** Holy Family School **

Telephone: 049-5552257 Old Bridge Road,

 Cootehill,

 Co. Cavan.

H16 NY32

**Admission Policy**

**School Address: Old Bridge Road, Cootehill, Co. Cavan H16 NY32**

**Roll number: 19439B**

**School Patron/s:**

**Dr. Rory O’Hanlon**

**Fr. Owen Collins**

**Dr. Fiona O’Hea**

**Catherine Farrell**

**Isobel Lord**

## **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 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 The Holy Family 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.

## **Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

The Holy Family Special School is a special national school for pupils aged four to eighteen years. These pupils are from the catchment area of the Counties of Cavan and Monaghan. The school caters for pupils who have been assessed as having either a moderate or severe/profound general learning disability and for pupils diagnosed with Autism in addition to a moderate/severe/profound learning disability. The school is run under the Rules of National Schools and is a multi-denominational school.

* The Holy Family School endeavours to create a happy and secure learning environment where we value and develop the whole person to their full potential whilst celebrating each pupil’s uniqueness and personal qualities.
* We aim to give the pupils a caring and inspiring academic atmosphere in which we hope to enable them to achieve their upmost capabilities.
* We aim to foster independence, dignity, self-discipline, social independence and competent handling of basic needs.
* We aim to prepare each child as far as possible for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
* We endeavour to build firm contact, communication and relationships with the families of our pupils as the success of what we hope to achieve depends on the co-operation and support of every parent/legal guardian.

Our primary aged pupils follow the Primary School Curriculum. This is adapted to the level at which each individual child is working at.**The Primary School Curriculum celebrates the uniqueness of the child as it is expressed in each child’s personality, intelligence and potential for development.  It is designed to nurture the child in all dimensions of his/her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical. (Primary School Curriculum Introduction, 1999).** Our post primary aged pupils complete the Junior Cycle at either level 1 or level 2. The Learning Programmes are built around Priority Learning Units (PLUs) that develop the basic, social and pre-vocational skills of the students involved. These PLUs explicitly identify and develop the key areas of learning needed to prepare the students for their future lives.

Because of the range of special needs our school caters for, class sizes may vary from class to class depending on the number of children within a class presenting with additional needs. In this regard some classes may be deemed by the Principal to be full to capacity, and in this case the Board of Management may direct that no additional pupils may enrol in these classes during the year. School capacity varies according to the needs of the children we are catering for at a particular time.

**Mission Statement**

**The aim of the Board of Management and the staff of the H.F.S. with assistance and guidance from the Department of Education and Skills and the H.S.E North East, is to provide the highest quality of care and education to all the children in this service, thus enabling them to achieve their fullest potential and thereby allow them to participate as fully as possible within their local communities and society in general**

**The Application Process**

**If a parent/guardian wishes their child to attend the Holy Family School, they should request an application form. Parents/guardians are given a copy of the Admission policy with the application form, or directed to the school website.**

**Parents/guardians must then return the following:**

* Fully completed application form signed by one or both parent/guardians
* A birth cert for the child
* Proof of address for the child
* Psychological assessment that clarifies the cognitive functioning of the child,
* Other reports (where available) that highlight the special needs/ support requirements of the child such as:
	+ Psychiatric Assessment
	+ Current school report
	+ Individual Educational Plan from current school
	+ Speech and language therapy report
	+ Social work report
	+ Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy report
	+ Medical report as appropriate
* The school reserves the right to request additional professional reports and /assessments in support of any application
* An application will be valid when the above listed documents have been received and all supporting documentation as outlined above is received by the school.
* Closing date for applications can be found on the admissions notice
* Following the receipt of all documentation the Board of Management will meet after the closing date to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria set out in this policy.
* The school shall admit each applicant that fulfils the admission criteria unless:
	+ The school is over-subscribed or the specific class is over-subscribed
	+ The parents/guardians refuse/fail to sign the Code of Behaviour
	+ The child does not have a psychological report confirming they have a moderate, severe or profound disability

An offer may be withdrawn if:

* The information provided is false or misleading
* Parents do not accept the offer by the date stated in the letter of offer
* Parents fail to confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour
* Parents have failed to inform the school if they are awaiting confirmation of a place/have accepted a place in another school

When the Board deems that further resources are required to meet the needs of the child – as outlined in the psychological, medical or other report – a request is submitted to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). These resources may include access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: special needs assistant, specialised furniture or equipment, transport services or other. Parents will need to complete relevant National Council for Special Education (NCSE) documentation to enable the school to secure such resources.

