

## **Admission Policy of St. Anthony's Special School**

**School Address: Humbert Way, Castlebar, Co. Mayo F23 W704**

**Roll number: 19248R**

**School Patron/s: Western Care Association**

### **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 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Anthony's Special 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**

2.1. St. Anthony's is a co-educational non-denominational Special School which provides education for pupils, aged 4 to 18, with a Mild General Intellectual Learning Disability. Many of our pupils may have additional needs such as physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

2.2. The School is under the Patronage of the Western Care Association and was founded in 1967. It is managed by a voluntary Board of Management with representatives from our Patron Western Care Association, the Teaching Staff, Parents and the local Community.

2.3. The school has primary and post primary sections catering for the different age ranges i.e. Primary 4-12 years and Post Primary 12-18 years. The school has limited capacity with variable class sizes depending on the needs of the children in each class.

2.4. School Ethos/ Philosophy: The characteristic spirit of our school as stated in our Mission and Vision Statement is inspired by a holistic view of the child and the school strives to enable

pupils to develop a sense of dignity and self-worth in an environment where the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical needs of the pupils are identified and addressed in accordance with each pupil's level of development and ability. The quality of education on offer at St. Anthony's is characterised by the professional dedication of all staff and by the creation of a caring, learning environment within the school which facilitates the nurturing and development of each pupils' full educational potential, as well as their self-esteem and encourages the development of personal responsibility.

2.5. Our school seeks to be a place where each individual is treated with the highest respect.

2.6. The school consists of 8 classes divided into Primary age and Post Primary age sections of the school. Pupils are grouped according to their chronological age. The Primary school section consists of three classes and the Post Primary school section consists of five classes. The school operates from 9.20am – 3.00pm. An infant day operates for pupils aged 4 to 6 as per mainstream schools. School transport may be provided by Bus Eireann for the infant day or parents/guardians may be required to collect these pupils.

2.7. There is a large staff of dedicated Class Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and Specialist Teachers of Woodwork, Home Economics, Music and P.E. who all work alongside the Principal Teacher, School Nurse, School Chef, School Secretary and the School Caretaker. The school is managed by a voluntary Board of Management as set out in 2.2 above.

2.8. The maximum class size in St. Anthony's is 11 pupils but class sizes may be smaller depending on the number of pupils within a class presenting with co-morbid disabilities and additional needs. In this instance some classes may be deemed to be at full capacity at a number between 6-11 pupils and in this case no additional children may enrol in these classes during the academic year. The Board will take into account the staff ratios set out in Department of Education Circular 38/2010 (see Appendix 1 hereto) which sets different teacher-pupil ratios depending on the needs of the children. School capacity therefore varies according to the needs of the children we are catering for at any particular time.

2.9. At St. Anthony's School all our Pupils follow a curriculum based on the Primary Curriculum, which is adapted to their needs, and also the NCCA Curriculum Guidelines for Students with Mild General Learning Difficulties. Post Primary age students may have the option of following the new Junior Cycle Level 1 or Level 2 curriculum.

2.10. Our curriculum also places great emphasis on developing Social Life Skills and bringing learning to the pupils through interactive teaching and practical learning experiences.

2.11. St. Anthony's School is not a therapeutic school for children with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is not designated or equipped to cater for children with a history of violent or extremely challenging behaviours that causes or threatens physical harm to themselves, to other pupils or to staff.

2.12. The criteria for decisions regarding enrolments are set out in this Admissions Policy and are contingent on the availability of a suitable vacancy relevant to the age and educational needs of the applicant.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Each child is considered as an individual. The Board of Management strives to ensure that every child accepted into St. Anthony's School can benefit from the services on offer. The

decision as to who will benefit involves the consideration of a wide range of issues. These issues will include the parents'/guardians' views on the proposed educational placement of their child, existing resources available, additional learning and medical needs (for example, autism, ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, epilepsy, etc.) social needs, emotional and behavioural needs. While recognising the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children.

In the admissions process, consideration will be given to ensure that a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff prevails and applications for children who might threaten the safety of the children already enrolled, many of whom are vulnerable by nature of their disability, may be refused.

St. Anthony's Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs **except as set out below and in Section 4:**

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**

St. Anthony's Special 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. The school will therefore refuse to admit students whose educational needs do not fall within this category and a refusal to admit a child who does not have these educational needs will not constitute discrimination.

Subject to the existing school's admission policy with regard to the category of disability catered for by the school and the school's designation, St. Anthony's Special 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 in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council and

St. Anthony's Special 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.

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

St. Anthony's Special School is a school which with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with Mild General Learning Disability; this is where a child has an assessed IQ between 50 and 70 and scores in the adaptive range for Mild General Learning Disability as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report which is not older than two years included in the child's application and which includes a recommendation for placement in a Special School for Mild General Learning Disability.

