.E, Physics, Spanish.

Additional Programmes for Senior Cycle

In addition to the traditional Leaving Certificate programme, the School offers **Transition Year**, **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme** and **Leaving Certificate Applied** as **optional programmes** at senior cycle.

General Admission Criteria

- The Board of Management reserves the right to decide on the numbers entering each programme on an annual basis.
- Applicants' attendance, records of behaviour and application to work will be considered and where deemed necessary, an interview will constitute a significant part of the selection procedure.
- In each case, it is important that enrolment of the applicant in the opinion of the school is considered beneficial to that child's continuing education.
- In the event that there are more applicants than places, names will be placed on a waiting list.
- A fee for each programme is agreed by the BOM on an annual basis. This fee is requested to facilitate the wide range of activities in which students are involved during the year. Provision of activities and subjects depends on resources and availability and this is also reviewed annually.

Specific Admission Criteria:

Leaving Cert Applied (L.C.A)

- Preference will be given to students who studied foundation level subjects for the Junior Certificate or followed a reduced timetable for the Junior Certificate
- Preference will be given to students who are aiming to pursue an apprenticeship, certain PLC's or immediate employment

Leaving Cert Vocational Programme (L.C.V.P)

- Only students with the designated subject groups can be considered for this course.

Transition Year (TY)

- Age of applicant
- Pastoral need

The TY Programme is an optional programme and the number of places to be allocated is agreed by the Board of Management each year. The Board also agrees the closing date for application on an annual basis. In the event that there are more applicants than places, in accordance with the selection process, applicants' names will be placed on a waiting list. Names of late applicants will be placed on a second waiting list, ranked according to date and time when application was received.

Special Education Needs (SEN)

Ashbourne Community School welcomes pupils with special educational needs and in line with the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 recognises "the need to provide that the education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment". It will endeavour to ensure that these students can participate in school life in so far as is reasonably practicable.

Parents/Guardians are required to contact the school well in advance of the admissions process if they feel their child has special educational needs so that the school can establish the resources required and seek allocation of appropriate resources.

As set out in our SEN Policy the school liaises with our feeder schools (See below) in order to access information relevant to providing for the needs of students with special educational needs. In each case the Board will seek recent records (Educational Report/Psychological Report) of the student's needs and the resources needed to meet them. All claims for language exemptions must be sanctioned by the Department of Education and Science and supporting documentation must be made available to the school by parents/guardians. The Board of Management, having gathered all the relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of the student with special needs can be met.

While recognising and fully supporting parents' and guardians' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, in some cases, attendance may have to be deferred until necessary resources are put in place.

Enrolment of First Year Students

Ashbourne Community School has approval for enrolment of 1000 students. Students who are eligible for admission must have reached the required age, i.e: 12 years on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year and must have completed Sixth class in Primary School. In accepting a place in Ashbourne Community School each applicant must be willing to accept the school ethos as outlined in the Mission Statement.

Available places in 1st year classes will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria and in the order as set out:

1. Siblings of those attending Ashbourne Community School and past pupils.
2. The children of Ashbourne Community School Staff.
3. Children from the following feeder schools, St. Declan's National School, St. Mary's National School and Gael scoil na Cille whose parents' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
4. Children from the following feeder schools Ardcath, Clonalvey, Curragha, Cushenstown, Garristown, Kilbride, Kilscohan, Oldtown, Rathfeigh, Rolestown whose parents' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
5. Children whose parents' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
6. Children from the following feeder schools, St. Declan's N.S., St. Mary's N.S. and Gael scoil na Cille, Ardcath, Clonalvey, Curragha, Cushenstown, Garristown, Kilbride, Kilcoscan, Oldtown,

Rathfeigh, Rolestown whose parents' principal private residence is outside the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.

The catchment area is defined by the school transport map and may be viewed in the School's reception area and is also available on our website.

Transfer of a student from another school

The Board of Management will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to Ashbourne Community School. It will consider requests for school places into other year groups, subject to their conformity with the criteria as per the enrolment of 1st Year students and to the availability of school places at the time of application. Places will be offered only if vacancies have arisen and if the BOM considers that it is advisable to do so. Where a student is considered for a place, the decision is taken by the BOM following consultation with the student's Parent/Guardian and her/his former school. It is necessary that the applicant's behaviour record is deemed to be beneficial to the order, discipline and educational welfare of existing students and that the enrolment of the applicant, in the opinion of the school, is considered beneficial to the child's continuing education.

Where a student is considered for an available place, the decision will be taken by the Board of Management, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, his former school and the education welfare office. A decision will be taken as to whether such a place may be offered immediately or whether it would be better to wait until the beginning of the next academic year.

Note 1:- "The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

(a) The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Science, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education

OR

(b) In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student may pose an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property".

Note 2: The parents/guardians of a child who accept a place in the school and subsequently do not take up that place are liable to have any future applications referred to the school's Board of Management for consideration.

Board of Management,
Ashbourne Community School,

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting on Thursday 9th June, 2011 (Ref. Meeting Nr. 179).

