

**Admission Policy of St Helen's Senior National School,**

**Limetree Avenue,**

**Portmarnock,**

**Co Dublin**

**Roll number: 19762I**

**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 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021. 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 Helen's Senior National 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

St Helen's Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational senior primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of Archbishop Dermot Farrell. The school strives to provide a safe and happy learning environment, which enables all pupils to reach their personal, academic and creative potential, through a rich variety of educational experiences. With effect from September 2022, the school has one Outreach Class which caters for pupils on the autistic Spectrum (AS). The purpose of this class is to develop an educational setting which focuses on the needs of all the children in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1988 and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, 2000 (EPSEN 2000). The aim of the classes is to promote growth and learning in an atmosphere of inclusion and mutual respect by focusing on pupils' strengths, and to identify and provide for their special education needs. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access, and of participation in school life, with respect for diversity of tradition, values, beliefs, and ways of life in society. We endeavour to create a sense of environmental awareness, respect and care within our school and the wider community.

The Catholic ethos permeates the school day and reflects the living faith of pupils and staff and is characterised by the caring interactive relationship among the whole school community. "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.

St Helen's SNS 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 St Helen's Senior National School 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.

St Helen's SNS has a Roman Catholic ethos and we embrace the spirit of respect for the diversity of other faiths and cultures. We strive to provide a safe and happy learning environment, which enables all pupils to reach their personal, academic and creative potential, through a rich variety of educational experiences. We aim to encourage a high level of empathy, respect and kindness towards others through positive behaviour strategies, supported by the Grow in Love Programme. We promote inclusion by aspiring to meet the needs of all children with regard to their spiritual, emotional, physical and

intellectual well-being. We endeavour to create a sense of environmental awareness, respect and care within our school and the wider community.

### **3. Admission Statement**

St Helen's Senior National 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.

St Helen's Senior National School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St Helen's SNS is a school which has established one Outreach Class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, for children on the Autistic Spectrum and may refuse to admit a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

### **4. Categories of Special Education Needs catered for in the school/special class**

St Helen's SNS is a school which has established one Outreach Class to provide an education exclusively for students on the Autistic Spectrum.

### **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

St Helen's Senior National School is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class in St Helen's SNS provides an education exclusively for students on the Autistic Spectrum and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specific category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Places in this class will be allocated to a maximum of six children per class, on condition that the necessary resources are provided, by the National Council of Special Education (NCSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

## 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:

### **In the case of the Mainstream Classes**

Priority will be given to applicants as follows:

1. Children who are in a mainstream class in St Helen's Junior National School will transition to the St Helen's Senior National School on completion of second class in the Junior School.
2. Children ordinarily resident at an address within the parish boundaries.
3. Children outside the parish of St Helen's Senior National School

### **In the case of the ASD Class**

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year.

1. Children transitioning from the special class in St Helen's Junior National School.
2. The child must have a psychological assessment report which confirms a diagnosis of AS and recommends placement in an AS class.

3. Children already enrolled in St Helen's Senior National School with a diagnosis of autism and a recommendation for a special class and are not managing the mainstream setting.
4. Children ordinarily resident at an address within the parish boundaries
5. Children outside the parish (priority will be given based on proximity to the school).

### **Parish Enrolment**

For the purpose of enrolling students in St Helen's SNS, the catchment area is determined by the Board of Management of St. Helen's Junior N.S. in agreement with the Boards of Management of St. Helen's Senior N.S. & St. Marnock's N.S. and Portmarnock Parish authorities. Accordingly, the parish of Portmarnock is divided into two catchment areas:

**St. Helen's catchment area** includes Strand Road north of Burrow Court, Upper Carrickhill, Martello Estate, Hillcourt, Dal Riada, Torcaill, Carrickhill Road north of Carrickhill Heights, Blackwood Lane and the Back road leading to Old Portmarnock north of the railway bridge located beside Hazelwood garage on the back road.)

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:

### **Mainstream Classes**

The eldest children will be given priority.

### **ASD Class**

A waiting list system will operate of the applicants who meet the criteria specified above. Enrolment in the ASD class occurs on 1<sup>st</sup> September, parallel to enrolment in the mainstream classes.

## **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) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school.
- (f) 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 St Helen's Senior National School 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 applicants

(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 St Helen's SNS, 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 St Helen's SNS 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 St Helen's SNS 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 Helen's SNS is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

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

### **14. Late Applications**

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

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

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

If the school is not over-subscribed, and there is place in the required class, the pupil will be allocated a place in the school on the basis that they fulfil the criteria mentioned in 6 above, and have provided the necessary enrolment form.

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

The Board of St Helen's SNS 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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parent 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 to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Pupils may be given alternative work to do during the religious instruction time.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the Board of Management**

The parent of 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 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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Helen's SNS on

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Enda Rice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Enda Rice, Chairperson, Board of Management