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Admissions Policy of Athenry Primary School

School Address: Tuam Road, Athenry, Co. Galway H65 C860

Roll number: 20582N

School Patron: The Archbishop Most Reverend Francis Duffy DD

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. 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 Athenry Primary 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

Athenry Primary School is a Catholic co-educational school from Junior Infants to Sixth Class with a Catholic Ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Tuam.

"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 Athenry Primary School 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.

Athenry Primary School has a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, while at the same time, protecting the integrity of the Catholic ethos of the school.

The school caters for boys and girls from Junior Infants to 6th class.

The school also has one Autism Class for boys and girls of school-going age.

The school depends to a large extent on the Department of Education & Skills for grants and teacher resources and operates within the regulations laid down by the Department. Fundraising is undertaken to supplement Department grants. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which are amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act.

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and funding and resources available, this school supports the following principles:

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

Athenry Primary School has 35 teachers, which includes the Principal, 22 class teachers, 9 special educational needs teachers and 3 supply teachers.

VISION STATEMENT

The staff in Athenry Primary School aim to

- Acknowledge and respect the dignity, uniqueness and individual needs of our pupils and in doing so, develop the whole child, physically, intellectually, emotionally, creatively, spiritually and socially
- be caring, fair and committed to the best interests of our pupils and seek to motivate, inspire and celebrate effort and success.
- Enable each child to learn and develop in a happy, safe, stimulating and mutually respectful

environment.

- Establish a learning environment where pupils are active agents in the learning process and instil in them an interest in and love of learning
- Develop each child as a social, literate and digitally responsible being who lives and cooperates generously with others and so contributes to the good of society.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Board of Management, Staff and Parents of Athenry Primary School are committed to: ●

providing a broad and balanced curriculum that is holistic in its approach thus enabling each pupil to achieve their full potential

- continuing to provide Catholic Education and spiritual development enabling our pupils to celebrate the Christian vision of life.
- being a positive influence in the lives of our pupils, by exercising good professional judgement and by showing empathy in our practice
- Being inclusive and welcoming of children from diverse, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Cultivating positive relationships with pupils, colleagues, parents and the wider school community
- Communicating effectively with pupils, colleagues, parents and the wider school community in a manner that is professional, collaborative, supportive, and based on trust and respect ● Working in a collaborative manner in the interest of sharing, developing and supporting good practice and providing the highest quality of educational experiences for our pupils ● Being committed to continuous professional development and reflecting on and critically evaluating our practice in order to ensure best practice
- Being connected to our local community and being supportive of local initiatives
- An cultúr agus an teanga gaelach a chothú agus a úsáid

3. Admission Statement

Athenry Primary School will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- or (i) the ground that the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil 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.

- Athenry Primary School will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including the provision and operation of a special class when requested to do so by the Council.
- Athenry Primary School, will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.
- Athenry Primary School has established an Autism class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides education exclusively for pupils with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a pupil who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational needs catered for in Athenry Primary School Autism Class

Athenry Primary School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for pupils with Autism.

The Annual notice on the website states how many places are available each year and outlines how families of children with Autism can apply for a place in the Autism class. The notice may also be found on our website.

5. Admission of Pupils

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a pupil, 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 pupil

All pupils must have reached their fourth birthday before they can be allowed to attend primary school. Athenry Primary School will not consider applications in relation to children who do not meet this requirement. The school recommends that a child who reaches their fourth birthday following 1st April of the relevant year should consider waiting until the following year before starting school.

Athenry Primary School 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 pupil a person who is not of Christian Faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. Athenry Primary School, while mindful of its Catholic ethos, welcomes children of all denominations, subject to there being places available in the relevant class. As a general principle and insofar as is practicable having regards to the school's admissions policy, children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is space available.

Eligibility Criteria for the Autism Class

The Autism class attached to Athenry Primary School provides an education exclusively for pupils with Autism and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the pupil concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

To be eligible for admission to the Autism Class, a child must have a:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-Disciplinary report)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of Need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional Recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate To best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child Has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.

Enrolment procedures for Autism Class

1. **Notification to NCSE:** Parents/guardians must notify the NCSE by **October 1st** of the year prior to their child's intended enrolment date. This notification should include information about the child's diagnosis, current educational placement, and any relevant assessments or reports.
2. **NCSE Consultation:** The NCSE will engage with parents/guardians to discuss the range of options available to meet their child's needs. This may include special classes, special schools, or mainstream settings with additional support.

