



## **Admission Policy**

### **Scoil Pól**

#### **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, parents through the Parents' Association and the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The policy was approved by Le Chéile on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Scoil Pól admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is available at our Open Night and from the school office thereafter.

Note: The word 'parent' in this document should also be taken to include guardians of children.

#### **2. Scoil Pól's Mission Statement**

Scoil Pól is committed to the provision of an inclusive, broad-based education within a Christian community where mutual trust and respect facilitate personal, social, vocational, academic and spiritual development

Scoil Pól is a Catholic co-educational voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The purpose of our Le Chéile school is to provide an education that acknowledges and affirms the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God - "The glory of God is humanity fully alive" (St Irenaeus). It embraces the intellectual, physical, cultural, emotional, social, moral and spiritual growth of each student.

Our school seeks to build a learning community that welcomes, and witnesses to, the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the Le Chéile Charter. The school draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past and the charism of Sr. Geneviève Dupuis foundress of the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle who founded this school.

Our school is committed to creating a place of inclusivity, equality and openness, where people can live with and be taught by one another, however diverse our experiences might be. It does not discriminate on religious grounds and is open to students from diverse backgrounds. It offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly to their own lives the lives of others and the earth, which is our home.

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is central to our curriculum. All students' spiritual development is enhanced through Religious programmes and areas such as nature, art, poetry, music, etc.

*In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Scoil Pól shall uphold, and be accountable to Le Chéile for upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school.*

The general objectives of all Le Chéile schools include:

Welcome recognises the unique dignity and worth of each person.

Wisdom is the pursuit of a greater understanding and appreciation of the world.

Witness comes from the expression of Gospel values, in everyday life, and recognises that every person is made in the image and likeness of God.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Scoil Pól will not discriminate in its admission of a student on any of the following grounds:

- (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,<sup>1</sup>
- (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

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<sup>1</sup> Admission decisions will be taken in accordance with provisions of [S.I. No. 6 of 2020](#) and Section 11 of Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 which amends Section 7 of the Equal Status Act 2000

- (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 (interpreted) in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Scoil Pól is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of Catholic denomination in preference to others.

Students, their parents/guardians are expected to respect the school's Catholic ethos and not seek to undermine or suppress it in any way.

Scoil Pól will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Scoil Pól will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education (Provision in respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act 2022.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class(es)**

Scoil Pól welcomes applications from parents/guardians of students with Special Educational needs.

Scoil Pól caters for a range of Special Educational needs within our mainstream school.

Scoil Pól, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class/classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Scoil Pól's ASD class provides an education exclusively for students with ASD who have a professional report recommending placement in an ASD class attached to a mainstream secondary school. The school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs and professional report recommendation provided for in this class. Places granted in the ASD class by Scoil Pól are subject to approval by the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) in the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

#### **5. Admission of Students**

Students admitted to Scoil Pól will normally have reached the age of 12 years on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the school year and will have completed a full course of primary education.

Scoil Pól 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,
- c) the parent of a student and student when required by the principal fails to confirm in writing their support of the school Ethos
- d) it is deemed that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. Scoil Pól is a Catholic school and so may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where such admission would be irreconcilable with the school's ethos.

Scoil Pól is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class attached to Scoil Pol provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

## **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:

1. Applicants for whom Scoil Pól is the nearest Secondary school to their home address
2. Siblings of current students
3. Children of staff

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:

Places will be allocated based on a lottery supervised by an external supervisor, nominated by the BOM, and the Principal. All applicants within the category will have their names entered for the lottery and names will be drawn until all places are filled.

Oversubscription to Special class(es) will follow criteria **1 – 3** as outlined above.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories 1-3 above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

SENCO in consultation with Principal and BOM will review the report(s) of the students and rank according to needs. Place(s) will be allocated in order of greatest need that the school can cater for.

At this point in the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places, places will be allocated based on a lottery supervised by an external supervisor, nominated by the BOM, and the Principal. All applicants within the

category will have their names entered for the lottery and names will be drawn until all places are filled.

## **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,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions to the school,
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude other than in relation to:  
admission to the special class in so far as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned,
- (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,
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

This is subject to the application being received during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Pól will be based on the following:

- Scoil Pól's admission policy
- Scoil Pól's annual admission notice
- 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 Scoil Pól applicants must indicate—

- (a) whether or not an offer of admission for another school or schools has been accepted. If such an offer has been accepted, details of the offer or offers concerned must be provided, and
- (b) whether or not an offer of admission from another school or schools has been sought or confirmation of such offer(s) is awaited, and if so, details of the other school or schools concerned must be provided.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on acceptance of a place in Scoil Pól may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

#### **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 Scoil Pól where—

- a) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading,
- b) 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,
- c) 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,
- d) the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education. The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student,
- e) 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 data 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 Scoil Pól 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 Scoil Pól is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria outlined in 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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application not later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

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

Where parents wish to make an application for their son/daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application. Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will be deferred until the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend, in turn, on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year group. Such applications will be placed on a waiting list until the number of available places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their son/daughter may be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their son/daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects. For this reason parents and their son/daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal

and/or Deputy Principal to ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their son/daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels available at the time.

**Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year:**

The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission from Scoil Pól, the parents must indicate—

- (a) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned, and
- (b) whether or not they have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Parents should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

**Circumstances in which offers of a place in a year group other than First Year or during the school year may not be made or may be withdrawn:**

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Scoil Pól where—

- a) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading,
- b) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place,
- c) 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,
- d) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out above,
- e) the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education. The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility,
- f) the application is made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year **before** the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year.



### **Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:**

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list will be in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy see [Section 6](#) above. If there are two or more students in any of the selection criteria categories set out in [Section 6](#) above, then the position on the waiting list (for places in a year group other than First year) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal, Deputy Principal and an independent observer appointed by the Board of Management.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

### **Sharing of Data with other schools:**

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 12 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of data between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (a) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (b) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (c) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (a) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school
- (b) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school
- (c) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant
- (d) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005)

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

The board of Scoil Pól or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, charge fees for or seek payment or contributions 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.

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

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Scoil Pól without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request might be accommodated by the school. Such arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day for the student.

## **18. Reviews/appeals**

### **Review of admission 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.