#### **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

##### **c) Special School**

St. Anthony's Special School provides an education exclusively for students with Mild General Intellectual Disabilities 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 as outlined in section 4 above.

St. Anthony's School must verify that all applicants meet the criteria of having a Mild Intellectual Disability and will follow the steps below to ascertain if applicants come within the category of special needs catered for by the school and they apply to all applicants regardless of whether the destination class is oversubscribed or not.

It is the policy of the Board of Management to request a copy of any relevant medical, psychological, speech and language, occupational therapy etc. reports the child may

have. The school's Principal will also meet with the parent/guardians and the child to ascertain the child's needs and the school's suitability in meeting these needs.

Before making any application, we recommend that the child's parents/guardians consider visiting the school so that they will be better able to decide on the suitability of the school for their child. If they are considering making such a visit they should try and do so before the Christmas prior to the September of entry to allow enough time for the family to reflect on whether St. Anthony's would be a good fit for their child before making an application to the school. Such a visit will not give their child any priority and is solely to allow the parents inform themselves better about the school.

Parents are then asked to contact the school to obtain an Application Form or download one from the school's website. This form must be completed in full and all requested documentation listed on the Application Form must be submitted along with the Application Form for the child to be considered for admission. This Application Form must be returned before the Closing Date for Applications as set out in the Admissions Statement for that particular year of entry.

Following receipt of the Application form and the necessary documents and reports, the Board authorises the Principal and Deputy Principal to meet to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria set out below.

As St. Anthony's is a Special School it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school we accept applications from children aged between 4 on the 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of entry and less than 18 on the 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of entry.

Applications are treated as applications for particular classes based on the child's age. Each applicant will be assigned a class based on their age and all decisions on places are contingent on the availability of a suitable vacancy in the class relevant to the educational needs and age of an applicant. Class groupings and numbers in classes vary from year to year as students leave the school, move on to other classes or depending on the particular disability needs of each class group which affects the teacher-pupil staffing ratio. Existing students already enrolled in the school and due to move up classes because of their age will be prioritised for any vacant places in the relevant age class group before new applicants can be considered.

In calculating how many places a class has, the school will use the pupil teacher ratios for Special classes as set out by the Department of Education Circular 38/2010 and available in Appendix 1. Class sizes will not exceed 11 students for our classes for Mild General Learning Disability (though this may be less if students have co-morbid multiple disabilities or diagnoses) or 6 students for our classes where all students have a secondary diagnosis of ASD alongside their Mild GLD.

It may occur that an applicant with multiple diagnoses requires the equivalent of more than one place in that class (in line with Department of Education guidelines for class size and staffing). This will correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where a class grouping may appear as having available places, that class would now be full in light of that applicant's needs.

Subject to the school not being oversubscribed (i.e. that there are places available in the class assigned to the applicant) the policy of the school is to admit all applicants

- whose special education needs fall within the categories of need catered for by the school, and

- who have submitted the appropriate documentation to establish this profile of special educational need, and
- who fulfil the Threshold criteria set out below at Section 6.1, and
- whose parents/guardians have confirmed that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child.

If the Board of Management decides to admit a child, a letter of offer will be sent to parents along with the school's Code of Behaviour. This letter of offer will be issued within 21 days of the Closing Date for applications (or within 21 days of the receipt of the application, whichever is the later). The offer will be subject to the conditions set out in section 11 below.

If the Board decides not to enrol a child the parents of the child will also be informed within 21 days and will be provided with reasons for non-admission as per Section 9 below.

If the Board of Management have accepted the child for admission, the Board will then inform the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and seek its approval for the placement and its sanction for school transport arrangement and other staffing resources as required. This process may take 6 to 8 weeks.

Parents/guardians will be requested to respond to the offer of a place in the school in writing by a specified date (failure to respond by that date will result in the offer lapsing) and will return to the school the fully completed information forms including the application for NCSE school transport and SNA support forms, if applicable.

If the child meets the Threshold Criteria below but admission is refused on the ground that the class is full, parents/guardians will be informed that there is currently no place available but will be asked if they wish their child to be placed on the Waiting List. The school will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

If the child does not meet the Threshold Criteria below, the parents/guardians will be advised that the school is formally declining a place to their child in the school and will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

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

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the 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:

The receipt by the school of a completed Application Form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. The school does not operate its applications process on a first come, first served basis - each application will be considered on its merits and considering the places available in the different classes in the school.

Siblings of students in the school are not automatically entitled to a place in the school.

