



Marino Community Special School

ADMISSIONS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY 2026/27
(FOR APPLICANTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2027)

KEY INFORMATION – Applications Committee	
School Principal/Designated Liaison Person	Oonagh Kenny
Deputy Principal/Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Lesley-Ann Whelan
Chairperson, Board of Management	Mai Byrne

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Admission Policy of Marino Community Special School

School Address: Church Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. A98 TW99.

Roll number: 18281K

School Patron: Enable Ireland Services

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 reviewed by the school patron on the 16th 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 Marino Community Special School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Marino School was established in 1956 to meet the needs of students with physical and multiple disability. In 2010, Marino School transitioned into a Community Special School, following the guidance of the Department of Education and Skills and in consultation with the National Council for Special Education, under the continued patronage of Enable Ireland Services. The school continues to be part of the Special School element of the continuum of educational provision for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN). Marino School aims to promote each child's optimal development through a child-centred, individualised curricular approach. To

support this aim our school provides a caring and nurturing environment within which all pupils are supported in developing their full potential, self-esteem and self-worth. Marino School has strong links with the community and works collaboratively with local schools, through a wide variety of local initiatives.

Marino School staffing allocation takes account of the fact that our school caters for students with physical disability, Autism and possible related learning needs and recognises the need for Individual Education Programmes that are appropriate and relevant to each individual pupil's needs, in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 4 below. The staffing levels are decided by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and are set in accordance with the SERC staffing ratio for the needs of students enrolled in the school, i.e. pupil-teacher ratio of 6:1 for students with Autism and also for students with physical disability and complex need. Special Needs Assistants are also allocated to each class in line with the SERC ratio for these categories of disability. Additional staffing resources may be applied for as per timeframe set out by the NCSE.

Marino Community Special School is a non-denominational, co-educational school under the patronage of Enable Ireland Services. The beliefs and practices of individual pupils are respected and supported in an inclusive manner. Marino Community Special School follows the curricular programmes outlined by the Department of Education and Skills, amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998, in order to provide an appropriate education for each child. The curricular programmes provided by the school are adapted to meet the particular special educational needs of students with Autism and physical Disability attending the school. Within the context of a broad and relevant curriculum our school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all students and their cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual needs, in a therapeutic, nurturing environment.

Within the context and parameters of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
- Equality of access and participation in school;
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment;
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Marino School aims to foster, through carefully planned individual education programmes, independence, dignity, self-discipline, social independence and competent handling of basic daily needs. This prepares each student as far as possible, for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Finally, we endeavour to establish effective communication with the families of all students, as the success and achievement of goals depends on the co-operation and support of every parent/guardian.

3. Admission Statement

In accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, this policy sets out the Marino School policy on the admission of students and their participation in the school. Marino Community Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

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.

Marino Community Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified set out in section 4.

This policy aims to uphold the moral, spiritual, physical and psychological welfare and constitutional rights of all persons concerned. The school will strive to ensure that the principle of "reasonable accommodation" is enacted for all students.

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

Marino Community Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with:

- Physical disability and associated learning need.
- ASD with mild and moderate intellectual disability
- Autism aged between 3 and 6 years for referral to the ASD Early Intervention Class only

The school may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have this specified category of special educational need.

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

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- Physical disability and associated learning need.
- ASD with mild and moderate intellectual disability
- Autism aged between 3 and 6 years for referral to the ASD Early Intervention Class only

and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of choice, the Board of Management of Marino Community Special School must respect the rights of the existing school community and the duty of care towards students already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice, and acting in the best interest of students. Applications for school placements must be accompanied by an NCSE eligibility letter.

The decision-making process regarding admissions is set out in this document. Enrolment is contingent, amongst other things, on the availability of a suitable vacancy in the school, for the age and educational needs of an applicant. Classroom capacity varies according to the range of needs of students that Marino School caters for, at a particular time. As a result, class groups

may vary in size depending on the number of students within a class presenting with additional needs.

Applications for admission to Marino Community Special School must be accompanied by:

- A completed application form and Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) of student.
- A statement of diagnosis as confirmed by the psychologist's/psychiatrist's report included upon referral, in accordance with the criteria for admission to Marino Community Special School set out in Section 4.
- A statement confirming that the student is in the mild or moderate cognitive range of ability (as confirmed by the psychologist's report included in the referral application), and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered by Marino Community Special School.
- A detailed recommendation for a special school setting (as stated in the psychologist's report included in the referral application), as to why a special school placement is necessary or advisable and therefore recommended.
- Any other available professional reports, such as a psychiatric Assessment; Physiotherapy Assessment; Speech and Language Assessment, Occupational Therapy Report; Social Work Report; Medical report.
- Applications **must be accompanied by an NCSE eligibility letter.**

Consideration of applications:

Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application:

1. The application form was fully completed and included all enclosures appropriate to the application.
2. The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent) within the catchment area of Shankill in South County Dublin or County Wicklow and has provided proof of address with a corresponding Eircode, dated within the last 6 months.
3. The child is at least 5 years old and has not reached their 18th birthday on the 1st of September of the year of entry.
4. Applications will only be considered where the psychological assessment report included in the child's application is dated within the last 24 months from the date of application, and also that this report confirms the following:
 - Firstly, the child will benefit from a special education programme and a recommendation that the child should seek a placement in a special school is clearly stated.
 - Secondly, recommendations for additional support of a special needs assistant, and/or a bus escort, stating clearly the grounds for each.
 - Thirdly, the child has been assessed by a psychologist with a diagnosis matching one of the categories described below.

