

Admissions Policy 2027

Admission Policy of St Finian's College

School Address: Old Longford Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath

Roll number: 63280N

School Patron: Bishop Thomas Deenihan

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 in April 2020 and is reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management biannually. 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 Finian's College 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

St Finian's College is a Catholic co-educational voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Meath.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary 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 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 St. Finian's College 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.

Mission Statement

Because St Finian's is a Catholic School we seek to develop a sense of community that attempts to live out the teaching of Christ, especially in our treatment of others. We endeavour to develop the spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural and physical potential of all our students. With the co-operation of the parents, this potential is developed as fully as possible, so that each student can achieve success at his or her own level of ability.

Aims of the College

St Finian's College seeks to develop the unique potential of each student. With the co-operation of the parents every effort is made to ensure that each pupil can achieve success at his or her own level of ability. Religion is an important part of life and every student is encouraged to deepen his or her faith and to develop for themselves, a reasoned basis for the practice of that faith. St Finian's aims at providing well-educated Catholics to the enrichment of society.

St Finian's is a diocesan College that aims to serve the wider community to include Mullingar and its surrounding parishes.

We adhere to the regulations, curriculum and other programmes as laid down by the department of Education and Science.

The financial and teaching resources of the College are provided by a combination of Department of Education and Science grants and teacher allocations, voluntary contributions and fund-raising. Our school policy and the implementation of our aims and objectives are subject to the resources and funding available to us.

St Finian's recognises the right to parental choice in relation to enrolment and is committed to the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school, respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

3. Admission Statement

St Finian's College 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.

Post-primary denominational schools

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

Schools with special education class(es)

St Finian's is a school which has established two classes, 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 classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

St Finian's College with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism (ASD).

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.

School with special education class(es)

The special classes attached to St Finian's College provide an education exclusively for students with ASD and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order

listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

Enrolment Criteria

Secondary school students must be aged 12 on 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year.

The College may accept up to a maximum of 180 first year students for the Academic Year 2027-2028

Only students who are in the final year of primary school will be considered for enrolment as first years.

Priority will be given to siblings of present/past pupils, followed by children of former/present employees and then finally by children/grandchildren of past pupils (Not exceeding 25% of overall intake. If the number exceeds 25% then the age criteria will apply).

A minimum of ten places are reserved each year for music scholarship students.

Enrolment Procedure

Students are welcome to apply online through the Let's Enrol system on our website stfinianscollege.ie. The Admission Notice outlines the dates applications are being accepted. All prospective students will receive a digital acknowledgement that their application has been received. Places will be offered online. Waiting List will be established.

Canvassing will disqualify.

Should the number of applicants exceed our proposed intake, the following procedure will be adopted in order of priority:

1. A minimum of ten places will be reserved for music scholarship students.
2. All siblings of present/past pupils.
3. Children of former/present employees.
4. Children/grandchildren of past pupils (not exceeding 25% of overall intake. If the number exceeds 25% then the age criteria will apply).
5. All remaining places will be offered to applicants, **beginning with the eldest by date of birth**, until all places are filled.

Decision Making

Decisions will be made in relation to enrolment by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy.

Decisions will be notified to parents within 21 days of receiving information as prescribed by the Minister under the Act.

Students with Special Educational Needs

Applicants with special needs, when enrolled, should note that the College will, with parental permission, access the student's records from their primary school/Individual Programme well in advance of entry to the school to facilitate planning and apply to the National Educational Psychological Service and/or the Department of Education and Science for the resources to support the student.

The school enrolment/admission policy will be revised and amended as needed to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of the school and the community it serves.

Special Class Enrolment

St. Finian's College opened St. Phyl's in September 2014 and St Martha's in September 2016. The following outlines the Admission Policy for this Class.

Criteria for Enrolment

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- **Diagnosis of 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

- **An eligibility 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 autism.

The class will only cater for students who are 12 years of age or more on the 1 September of the school year in question.

St. Finian's College offers on an optional year basis a five / six-year secondary education programme. (Six if Transition Year is availed of)

An applicant must graduate from the school after six years.

Under guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills the number of places in each class is limited to six students.

Process of Enrolment for ASD Class

The process begins with:

1. An eligibility 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 autism.

2. The online school application form is completed. This must be accompanied by the professional reports outlined earlier under criteria for enrolment.

