Divine Word National School

Admission Policy

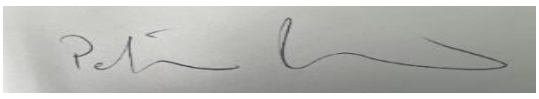
Updated/Reviewed on: 21st September 2026

(This policy was approved by the school patron on the 25th September 2026.)

Principal: Marcella Nic Niallaigh

Signature: 

Board of Management Chairperson: Peter Leonard

Signature: 

School Phone Number: 01 - 494 5955

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School Address: Divine Word National School, Marley Grange, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Admission Policy of The Divine Word NS

School Address: Marley Grange, Rathfarnham, Dublin D16FF62

Roll number:19574H

School Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

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 25th September 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 Divine Word NS, 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:

The Divine Word NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

(a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
(b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
(c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
(d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Divine Word N.S. shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Divine Word NS strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere and environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, and cultural needs of the children are identified and addressed.

Divine Word NS encourages the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Divine Word NS Parents Association. The school will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem and wellbeing of everyone in the school community; to imbue in the children respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Divine Word NS will promote gender equity amongst teachers and pupils and promote a caring and responsible attitude to the environment

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

We always aim to promote our school motto: "Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí"

3. Admission Statement

Divine Word NS will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

(a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
(i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

- Divine Word N.S. 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.

- Divine Word N.S. 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.

Divine Word NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

The Divine Word NS is an all-inclusive school and accepts children with any special needs requirements.

Enrolment Policy for Special Class
The special class was established to meet the needs of students with complex / severe educational needs arising from their diagnosis of Autism. The class is resourced for students diagnosed with Autism meeting DSM IV/V or ICD 10 diagnostic criteria, detailed evidence of complex/severe educational needs and a professional recommendation including a clear rationale as to why the student must attend such a placement. The class is for students who meet these criteria irrespective of cognitive ability in accordance with Department of Education (DoE) policy. To simplify the criteria, it is as follows:

- A diagnosis of Autism meeting DSM IV/V or ICD 10 diagnostic criteria
- Detailed evidence of complex/severe educational needs

- A professional recommendation including a clear rationale as to why the student must attend such a placement. The special Autism class is for students who meet these criteria irrespective of cognitive ability in accordance with Department of Education (DoE) policy.

Divine Word N.S. may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

The following criteria will apply when making an application for the special class:

➢ Each child must have a full current Psychological & Cognitive Assessment, which must specify a diagnosis of 'Autism' i.e. DSMV or ICD10 and a recommendation for a special class placement in a mainstream school from such a professional report.

➢ The parents/guardians must fill in and return a School Enrolment form as for all pupils. All relevant reports and assessments must be given to the school once the child has been offered a place in the school.

➢ The Board of Management states that, as per DES instruction, the school will accommodate one special class for children with Autism, covering the age range of the primary school.

➢ The Department of Education & Skills states that each class's ratio is a maximum of six pupils to one teacher and two SNAs.

➢ The Admissions Policy states that the parents/guardians (and the prospective candidates for the class if required) may be invited to meet the principal, the class teacher and any other relevant parties before the child starts school.

➢ The special class will cater for children of primary school age only – i.e. four years to thirteen years.

➢ In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act a parent/guardian must confirm compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if this confirmation is not received prior to the pupil attending the school. The Board also reserves the right to continue to suspend or expel a child under 'Health & Safety' regulations and in conjunction with the school 'Code of Behaviour' as per the National Education Welfare document if the need should arise.

➢ A placement breakdown can sometimes occur. All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents and/ or the school. The review will include input from all agencies involved (through a multi-disciplinary team meeting), the parents/guardians and the school. Following the review, a recommendation may be made that the child be enrolled in a school that can better meet his/her needs.

➢ First preference will be given to pupils attending Divine Word N.S. where a transfer will take place from mainstream to special classes if criteria have been satisfied.

In the event of over-subscription for the Special Class the following criteria will apply as per the mainstream class admissions oversubscription criteria;

1. **Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and/or children resident in the parish of Divine Word, Marley Grange (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)**
2. **Children of staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).**
3. **Children residing outside the parish (the eldest child will also have priority).**

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

The Divine Word NS is a Catholic Ethos School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Ethos where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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. **Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and/or children resident in the parish of Divine Word, Marley Grange (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)**

2. **Children of staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).**

3. **Children residing outside the parish (the eldest child will also have priority).**

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 offered in accordance with date of birth (oldest to get priority)

In the event of two or more applicants with the same date and time of birth, there will be a draw carried out by an independent person.

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;

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

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

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

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

(g) (other than siblings of a student attending or having attended the school as per Enrolment Criteria.

(h) 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.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to the Divine Word NS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school'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 the Divine Word NS, you must indicate—

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

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

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

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by the Divine Word NS 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.
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 the Divine Word NS 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 the Divine Word NS 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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 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 13.

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:

Parents wishing to enrol their child(ren) in the school must apply by completing the Application Form (available through the school's website/office). The applications are dated and placed on a waiting list according to the date they were received. Places will be given to such children depending on whether there is an available space.

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:

Parents wishing to enrol their child(ren) in the school must apply by completing the Application Form (available through the school's website/office). The applications are dated and placed on a waiting list according to the date they were received. Places will be given to such children depending on whether there is an available space.

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

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

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

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

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students: A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

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.