3. **NCSE Letter:** Parents/guardians must obtain a letter from the NCSE confirming that their child meets the eligibility criteria for enrolment in an Autism Class. This letter must be submitted with the child's application to the school.
4. **School Application:** Parents/guardians must submit a completed application form to the school. This form should include the NCSE letter, professional assessments and reports as well as any other required documentation
5. **School Decision:** The school will review the application and make a decision with support and guidance from the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) based on the child's eligibility and the availability of places in the Autism Class.
6. **Formal Offer of a place:** Applicants will be notified of the decision on their application in writing.
7. **Formal Acceptance of a place in the Autism Class:**

Both parents/guardians must accept the offer in writing by a date specified in the Letter of Offer. The offer of a place is subject to the parents/guardians having provided the school With:

- a fully completed, accurate enrolment form
- an original copy of the child's Birth Certificate
- a written confirmation accepting all school's policies and procedures
- a recent psychological report or a report from a multi-disciplinary team dated no more than 18 months prior to proposed admission date
- Medical report, if applicable
- Letter of eligibility from NCSE

6. Oversubscription (Mainstream)

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 pupils already attending the school
- b. Children residing within the town boundary of Athenry
- c. Siblings of past pupils
- d. Children of past pupils
- e. Children of current staff members
- f. Children residing outside the town boundary of Athenry, whose home address is closest to the school

Working within the above criteria, places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated and at the same time ensuring a gender balance approach.

All children must be 4 years of age by the April before they are due to start.

Unsuccessful applicants are placed on a waiting list in order of priority according to the above criteria.

7. Oversubscription (Autism Class)

In the event that the Autism Class 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. Existing pupils in the mainstream school who have a letter of eligibility from NCSE
- b. Children who have siblings enrolled in the Special class for Autism
- c. Children who have siblings enrolled in the mainstream school

- d. Children resident within the boundary of Athenry town
- e. Children of past pupils of the school
- f. Children of current staff members
- g. Children residing outside the town boundary of Athenry, whose home address is closest to the school
- h. Late applications and applicants who are late for the online submission stage or whose documentation (birth cert, assessment reports etc.) was submitted after Formal Registration stage (see Annual Admission Notice)

Working within the above criteria, places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated and at the same time ensuring a gender balance approach.

All children must be 4 years of age on or before the 31st of March in the year of admission.

Unsuccessful applicants are placed on a waiting list in order of priority according to the above criteria.

8. 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 pupil on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a pupil'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 pupil's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to our Autism Special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the pupil has the category of special educational needs concerned (Autism).
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a pupils parents;
- (e) a requirement that a pupil, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a pupil's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
(Other than, (1) siblings of a pupil attending or having attended the school and (2) parents of a pupil 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2026 only).

9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Athenry Primary School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admissions policy
- The school's annual admissions 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 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#) 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.

The Board of Management will have regard for relevant Department of Education guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and / or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of children.

While recognising the right of parents to seek to enrol their child(ren) in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of Athenry Primary School must also respect the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled in the school. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children.

The Board of Management will determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom each year bearing in mind:

- Size of / available space in classrooms
- Educational needs of children of a particular age
- Multi-grade classes
- Presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs
- D.E. maximum class average directives

10. 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 pupil 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 pupil's ranking Against the selection criteria and details of the pupil'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 [19](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Athenry Primary 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 are 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.

12. 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 Athenry Primary 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 of a pupil, 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 pupil; or

(iv) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 11](#) above.

13. 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 pupils.

14. 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 pupils, whose applications for admission to Athenry Primary 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 Athenry Primary School is in the order of priority assigned to the pupils' 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 pupils on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the pupils have been placed on the list.

15. 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.

16. Procedures for admission of pupils to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of pupils who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

- Parents must confirm that they have already advised the principal of their previous school of their move to Athenry Primary School
- Maximum number of pupils in the given standard has not been reached, so there is room in that class
- If there are 2 classes for the given standard, the new pupil will be assigned to the class with the least number of pupils
- The school will not however enrol any child into Sixth class, where that child has already completed Sixth class in another school.

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

- Applications for enrolment after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought will be processed in line with this policy subject to there being space available in the appropriate class.

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

The board of Athenry Primary 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 pupil to the school, or
- (b) The admission or continued enrolment of a pupil in the school.

18. Arrangements regarding pupils not attending religious instruction

The following is the school's procedure where the parents of a pupil wish for that pupil to attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school.

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) of the pupil, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Any arrangements agreed upon will not result in a reduction in the school day of the pupil.

19. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the pupil 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 pupil, may appeal a decision of the 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 to 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.

Ratified by Board of Management on:

Signed: Stephen O'Meara Chairperson

Signed: Catharina Crowe (Acting Principal)

Revision History

DATE	EVENT	AUTHORITY
Dec 24	Policy Creation	Principal
Jan 25	Reviewed Ratified	APS School Community
Jan 25	Ratified	BOM
Jan 25	Approved	Tuam Diocese
Nov 25	Reviewed	School Community
Nov 25	Ratified	BOM
Next Review:		