Date: _____

*Chairperson
Board of Management
Ashbourne Community School*

Appendix 1: Enrolment of First Year Students - Admissions Procedure:

The **Application Form, the Admission Policy and the Code of Behaviour** are available to parents/guardians prior to the date of enrolment. Once the enrolment date is agreed by the Board of Management, it is published on the school website, in the parent newsletter, in local newspapers and in the parish newsletter. Application forms are sent to all feeder primary schools within the catchment area early in the school year and the feeder primary schools are visited by personnel from the school. Application forms are also available on request from the school office. All local primary schools are informed of relevant dates for information evenings, open days and assessments. Those not attending local primary schools can contact the school office for further information. An **Open Evening** is held in October each year.

1. Students applying for enrolment in the school must fill out the **appropriate** school application form and provide **proof of address in the form of 2 current utility bills**. All relevant information requested on the application form must be submitted. Parents who make an application must provide the school with accurate information as set out in our application form. Providing false information will automatically disqualify applicants from the process.
2. The fully completed application form should be **signed** and submitted to the School Office by the closing date which is noted on the application form and agreed by the BOM each year. Applications received after that date will only be considered if places remain available.
3. The form must be accompanied by **an original Birth Certificate** (Long version) and **2 recent passport size photographs** signed on the back by the student. The original Birth Certificate will be copied and returned to parents/guardians.
4. **A copy of the Code of Behaviour is given to all applicants and must be signed by both the incoming student and by a Parent/Guardian.** Parents/Guardians and students are asked to familiarise themselves with and to sign the code of behaviour as written confirmation that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that "they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such a code by the child." (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000).
5. **All fully completed applications accompanied by all necessary documents received by the stated deadline** are considered by the Board of Management at its first meeting after the closing date has passed.
6. **In the event that there are more applicants than places and it is not possible to accommodate all applicants, a lottery will determine the order in which the remaining places will be allocated among the applicants in the category in which the final places are to be offered. The lottery will also determine the order in which the remaining unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Applicants on this list will have priority over any late applicants.**
7. **On approval by Board of Management, names of late applicants will be placed on the waiting list, ranked according to date and time when application was received.**
8. As soon as is practicable, but **not later than 21 days** after the closing date, the Board of Management will make its decision in respect of all applications and inform parents/guardians in writing to the address specified on the application form. Section 29(1) of the Education Act provides for the right of appeal by the parents of any student whose enrolment is refused (within a specified time).
9. Parents/Guardians are requested to **acknowledge acceptance of a place in writing** and to **complete the standing order form** attached. This **non refundable payment** covers Pastoral Care costs, photocopying, exam sheets and the school journal and other miscellaneous items.
10. An Information Evening on the assessment and subject choices is facilitated by the school for parents/guardians in January.

11. All incoming first years are required to attend an assessment in late January. The data collected is used by the school to ensure a mixed ability grouping in first year classes and to identify necessary supports for individual students. Students may be "banded" or "streamed" for English, Irish and Maths in their Second Year. This allows students to be assigned to appropriate levels in English, Irish and Maths in any combination. For example, a student may do all Higher level subjects, or do some at Higher level and others at Ordinary or Foundation level.
12. Following the assessment on the same day the PTA facilitates fitting for uniform for all incoming first years. A **non-refundable deposit** is required on this day and ordered uniforms are available for collection in August.

Appendix 2: Transfer of a student from another school - Admissions Procedure

1. Students applying for enrolment in the school must fill out the appropriate school application form. All relevant information requested on the application form must be submitted and the applicant must show evidence of residency in the Ashbourne Community School catchment area.
2. Students must supply the most recent report from their current/previous 2nd level school and a written reference from the authorities in that school.
3. The form must be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate (Long version) and 2 recent passport size photographs signed on the back by the student. The original Birth Certificate will be copied and returned to parents/guardians.
4. A copy of the Code of Behaviour is given to all applicants and must be signed by both the incoming student and by a Parent/Guardian. Parents/Guardians and students are asked to sign the Code of Behaviour as written confirmation that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that "they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such a code by the child." (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000). Parents are also given a copy of the school's Admissions Policy.
5. All applicants are interviewed by the Deputy Principal/ Principal. This facilitates discussion about the availability of an appropriate place in the school and satisfactory continuity of subject availability from the previous school to Ashbourne Community School.
6. As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after the application was received, the Board of Management will make its decision in respect of the application and inform parents/guardians in writing to the address specified on the application form. Section 29(1) of the Education Act provides for the right of appeal by the parents of any student whose enrolment is refused (within a specified time).
7. Parents/Guardians are requested to acknowledge acceptance of a place in writing and to complete the standing order form attached. This payment covers Pastoral Care costs, photocopying, exam sheets and the school journal and other miscellaneous items
8. In the event that the relevant year group is full, names of applicants will be placed on a waiting list ranked according to date and time when the application was received. Names will be then be placed on separate year group waiting lists and as/ when a place becomes available in the given year group, the place will be offered to the first applicant on the list.