



Admission Policy of Scoil Gharbháin

Clais na Lachan, Dún na Mainistreach, Dún Garbhán, Co. Phortláirge.

Roll number: 19814B

School Patron: Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, Bishop of the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

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 Scoil Gharbháin 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 12/10/26. 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 the Scoil Gharbháin 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.

Legal Precedence of Language: The Irish language version of this policy will take precedence in the event of any discrepancy, ambiguity, or conflict of interpretation between the Irish and English versions.

2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the School

Scoil Gharbháin is an Irish language medium Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.

“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:

1. The full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral, and spiritual aspects; and
2. A living relationship with God and with other people; and
3. A philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and
4. The formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

As a **Gaelscoil**, Scoil Gharbháin operates a **Total Immersion Method** where Irish is the sole language of communication, instruction, and administration within the school. The school's objective is to foster a high level of linguistic fluency and an organic appreciation for Irish culture, heritage, and identity among its pupils and the broader school community.

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

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Gharbháin will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- The gender ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The civil status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The family status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The sexual orientation ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The religion ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The disability ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The ground of race of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- The Traveller community ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned, or
- The ground that the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned has special educational needs.

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, all grounds shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Scoil Gharbháin 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 through the medium of Irish, when requested to do so by the Council.

Scoil Gharbháin 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.

Scoil Gharbháin requires a valid Letter of Eligibility issued by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) via the Parents Notify process as a prerequisite for admission to its special class.

4. Admission of Pupils

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where:

1. **The school is oversubscribed** (please see Section 5 below for mainstream classes and Section 6 for the special class).
2. A parent of a pupil, 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 pupil.

Admission Requirement: Any application for a child who will reach their 4th birthday between 1st June and the first day of the school year will be placed on the main waiting list in the event of over-demand & may be offered a place if a school place becomes available after criteria have been applied.

5. Mainstream Oversubscription & Selection Criteria

In the event that the school is oversubscribed for mainstream entry (Junior Infants), the school will apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications received within the timeline set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice:

- **Criterion 1:** Applicants who are siblings (including step-siblings, adoptive siblings, foster siblings, or half-siblings) of a pupil or past pupil of Scoil Gharbháin.
- **Criterion 2:** Applicants whose parents are past pupils of Scoil Gharbháin (to a maximum of 25% of the available places).
- **Criterion 3:** Applicants who have attained a level of fluency in the Irish language indicative of what would be expected of a pupil, taking into account the age and any special educational needs of the pupil concerned, where said fluency would be likely to regress were the pupil not admitted to an Irish-medium school. (Parents wishing to utilise this must supply evidence to display fluency to the Board's representatives).
- **Criterion 4:** External applicants living within the Dungarvan/Ballinacourty planning area and within Gaeltacht na nDéise.

- **Criterion 5:** Other applicants whose applications were received within the timeframe outlined in the Annual Admission Notice.

The school Board reserves the right to set the maximum number of pupils in any given class. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted in Junior Infants shall be 27 per class.

If two or more pupils are tied under any criterion, priority will be set according to the next criterion on the list.

6. Admission of pupils to the Special Class (Classroom for Autistic pupils)

Scoil Gharbháin will operate a designated Special Class catering to pupils with a diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

A. Linguistic Medium of the Special Class

In keeping with the characteristic spirit and the *Total Immersion Method* of Scoil Gharbháin, this special education classroom operates entirely through the medium of the Irish language. All teaching, learning, support, and social interactions within the special class will be conducted by staff through the medium of Irish, with the sole exception of explicit English language curriculum lessons.

B. Legally Aligned Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for a place in the special class, an applicant must satisfy the strict, updated statutory eligibility criteria mandated under Department Circular 0063/2026:

1. **Professional Reports:** The parents must provide a psychological, psychiatric, or multi-disciplinary report confirming a diagnosis of Autism.
2. **Complexity & Rationale:** The professional report must explicitly demonstrate the complexity of the child's overall needs and provide a clear professional recommendation and rationale as to why a special class placement in an Irish-medium mainstream school is the most appropriate placement type.
3. **NCSE Letter of Eligibility:** The applicant must provide a valid, current **Letter of Eligibility** issued by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) via the Parents Notify process for the relevant school year. This letter acts as a prerequisite for enrolment and confirms that the child is known to the NCSE and has the required diagnosis and professional recommendation for a special class placement.

C. Selection Criteria for Special Class Oversubscription

In the event that the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of available places in the special class, places will be allocated applying the following selection criteria in the order listed below:

- **Criterion 1:** Applicants who are pupils currently enrolled in mainstream classes within Scoil Gharbháin who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the

NCSE as eligible for a special class placement, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year.