Categories of special educational need:

- (1) A physical disability with a mild intellectual disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of 50 or greater and less than 69 for applicants and aged between 5 and 18 years
 - (2) A physical disability with a moderate intellectual disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of 35 or greater and less than 49 and aged between 5 and 18 years
 - (3) A diagnosis of autism with a mild intellectual disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of 50 or greater and less than 69 for applicants and aged between 5 and 18 years
 - (4) A diagnosis of autism with a moderate intellectual disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of 35 or greater and less than 49 and aged between 5 and 18 years
 - (5) A diagnosis of autism and aged between 3 and 6 years for referral to the ASD Early Intervention Class only.
 - (6) The NCSE has provided an eligibility letter to accompany the student referral.
5. The recommended destination class is suitable for the child with respect to the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance.
 6. The recommended destination class has not reached full capacity (i.e. the class is not over-subscribed).

Following consideration of all applicants in relation to the above threshold criteria by the Admissions Committee

School places will be allocated in the first instance, by using the child's age as the deciding basis, with priority given to the youngest applicants for the destination classes.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the destination class is oversubscribed, Marino 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:

6.1 Priority of Applications: Where the destination class is oversubscribed, places will be offered each September to qualifying applicants (i.e. those who meet all the Threshold Criteria) based on a ranking of their application on the following Assessment Criteria.

The school has a limited number of places and must prioritise its available places for those students who would most benefit from them. Where the documentation provided is not adequate or is not in accordance with the requirements of this policy, this may result in an applicant being refused a school place. In these circumstances, the Admissions Committee will make a recommendation to the Board in respect of each such application.

6.2 Assessment Criteria: It may occasionally occur that a child requires such additional physical space, resources or staffing support that that child effectively requires the equivalent of two or more places in that class. This may correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where the Board has identified a class grouping as having two available places, that class would now be full with regard to that child's needs. Such a circumstance is likely to be rare but it is within the discretion of the Board to limit class size where required for safety or educational reasons.

6.3 Non availability of place: If there is no place available for the child in the destination class then the application will be refused. If there is a place available in a particular destination class and there are a number of applicants for the same place, then the Board of Management will rank each such application in accordance with their marks from the assessment criteria above and applicants will be offered any available places based on their ranking on these criteria.

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 of two or more children who are candidates for the same place having the same marks, places will be allocated on the basis of age, with the youngest child given priority. In the event that more than one candidate share a date of birth, catchment will be used as the deciding criterion, with the child living closest to the school and therefore, availing of a shorter journey to and from school, as determined by Google Maps, will be offered the school 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, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at an early intervention class in Marino Community Special School
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
other than in relation to admission to a special school insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs catered for by Marino Community Special School.
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. Decisions on applications

The Board of Management of the school makes the final decision concerning the admission of any student. It may choose to set up a sub-committee, an admissions committee, to process the applications for referral, in line with the criteria outlined above.

All decisions on applications for admission to Marino Community Special School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 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.

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 Marino Community Special School, you must indicate—

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

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

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Marino Community Special School where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading (including through the omission of any medical or psychological report, or the submission of out of date or inaccurate reports).
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or

- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#) above.

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

- (1) In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, parents will be asked if they wish to have their child’s name placed on a waiting list.
- (2) The waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Marino Community Special 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. **On the last day of June each year, the waiting list will cease to operate.**
- (3) Placement on the waiting list of Marino Community Special School is in the order of priority assigned to the students’ applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.
- (4) 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.

- (5) If a child is entered on the waiting list for a particular academic year, this will not give them any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September. **A new application for the child will be required for the following academic year even if they are placed on the waiting list and his/her application will be processed again under the Admissions and Participation Policy.**
- (6) The child will be listed on the waiting list only in respect of the class for which his/her application was considered (the destination class) and each child will be listed on the waiting list in the order of their ranking according to the assessment criteria. If a place becomes available during the academic year in the destination class, the place will be offered first to qualifying children in the order they are listed on the school's waiting list for that class and only after that to children who make mid-year applications.
- (7) If the child's parents/guardians wish to reapply for entry the following academic year, they may do so. Their child will continue to be listed on the waiting list in the interim until the end of the academic Year.
- (8) Parents should note that if during the academic year in question, the child ceases for any reason to meet all the threshold criteria, the child will be removed from the waiting list and will be formally refused a place in the school.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act. Applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and any such places that are available will normally be allotted to applications received before the Closing Date. Late applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the threshold criteria referred to above). Late applications which meet the threshold criteria above will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with their scores on the assessment criteria. Late applications which do not meet the threshold criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Marino Community Special School accepts applications from students aged between 5 and 18 years each year. Applications are treated as applications for particular classes. At an early stage of the application process, a child is assigned to a particular destination class based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools.

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:

All applications for admission for a particular academic year received after the start of the academic year will be treated as a Mid-Year Application for that year and will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act. Applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and there are rarely if ever any vacancies during the school year. Vacancies are normally filled from a waiting list operated by the school in accordance with the procedures above. Mid-year applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above) for the academic year in question. Mid-year applications which meet the Threshold criteria above will be placed on the Waiting List in accordance with their scores on the Assessment Criteria. Mid-year applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Marino Community Special 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.

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 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:

Marino Community Special School does not provide formal religious instruction on a day-to-day basis. Traditionally, on a case-by-case basis, the school has facilitated the practical preparations for First Communion and Confirmation for students who are of a Roman Catholic denomination. The students are based in various classes throughout the school. Alternate arrangements are put in place for those students who are not participating in these Programmes and there is no reduction in their school day.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

19. Ratification and review of this policy

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 7th September 2026.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

- Chairperson, Board of Management:

Mai Byrne

16.09.2026.

Mai Byrne