Following enrolment, the most suitable form of introduction will be agreed to meet the child’s needs. This may initially be a short day, gradually increasing to a full day or week, depending on the needs of the child and the recommendations in supporting documents. If a shorter day is recommended, parents/guardians are asked to collect their child from the school. Following review, this should be increased to full days/weeks over a suitable period of time.

Due to transport arrangements, all pupils attend for a full school day.

Some families may wish to bring their child to school during the initial introductory period. The parents/guardians and the principal will agree arrangements for this. The school will try to facilitate any reasonable arrangement.

**Criteria for Assessment of Applications**

It is important to note that the completion of an application form or written application to the school, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. Assessment of all applicants will be considered by the Board based on the following criteria.

The school will consider an application if the following criteria are met:

* The child is aged between 4 and 17
* The child has a recent psychological report that states that the child’s primary assessed disability is moderate, sever or profound general learning disability
* The child lives within the designated catchment area of the school
* The parents/guardians are agreeable to this referral and have met the application requirements.

The following criteria will be used when considering and prioritising a referral:

* Children who meet the threshold criteria as outlined above
* The availability of a place for the pupil in a classroom of compatible peers to ensure a positive educational experience for all existing pupils and any new applicants
* The child will be able to tolerate a classroom environment alongside other children.
* The pupil/teacher ratio will be appropriate to the needs of the child.
* The capacity of the school to provide an appropriate educational service and the necessary nursing medical supports where applicable
* The capacity of the school to provide a suitable physical environment for the needs of the child.

## **Admission Statement**

The Holy Family School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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.

**Special schools**

The Holy Family School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

## **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

The Holy Family School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with

* a moderate learning disability,
* a severe/profound disability
* autism in addition to a moderate/severe/profound learning disability.

## **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#_Oversubscription_(this_section) below for further details)
2. 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

**Special School**

The Holy Family School provides an education exclusively for students with a moderate or severe/profound general learning disability and for pupils diagnosed with Autism in addition to a moderate/severe/profound learning disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

## **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:

**Criteria to be used**:

1. Children who are four years of age before the first day of the academic year who have siblings currently enrolled in the school. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
2. Children who are four years of age before the first day of the academic year and who live within the **counties of Cavan and Monaghan**. Evidence of residency will be requested in the form of a recent utility bill such as ESB, house insurance etc. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**
3. Children not in the above named categories and who are four years of age before the first day of the academic school year. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.)**

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:

* If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, **older children will have precedence.**
* If, in the event that one place is available and the next two children are twins; both will be taken.

## **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:

1. a student’s prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
2. the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
3. a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude where they meet the criteria for our school designation
4. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents;
5. a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission
6. a student’s connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school
7. 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

## **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to The Holy Family 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 14](#_Late_Applications) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#_Procedures_for_admission)  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.

## **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](#_Reviews/appeals) below for further details).

## **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from The Holy Family 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.

## **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 the Holy Family School where—

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#_Acceptance_of_an) above.

## **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.

## **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 the Holy Family 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.

Placement on the waiting list of The Holy Family School 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.

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.

## **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.

## **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:

* Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to the enrolment policy of the school, available space, and either with approval of the Department of Education & Skills ***or*** when a transfer is made because of a change of the ordinary residence of the child. Such applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
* A pupil who leaves the school and who is taken off the roll/POD, and who subsequently wishes to return to the school must reapply to the Board of Management in writing.
* Parents/guardians who request a school place will be given an enrolment policy and an enrolment form. When the enrolment form has been received by the school, the parent/guardian will be informed if there is a place available.
* Because of the range of special needs our school caters for, class sizes may vary from class to class depending on the number of children within a class presenting with additional needs. In this regard some classes may be deemed by the Principal to be full to capacity, and in this case the Board of Management may direct that no additional pupils may enrol in these classes during the year. School capacity varies according to the needs of the children we are catering for at a particular time.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of the Holy Family School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

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

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

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

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

A written request should be made to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Written requests by parents/guardians will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **Reviews/appeals**

**Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent 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 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.

Ratified on:

Signed

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Chairperson