- **Criterion 2:** Applicants who are siblings (including step-siblings, adoptive siblings, foster siblings, or half-siblings) of a pupil or past pupils of Scoil Gharbháin, who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the NCSE as eligible for a special class placement, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year.
- **Criterion 3:** Applicants whose parents are past pupils of Scoil Gharbháin, and who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the NCSE as eligible for a special class placement in an Irish-medium school, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year (to a maximum of 25% of available places).
- **Criterion 4:** Applicants who have attained a level of fluency in the Irish language indicative of what would be expected of a pupil, taking into account the age and any special educational needs of the pupil concerned, where said fluency would be likely to regress were the pupil not admitted to an Irish-medium school, and who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the NCSE as eligible for a special class placement in an Irish-medium school, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year (*Parents wishing to utilise this must supply evidence to display fluency to the Board's representatives*).
- **Criterion 5:** External applicants living within the Dungarvan/Ballinacourty planning area and within Gaeltacht na nDéise and who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the NCSE as eligible for a special class placement in an Irish-medium school, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year.
- **Criterion 6:** Other applicants whose applications were received within the timeframe outlined in the Annual Admission Notice and who have been formally notified to, and verified by, the NCSE as eligible for a special class placement in an Irish-medium school, and who hold a valid NCSE Letter of Eligibility for the relevant school year.

The maximum number of pupils in one special class is 6.

If two or more pupils are tied under any criterion, priority will be set according to the next criterion on the list.

D. Absolute Prohibitions (Inspectorate Compliance)

In strict adherence to Department of Education and NCSE guidelines:

- Enrolment will **never** be made contingent on a child's ability to participate or integrate into a mainstream class setting.
- Refusal of enrolment cannot be based on a prospective pupil's potential behaviour, nor will admission be contingent on available resources.
- No additional documentation, tests, or assessments will be requested beyond the necessary diagnosis, professional rationales, and the NCSE confirmation letter.

7. Entry to Other Classes (Senior Infants to Rang 6)

Applications for places in classes other than Junior Infants must be submitted in writing or via web enrolment through the Scoil Gharbháin website. Eligible children may be accepted if there are spaces available in the class and if, in the opinion of the Board of Management, the child's fluency in Irish is sufficient to allow them to take part in the curriculum without causing a breakdown in the total Irish-immersion environment of the classroom. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide evidence of Irish fluency with the application.

8. 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 pupil on a waiting list:

- A pupil's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including *naíonraí*.
- The payment of fees or contributions to the school.
- A pupil's academic ability, skills, or aptitude (except regarding Irish language exception provisions allowed under section 62(9) of the Act).
- The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills, or aptitude of a pupil's parents/guardians.
- A requirement that a pupil or their parents attend an interview, open day, or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school (provided it arrived within the period specified in the Annual Admission Notice).

9. Decisions on Applications

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

- The 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

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.

10. 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 pupil 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 pupil's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the pupil'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 17 below for further details).

11. Accepting an Offer of Admission

In accepting an offer of admission from Scoil Gharbháin, the applicant must indicate in writing:

1. Whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have, they must provide details of the offer(s) concerned.
2. Whether or not they have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, provide details.

Failure to comply with these disclosure provisions or failure to sign the school's Code of Behaviour within the timeline set out in the Annual Admission Notice may result in the immediate withdrawal of the offer.

Registration Name: Upon acceptance of an offer, the pupil will be registered on the Primary Online Database (POD) and the school's administrative system (Aladdin) using the exact name and details as they appear on their official Birth Certificate.

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

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Scoil Gharbháin 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 pupil, 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 pupil; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 11 above.

13. Sharing of Data with other schools

The school protects the privacy of all applicant data in accordance with GDPR regulations. However, as permitted under Section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, the Board of Management may share specific personal data with other schools or the patron body to prevent double-booking or over-allocation of local school places.

This data-sharing mechanism is strictly restricted to the following elements:

1. The specific date on which the application was received by the school.
2. The exact dates on which a formal offer of a place was issued, and/or subsequently accepted or declined by the parents/guardians.
3. Essential pupil personal details required for definitive identification, limited to: Full Name, Home Address, Date of Birth, and Personal Public Service Number (PPSN).

14. 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 pupils whose applications for admission to Scoil Gharbháin 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. This waiting list will be structurally managed via two distinct tiers:

1. **Main Waiting List:** Composed entirely of valid applications received within the official timeline set out in the Annual Admission Notice. These applicants will be ranked strictly according to the school's oversubscription criteria.
2. **Supplementary Waiting List:** Composed of late applications received outside the official admission window. These will be organised by application date and oversubscription category behind the main list.

Clearance Requirement: The Main Waiting List must be completely cleared, and all qualified applicants on it offered places, before any school place can be offered to an applicant situated on the Supplementary Waiting List.

15. 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 a manner consistent with the school's policy. If the school is oversubscribed, late applications will be placed on the waiting list behind applications received on time, in the chronological order in which the late applications were received.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Scoil Gharbháin or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contribution as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a pupil to the school, or

- the admission or continued enrolment of a pupil in the school.

17. Reviews and Appeals (Section 29)

Review of Decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the pupil may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998 and within the timelines specified by the Minister for Education.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and 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 **within two weeks 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 over subscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of the decision by the board of management **within two weeks 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 pupil may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission to an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education.

- Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must** request a formal review by the Board of Management *prior* to making an appeal under Section 29.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 14/9/26

Signed: Siobhán Ní Mhurchú (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: Sineas Uí Ruaráin (Principal, Scoil Gharbháin)

Dungarvan/Ballinroad Area Map

<https://consult.waterfordcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/Pre%20Draft%20Issues%20Paper%20Dungarvan%20Final.pdf>

ARCGIS - National Administrative Boundaries

Gaeltacht na nDéise Area Map

[Map Viewer](#)