Please note that all reports relating to a child which have been drafted by a psychologist, psychiatrist, behavioural therapist, paediatrician or other relevant medical practitioner (who has produced a report relating to the child's cognitive development, learning ability or

educational development) within the two years preceding application must be provided to the school for assessment by the Board of Management. The withholding of reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an Admission Application at any time. If, after admission, it later becomes apparent that reports or relevant information has been withheld from the school, this may result in an application being invalidated or, if it becomes apparent after admission, in the child involved losing their place in the school.

6.1. The main threshold criteria for admitting a child who applies for a place is that

6.1. A) The child's primary disability is within the Mild Cognitive and Mild Adaptive Needs range as set out in Section 4 above and which is clarified in greater detail below and the child therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school.

*A.1.1. Applications will only be considered where the child has a Mild Cognitive Learning Disability with a full scale IQ on a standardised test within the 50-70 range and has needs in the Mild Adaptive range as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application and where the following conditions are met:*

*A.1.2. The assessment reports provided are from within the last 24 months*

*A.1.3 For entry into the primary section of the School, the child is at least 4 years old and has not reached their 12th birthday on the 1st of September of the year of entry.*

*A.1.4. For entry into the Post Primary section of the school, the child is at least 12 years old on the 1st September of the year of entry and has not reached their 18th birthday on the 1st of September of the year of entry.*

*A.1.5. At least one of the assessment reports provided is from the last 12 months and all of the assessment reports are from within 2 years of the date of application.*

*A.1.6. The child's primary diagnosis is not one the following*

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder*
- Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities*
- Emotional and/or Behavioural Disorders*
- Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder or any other conduct disorder*
- Any other recognized disorder/disability other than Mild Intellectual GLD*

*A.1.7. The Board may consider applications for places for children with the disabilities listed in paragraph A.1.6. above, provided that they are secondary to a primary diagnosis of Mild GLD and they meet the other criteria set out.*

*A.1.8. A recommendation from a psychologist is required outlining why placement in a special school for students with a Borderline Mild general learning disability is more suitable than placement in a mainstream school.*

6.1. B) There is a vacancy in the school which is appropriate given the age and educational needs of the applicant.

6.1. C) The application form was fully completed, signed and included all enclosures appropriate to the application.

6.1. D) The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent) within the catchment area of South, East or West Mayo and has provided proof of address

with an Eircode from one of the areas listed and we are the nearest suitable Special School.

6.1. E) That there is no evidence from school reports or from the assessment reports that the student has been expelled from a school for behaviour that caused injury to others. If there is such evidence, the application may not be considered: see 6.4 below.

6.1. F) The application was received by the Closing Date for applications for that particular year of entry.

If an applicant does not meet all the criteria set out above, or the reports supplied do not meet the requirement set out above, the parents/guardians will be advised that the school is formally declining a place to their child in the school and will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

If the requested documents listed in the application form are not included with the application, the application will be deemed incomplete, will be returned to the child's parents and will not be considered. If the Parents of the child wish to re-submit their fully completed application, they may do so provided the application is received before the closing date and is in accordance with the other requirements of this policy. If a previously incomplete application is re-submitted, it will be considered as having been received on the date of re-submission and not the date of original submission.

The closing date for applications will be given to parents with the Application Form and will be set out in the Admissions Statement each year. Other than in cases where a vacancy arises during the academic year, applications received during the year will not be considered until after the Closing Date.

After the Closing Date only those applications which meet all the criteria above will be reviewed.

Bearing in mind the age and needs of the child and the particular age range class grouping into the child would be admitted, the Board will employ the following criteria to assess qualifying applications:

- (i) The pupil/teacher ratio will be appropriate to the needs of the child and those already in the class.
- (ii) The extent to which a particular child will be able to tolerate a classroom environment containing other children.
- (iii) The composition, special needs and ages of the pupils currently enrolled in the class into which the child would be admitted.
- (iv) The availability of expertise within the school to deal with any other needs the child may have.
- (v) The extent to which the child's primary diagnosis and capacity to benefit from the educational opportunities available in the school may be affected by any other needs the child may have.
- (vi) There is sufficient physical space in the relevant classroom (in light of the excerpt from Circular 38/2010 at Appendix 1 hereto) and the appropriate age range class for that child has not reached full capacity.

6.2. While recognising the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children.



6.3. Class sizes may vary from class to class depending on the number of pupils within a class presenting with additional needs. See section 5 above. 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 profile of the children we are catering for at a particular time.

6.4. Consideration must be given to ensure that a healthy and safe environment for all pupils and staff prevails. Many of our students are already quite vulnerable as a result of their disability and therefore we will not admit any children whose behaviour or needs may create or be a risk to our other, already vulnerable, students. Even where the child would otherwise be eligible for admission, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to a pupil in exceptional cases.

Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

6.4.1. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and/or the NCSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.

6.4.2. The members of the Board of Management are reasonably clear from reports that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property.

