Admission Policy of Clifden Community School
Ardbear, Clifden, Co Galway H71 W673
Roll number: 91412M
School Patrons: The Provincials of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and of the Franciscan Brothers (Third Order of St. Francis), the Chief Executive of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

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 June 18th 2026. 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 Clifden Community School's 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

Characteristic Spirit of **Clifden Community School**

BACKGROUND
The responsibilities of the patron of Second level schools are clearly laid out in the Education Act, 1998. In the Community School Sector, the Trustees of the school are the Joint Patrons of the school. The roles and responsibilities of the Patron in a Community School are laid out in the Education Act, 1998. These roles and responsibilities are further defined in the ***Deeds of Trust of a Community School.***

The Joint Patrons of Clifden Community School are The Provincial of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, the Provincial of the Franciscan Brothers (Third Order of St. Francis) and the Chief Executive of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (formerly County Galway Vocational Education Committee).

The community of Clifden has a rich history in education where it has been particularly associated

with schools and schooling down the centuries. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy came to Clifden in 1853 and established a Primary School in 1855. St. Anne's Technical School opened in 1905 and closed in 1968. The Secondary Top opened in 1940 which evolved into a Secondary School in 1959. The Franciscan Brothers who came to Clifden in 1837, established the Classical School in 1889, and developed a Primary School in 1921 and then established Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (Secondary School) in 1947.

The new Clifden Community School was established in 1973 following the amalgamation of the Mercy Secondary School and the Franciscan Boys School (Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál) who joined with Co. Galway V.E.C. to form a new single post-primary school to serve the educational needs of the wider Clifden community. The development of Clifden Community School marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of education in Clifden.

Characteristic Spirit of a Community School under the joint patronage of Catholic and ETB Patrons

Clifden School Community school is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Sisters of Mercy (CEIST), the Franciscan Brothers and GRETB.
Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community**.** Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened in September 1973 following the amalgamation of the Franciscan and Mercy schools. The values of GRETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Religious Congregations and are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Clifden Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school, Clifden Community School, provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full

potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Clifden Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

3. Admission Statement

Clifden Community 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

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.

Clifden Community School is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Clifden Community School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Moderate Disability & a class for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Note: *The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by Clifden Community School will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department of Education and Skills.*

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.

Admission of Students to Special Education Classes

The special classes in Clifden Community School provide an education exclusively for students with Mild/Moderate Disability & Autism Spectrum Disorder (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.

The following evidence is required in support of such an application:
Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of Special Educational Needs *(e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11; psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)*

AND

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

AND

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

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for *(e.g. autism.)*

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:

1. Children attending primary schools in the catchment area: (list the schools)
Scoil Mhuire Clifden, Eagles Nest, Cashel, Cleggan, Letterfrack, Tully, Lettergesh, Ballyconneely, Kingstown, Roundstone, Inish Bofin, Claddaghduff, Aillebrack, Leenane
2. Siblings of students already attending the school
3. Siblings of students who have attended the school in the past

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:

Lottery

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 (howsoever described) to the school;
(other than in relation to a post leaving certificate or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)
(c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to admission to a special class insofar 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;
(other than in relation to a post leaving certificate or further education and training course)

(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 siblings of a student attending or having attended the school)

(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,
This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.
This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Clifden Community 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 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 16 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

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 (3 weeks from closing date for receipt of applications).
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 Clifden Community School you must indicate—

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

Acceptance of an offer of a place shall be made within 2 weeks of the date of the offer.

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 Clifden Community 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 Clifden Community 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 Clifden Community School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

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:

The applicant shall be invited in the company of his/her parents to meet with the school authorities. In addition to the school's official application form, the applicant will provide the school authorities with the following information;

- Two of the most recent school term reports
- A Psychological Report (where one exists)
- Special needs requirements, (with supporting documentation) if applicable
- Any report deemed to assist the applicant and the school authorities

Information will be requested from the Principal of the applicant's former school about:
(a) any problems relating to school attendance that the child concerned had while attending that school
(b) such other matters relating to the child's educational progress considered appropriate
[Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 20]

Additional aspects for consideration:

- the availability of the applicant's subject choice on the school's curriculum, and not exceeding maximum class size
- not exceeding the maximum number in a year group as determined by the management of the school from time to time, depending on current enrolment in the year group
- it may not be possible to provide all the subject options or levels that the transfer applicant has had in his/her current/previous school, and that Clifden Community School does not guarantee a place in any subject or course to a student who transfers during the school year or during the progress of a programme

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 per the procedures 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.

Acceptance of an offer by an applicant will be on the strict understanding that it may not be possible to provide all the subject options or levels that the transfer applicant has had in his/her current/previous school, and that Clifden Community School does not guarantee a place in any subject or course to a student who transfers during the school year or during the progress of a programme.

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees (applies to all schools)

The board of Clifden Community 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 admission to post leaving certificate or further education courses run by Clifden Community School.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

As per the Characteristic Spirit of Clifden Community School, time for the teaching of religious education, as agreed and stated in the ***"Deed of Trust and Model Lease for Community Schools"***, will be respected and accommodated within the educational programmes offered within the school. Clifden Community School follows the NCCA religious education programme. Religious instruction is not provided. Should parents wish that their child be withdrawn from occasional liturgical events in school, this request should be made in writing to the Principal. Supervised study will be provided in such instances. Parents are encouraged to contact the Principal if they have concerns or queries.

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.