3. Fully completed applications are then recorded on the online system. Entry into this system only secures a place on the list of applicants.

4. Our class caters for average, mild or moderate General Learning Disabilities.

Procedures for Admission

Priority will be given to:

1. Applicants with siblings, present or past.

2. Applicants of former or present employees.

3. Applicants who are children/grandchildren of past pupils.

4. Applicants from special ASD Classes currently enrolled in 6th class at Primary Level.

5. Applicants coming from 6th class where there is no special class but they have 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 autism.**

7. Applicants coming from a home school environment with 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 autism.**

If places remain available after the above, the following ranked criteria will apply:

1. Age: Available places will be allocated on the basis of date of birth, with priority being given to the oldest applicant at the criteria level, and thus continuing until all places are filled.

2. Should two or more applicants share the same date of birth, the applicant for whom this class would be the nearest facility, will gain the place.

On enrolment, it is the responsibility of the parents to attend all meetings and interviews pertaining to the application of their child.

On enrolment, it is the responsibility of parents to provide all of the documentation, reports and information required or requested.

On enrolment, it is the responsibility of parents to make a full disclosure to the school authority of any information re: (learning, behavioural, health, etc.) which their child had in a previous school.

Admission is subject to the following:

As previously pointed out, the number of places in an ASD class is limited to six.

That students wishing to transfer from another second level school will be subject to the school's transfer policy.

All applications to the ASD Class will be reviewed by the Admissions Panel which will consist of the following:

- (i) School Principal.
- (ii) Deputy Principal.
- (iii) Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator.
- (iv) Special Class Teacher (s)
- (v) Any other relevant Special Education Needs personnel as deemed appropriate by the above.

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:

- In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above, remaining places will be offered to applicants, **beginning with the eldest by date of birth**, until all places are filled.
- Should two or more applicants share the same date of birth, the applicant for whom this school would be the nearest school to their residence, will gain the place.

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;

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Finian's College 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 online 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 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 Finian's College 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.

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

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 Finian's College 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 data between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

(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 Finian's College 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 St Finian's College is automatic on the online system, in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the

school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy, i.e. places will be offered to applicants, **beginning with the eldest by date of birth**, until all places are filled. The parents of all unsuccessful applicants will be asked at the conclusion of the offer process to confirm their wish to remain on the waiting list. 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.

Please note:

Where a special class is oversubscribed, the Admissions to School Act 2018 requires schools to compile a waiting list for a special class in accordance with their admissions policy. The school must use this list to fill any vacancies arising during the school year in question only.

14. Late Applications

If the school receives late applications for the special class, these applicants will be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These late applicants, even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream classes of the school or are local children and young people, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the special class.

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

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

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:

Other Applications for Enrolment: i.e. not 1st Year

Depending on the limitations of class size and subject choice, a small number of vacancies may arise at the end of each academic year in classes other than first year.

Applications should be made online on the relevant form from the website www.stfinianscollege.ie to the Principal before 1 June.

Priority will be given to siblings of present/past pupils, children of past pupils, and children of former/present full time staff.

All remaining places will be offered to applicants, **beginning with the eldest by date of birth**, until all places are filled.

Allocation of places for the Academic Year will be made in June.

All applicants will be notified in writing by the 21 June.

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:

Other Applications for Enrolment

St. Finian's does not accept students enrolling during the current academic year unless they are moving into the area for the first time.

Notwithstanding the above allocation system, the Board of Management reserves discretion to allocate places in exceptional circumstances and acting in the best interest of all pupils.

All applications are dependent on the limitations of class size and subject choice.

Applications should be made online on the relevant form from the website www.stfinianscollege.ie to the Principal.

Priority will be given to siblings of present/past pupils, children of past pupils, and children of former/present full time staff.

All remaining places will be offered to applicants, **beginning with the eldest by date of birth**, until all places are filled.

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

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

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

St Finian's College does not provide religious instruction to students, but rather the study of Religious Education as an exam subject to both Junior & Senior Cycle and Non-Exam Religious Education to Senior Cycle.

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend St Finian's College and wishes to discuss the above arrangements, should make a written request to the Principal.

A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss the situation.

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** within 21 calendar days

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** within 21 calendar days 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** within 21 calendar days 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.

Review of Policy

The Board of Management after one year, and every two years thereafter will review this policy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 11th September 2025.

Aidan Farrell Chairperson
John Mc Hale Principal

Next review date: September 2027