

Admission Policy of Ashbourne Community School



1 Deerpark, Ashbourne, Co Meath

Roll number: 91495T

**School Joint Patrons: The Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath
Louth Meath Education and Training Board**

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 joint patron and with Parents/Guardians of children attending the school. This Admissions Policy should be ready in conjunction with its Appendix.

The policy was approved by the school joint patron on 15th September, 2020. 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 Ashbourne Community School 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

Ashbourne School Community School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath and Louth Meath ETB.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened on September, 1994 on a greenfield site. The values of Louth Meath ETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Ashbourne Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal

opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, Ashbourne Community School provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Ashbourne Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Ashbourne Community School promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Ashbourne Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

Mission Statement

Our school is a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our School policy and practice.

Ashbourne Community School is a partnership of Students, Staff, Parents/Guardians and Guardians, Board of Management and our local and global communities. We value the on-going input of all these partners in the life of the school.

We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their potential. Through positive staff and student relationships and a broad extra-curricular programme, we aim to develop in each student a confident, healthy self-image and a sense of personal, local and global responsibility.

We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important. We endeavour to co-operate with parents and guardians and religious leaders of all faiths to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.

3. Admission Statement

Ashbourne Community School 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.

4. Admission of Students

Ashbourne Community School has approval for enrolment of 1,000 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 or its equivalent. In accepting a place in Ashbourne Community School, each applicant must be willing to accept the school's characteristic spirit as outlined in the Mission Statement.

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 5](#) below for further details)

Selection criteria:-

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.

1. Siblings of those attending Ashbourne Community School and past pupils.
2. The children of Ashbourne Community School current Day School Staff.
3. Children from the following feeder schools, Ashbourne Community National School, Ashbourne Educate Together, Gaelscoil na Cille, Gaeilscoil na Mí, St. Declan's National School, St. Mary's National School whose parents'/guardians' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
4. Children from the following feeder schools Ardcah, Curragha, Cushenstown, Garristown, Kilbride, Kilcoscan, Oldtown, Rathfeigh, Rolestown, St. Margaret's whose parents'/guardians' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
5. Children whose parents'/guardians' principal private residence is in the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
6. Children from the following feeder Primary Schools in Ashbourne i.e., Ashbourne Community National School, Ashbourne Educate Together, Gaelscoil na Cille, Gaeilscoil na Mí St. Declan's National School, St. Mary's National School and feeder Primary Schools in Ardcah, Curragha, Cushenstown, Garristown, Kilbride, Kilcoscan, Oldtown, Rathfeigh, Rolestown, St. Margaret's whose parents'/guardians' principal private residence is outside the Ashbourne Community School's catchment area.
7. Any other applicant.

- b) a Parent/Guardian 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.

5. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the selection criteria above in the order listed above to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual Admission Notice.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria category above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply):

Details of the school's arrangements - Lottery:-

A lottery will determine the order in which remaining places will be allocated among the applicants in the category in which the places are to be offered.

6. 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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (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/guardians;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents/guardians, 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 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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Ashbourne Community School 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 the intake group.)

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.

8. 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).

9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Ashbourne Community School, 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.

10. 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 Ashbourne Community School 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/guardian 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 9](#) above.

11. 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.

12. 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 Ashbourne Community School 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.

A lottery will determine the order in which unsuccessful applicants due to the school being oversubscribed will be placed on a waiting list. Applicants on this list will have priority over any late applicants.

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.

13. Late Applications

Following the administration of all applications received on time and where necessary, the establishment of a waiting list, all late applications for admission i.e. received after the closing date as outlined in the annual Admission Notice will be date stamped and timed and added to this waiting list accordingly.

14. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The school 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 the availability of school places at the time of application.

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

AND

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:

1. Students applying for enrolment in the school must fill out the appropriate school application form as per the Admissions page of the school's website. All sections on the application form must be completed. Failure to present the completed form will delay the process. All relevant information requested on the application form must be submitted.
2. The form must be accompanied by:-
 - a) an original Birth Certificate 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.
 - b) proof of address in the form of 2 recent original utility bills or other documentation satisfactory to the school.
3. 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 familiarize 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).
4. Parents/Guardians will be afforded the opportunity to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal to discuss Subject Options.
5. As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 calendar days after the application was received, the school will make its decision. The school 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 Version 12 the Education Act provides for the right of appeal by the parents/guardians of any student whose enrolment is refused (within a specified time).
6. Parents/Guardians are requested to acknowledge acceptance of a place in writing within the specified deadline stipulated in the letter of offer.
7. In the event that the relevant year group is full, names of applicants will be placed on the relevant Year Group waiting list according to date and time when the application was received. As/when a place becomes available in the given year group, the place will be offered to the first applicant on the list. This list expires on the last day of the final term prior to the commencement of the summer holidays. At this point, should an applicant wish to be considered for a place in the following academic year, the onus is on the Parent/Guardian to contact the school in writing to advise them of their request. These applicants who have already been on a waiting list for an academic year will be prioritized for a place in the next academic year over new applicants.

15. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School 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 enrolment of a student in the school.

16. Additional Programmes for Senior Cycle (for current students attending Ashbourne Community School)

Additional Programmes for Senior Cycle (for current students attending Ashbourne Community School)

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.

The Board of Management reserves the right to decide on the numbers entering each programme on annual basis.

The following criteria will apply

- o 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.
- o In the case of the TY Programme, students of Ashbourne Community School are invited to complete the application form. All applications received on time are considered by the school. If there are more applicants than places available and it is not possible to accommodate all applicants, a lottery will determine the order in which the places will be allocated. 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 from within the school community.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Ashbourne Community School offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *religious education* supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between '*religious education*' and '*religious instruction*':

- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- *Religious instruction* is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels, the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian 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 and Skills.

The Board of Management 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 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** 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** 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.