Admission Policy
of
Raphoe Central NS

School Address: McBride Street, Raphoe, Co. Donegal

Roll number:16138S

School Patron/s: Joint Management of Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Church in Ireland

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on *[date]* . 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 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

Raphoe Central National School is a school under the joint Patronage of the Presbytery of Derry & Donegal and the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry & Raphoe. The teaching and traditions of the Patron determine the values and characteristic spirit of the School.

Raphoe Central National School is a caring and sharing school where each child is nurtured and valued for his/her own sake. The values of Christian living based on "Love God" and "Love one Another" will permeate the life of the school.

The school will promote the values of nurturing pupils as responsible citizens in the community, country and wider world. The school will value all its pupils and teachers equally and will promote self-respect and mutual respect among all of the school community.

The virtues of honesty, truthfulness, tolerance and consideration for others will be fostered. A positive and optimistic attitude to the world will be part of school policy. The school will encourage a sense of caring and belonging, pupils will be treated fairly and their spiritual, moral and religious development will be encouraged, in addition to their intellectual, social and academic development.

Religious Education occupies a central position in the school curriculum and is regarded as a core subject; all pupils in the school attend classes in Religious Education and school assembly. Denominational instruction is not given in the school nor is any denominational preparation undertaken in the school.

"The School" comprises the school community, made up of the pupils, the parents, the teachers, and the Board of Management, and each will have a part to play in the life of the school.

Parental involvement is encouraged through: home-school links, formal and informal meetings, information about school events and supporting school functions.

School functions, such as the Carol Service, the parent's day, reception day, sports day, team games, school outings, displays of art/craft/project work, and fundraising events will be held to encourage cooperation in the School community. Links with local Church of Ireland parish and the Presbyterian congregation will be maintained.

A spirit of loyalty to the school will permeate school life.

3. Admission Statement

Raphoe Central NS 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.

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion Raphoe Central NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

All denominational schools
Raphoe Central NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to

admit as a student a person who is not either a member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland or the Church of Ireland and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

The school does not currently have a special class or unit attached but should this become the case the Board Of Management will review the policy and amend accordingly based on the educational provision of any such unit.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where – a) the

school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

Raphoe Central NS is under the management of the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of either of these backgrounds where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

6. Oversubscription

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

Priority Raphoe Central National School is under joint Presbyterian and Church of Ireland management.

In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d), as follows:

Priority Category 1

(a) An Applicant Student who is a member of the Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school and who lives within the boundary of the Raphoe, Ballyholey, Ballindrait, Ballylennon, Manorcunningham, Galdonagh, Convoy, Lifford, Craigadoes, Glenmaquin area and may have access to the School Transport Scheme for the School.

(b) Priority Category 2: An Applicant Student who is a member of the Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school and who lives outside the school catchment area.

(c) Priority Category 3: An Applicant Student who lives within 20 miles radius of the School and who complies with the terms of this Policy'

(d) Priority Category 4: All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy

In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of

a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

A statement from the Applicant confirming
(i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student. and

(iii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion.
This evidence will consist of:
- a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming that
(a) the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or (b)the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion **or**
a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion as defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act.

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:

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School.

Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system whereby the names are drawn in a lottery supervised by the Principal, the Chairperson and one independent witness.

Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not

exceed the number of places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system whereby the names are drawn in a lottery supervised by the Principal, the Chairperson and one independent witness.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

(a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,

other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—

(I) an early intervention class, or

(II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;

(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;

(c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;

(d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

(f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;

(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only

apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

(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 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Raphoe Central NS will be based on the following:

- Our School's Admission Statement
- 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 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 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.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Raphoe Central NS you must indicate—

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Raphoe Central National 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 student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or

(iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Raphoe Central National 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 [school name] 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.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

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

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

· An Application to Enrol form should be requested and submitted as per the guidelines and dates set out for children coming into Junior Infants. · An Acceptance of Admissions should be sent to the parents which should be returned within 14 calendar days of receiving the form to confirm acceptance of a school place.

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

· Places may be offered based on the current enrolment.
· Pupils may start when the required paperwork is presented and the appropriate forms have been completed and received by the school.

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

This rule applies to <u>all</u> schools.

The board of Raphoe Central NS 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.

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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

Students will be provided with alternative activities to complete in the classroom whilst the other children engage with their RE lesson. The pupil and their parents may choose whether the child/children can remain at his/her seat or sit at the back of the classroom. The school recommends allowing the pupils to remain in his/her usual seat.

18. 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.