6.4.3. The pupil has previously been expelled from St. Anthony's School or any other school in circumstances where the Board of Management feels that placement in St. Anthony's School would not be appropriate for the child.

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:

On application, students will be considered for destination classes based on their age and appropriate teacher pupil ratios applicable to each student. If the destination class for an applicant is oversubscribed, and all applicants fulfil the threshold criteria, then age will be the sole decider, with the oldest children ranking highest for each destination class.

Priority will then be given to those students not already in a Special class/school where a Special school/class is recommended in their psychology report.

If there is no place available for the child in the assigned class then the application will be refused.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the Current Year Waiting List for the destination class in the order of their ages with the oldest child placed first on the list and then the next oldest child and so on.

## **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
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs
- (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 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Anthony's Special 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](#) 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 St. Anthony's Special 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.

## **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 St. Anthony's Special School where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading (including through the omission of any medical or psychological report, or the submission of out of date or inaccurate reports)..
- (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.
- (v) The school has been designated by the National Council for Special Education or the Child and Family Agency under S.67 of the Education Act, 1998 (when commenced) to admit a particular child and the only way to comply with the designation is to withdraw an offer of a place to another child

## **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.

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—

(i) an application for admission to the school has been received,

(ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or

(iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

(i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school.

(ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school.

(iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant.

(iv) 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).

### **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 St. Anthony's Special School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid only for the school year in which admission is being sought. It will cease on the last day of June of each year.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Anthony's Special 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.

The child will be listed on the Waiting List only in respect of the class for which his/her application was considered i.e. the destination class and in the order according to their age.

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.

If a child is entered on the Waiting List for a particular academic year, this will not give them any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September. A new application for the child will be required for the following academic year even if they are placed on the Waiting List and his/her application will be processed again under the Admissions and Participation Policy

If the child's parents/guardians wish to reapply for entry the following Academic year, they may do so. Their child will continue to be listed on the Waiting List in the interim until the end of the Academic Year

Parents should note that if during the academic year in question, the child ceases for any reason to meet all the Threshold Criteria, the child will be removed from the Waiting List and will be formally refused a place in the school.

### **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.

Any school places that are available will normally be allotted to applications received before the Closing Date. Late applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above). Late applications which meet the Threshold criteria above will be placed on the Waiting List in accordance with procedures set out in section 6 above. Late Applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

## **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:

St. Anthony's School is a special school, and as such it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 4 and 18 each year. Applications are treated as applications for particular classes. At an early stage of the application process, a child is assigned to a class based on the child's age.

Enrolment can only occur should a vacancy be available in the applicable age range class and if the applicant meets all the criteria for enrolment as set out in this admissions policy.

We will consider admission of students who have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school for classes other than our intake class if those classes have spaces (as set out by Department of Education and Skills circular 38/2010 in Appendix 1). The same procedure will apply for those students as set out in this policy in sections 1-14.

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:

To facilitate children who may need to move school due to a geographical move from another location or for some other exceptional reason such as a change of foster placement within the academic year, applications may also be reviewed during the year and an applicant may be admitted subject to there being a suitable vacancy within the particular age class and the applicant meets the criteria for admission as set out in this admissions policy.

Enrolment otherwise than at the commencement of the school year will be regarded as exceptional and will only occur should a vacancy be available, or have arisen, in the applicable age range class during the course of the school year.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants

will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 6

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

This rule applies to all schools.

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

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

**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:

St. Anthony's School is a non-denominational school and does not provide formal religious instruction on a day to day basis. Traditionally, on a case by case basis, the school has facilitated the practical preparations for First Communion and Confirmation for students who are of a Roman Catholic denomination and holds a school mass twice a year at Christmas and again in June as part of our annual graduation ceremonies.

Alternative arrangements for students not participating in the religious programmes or attending school masses are put in place without any reduction in the school day.

## 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.

This Policy was approved by the Patron on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and it has been ratified by the Board of Management and is in effect from the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It was reviewed and amended as instructed by circular 75/2022 and the Board approved the amendments at a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 from which time the amended policy is in effect

Signed:

Date:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1 (from Department of Education Circular 38/2010)

Pupil-teacher-SNA ratio - Special schools/special classes

Disability	Ratio of SNA to class group	Pupil-teacher-ratio
Physical Disability	1:1	10:1
Hearing impairment	1:4	7:1
Visual Impairment	1:4	8:1
Emotional Disturbance	1:4	8:1
Severe Emotional Disturbance	1:1	6:1
Mild General Learning Disability	1:4	11:1
Moderate General Learning Disability	1:2	8:1
Severe/Profound General Learning Disability	2:1	6:1
Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders	2:1	6:1
Specific Learning Disability		9:1
Specific Speech and Language Disorder.	1:3	7:1
Multiple Disabilities	1:1	6:1