



ENROLMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE OF ST. MATTHEW'S N.S. CRANFIELD PLACE, DUBLIN 4

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Admissions Policy (the '**Policy**') for **St. Matthew's National School** (the '**School**') has been devised in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status legislation, the relevant sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, directives of the School's Patron.
- 1.2 In this Policy, any reference to parents is to be taken as including reference to guardians, any reference to child is to be taken to include a child who has been adopted or fostered, any reference to siblings is to be taken as including reference to step siblings and foster siblings.
- 1.3 St. Matthew's N.S. is the co-educational parish school of St. Matthew's Church, Irishtown serving Junior Infants – Sixth Class. It has a distinct Church of Ireland ethos. It aims to serve its community by providing education to the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice, in cooperation with all the partners of education. The work of the school is conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for religious, social, physical and cultural differences.

2. General Information

- 2.1 While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in a school of their choice, the Board of Management (the '**Board**') reserves the right to determine maximum school and class size capacity, in order to ensure the safety and educational needs of students.
- 2.2 In determining the level of admissions, the Board shall take account of Department of Education & Skills ('**DES**') regulations/circulars in relation to staffing, class size and pupil teacher ratios; health and safety requirements, including, for example, traffic restrictions; it shall also have regard to issues such as physical space, multi-grade classes, the presence of pupils with special educational and/or behavioural needs, the number of pupils expected to leave the school, the size of classrooms/play areas/school premises, the deployment of teachers and the resources of the School.
- 2.3 The implementation of this policy and procedures is delegated to the Principal and Chairperson. It will be overseen by the Board.
- 2.4 A 'timeline' of the Application Process is attached for clarity.

3. Notification of Intention to Apply Form (*Stage 1 of Application Process*)

- 3.1 Those intending to apply for enrolment of a student in the School (the '**Intending Applicant**') should contact the School and request a copy of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form. This form can be submitted at any stage from the child's birth until the 30th September on the year prior to admission. Submission of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form does not offer any priority whatsoever to the Intending Applicant nor does it in any way guarantee a place for him/her either for the term and year requested nor for any other term or year. This form may be completed online at www.stmatts.ie
- 3.2 Those who have returned a Notification of Intention to Apply Form will be sent an Application Form in October of the year prior to proposed enrolment.
- 3.3 Where the Applicant wishes to transfer from another school to St. Matthew's N.S. the Board requests the class required be clear on the Notification of

Intention to Apply Form. The Board specifies that pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to this policy, available space within the required class and school, and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills. In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board requests that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools. In order to do so, St. Matthew's will make contact with the child's current/previous school after an offer of admission at St. Matthew's.

- 3.4 If the intention is to seek to enrol a child in less than 21 days, an Application Form should be requested and there will have to be full compliance with this Policy in terms of the application.

4. Applications for Admissions (*Stage 2 of Application Process*)

- 4.1 All applications for a place in the School shall be submitted to the School Principal on the approved Application Form. An Ethos Statement and Code of Behaviour will be furnished to each Applicant with a copy of the Application Form at the appropriate time, in advance of the Admissions Application period.
- 4.2 The application must be submitted during the Admissions Application period, which will generally be held during the first two weeks in October each year. Parents/guardians who have submitted a Notification of Intention to Apply Form will be sent the relevant documents in advance.
- 4.3 The School will not accept applications for admission in Junior Infants outside of these weeks.
- 4.4 The strict deadline for receipt of fully completed Applications Form is 3 pm on the specified closing date (please see attached timeline).
- 4.5 Only those Application Forms that have been completed in full, signed, dated, accompanied by relevant supporting documentation and submitted by the closing date will be considered by the Board.
- 4.6 An Application Form must be accompanied by
- (i) A copy of a birth certificate for the student in respect to whom the application has been made (the "**Applicant Student**")
 - (ii) Proof of address in the form of a utility bill in the Applicant's name (or in one of the Applicant's names where there is more than one Applicant), which must be dated no later than three months prior to the closing date
 - (iii) Statement confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion, where applicable as outlined below
 - (iv) Evidence to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion, where applicable, as outlined below.
- 4.7 It should be noted that submission of an Application Form does not confer a right to admission nor does it guarantee a place in the School.
- 4.8 Submitting inaccurate information on an Application Form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab initio. Where a place has been offered on the basis of inaccurate information submitted, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn.
- 4.9 Submission of the Application Form early in the Admissions Application period is not a factor in the allocation of places in the School. If an application is submitted prior to the Admissions Application Period, the application will not be considered by the Board.
- 4.10 Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for Junior Infants, must have attained their fourth birthday by 31st May in the year of admission.

5. Consideration of the Applications

- 5.1 The Board will oversee the Principal and Chairperson's consideration of the applications, and will issue its decisions in writing within 21 days of the closing date.
- 5.2 Waiting lists for Applicant Students only apply for the school year in respect of which the application for enrolment was made and do not carry forward to subsequent years.
- 5.3 Applicants who have been offered a place must inform the School, by completing and returning the Acceptance Letter and Registration Form within 14 days of being offered a place. Failure to do so within this timeframe will result in the place being forfeited and being reallocated.
- 5.4 Any lobbying of school personnel and/or board members with the intention of influencing an application for admission will automatically disqualify the applicant and a place will not be offered.
- 5.5 The foregoing conditions are subject to internal review from time to time and may be changed pursuant to other factors including DES/Patron requirements, changes in legislation etc.

6. Priority

St. Matthew's is a local school. Applicants of any religion or none who live within the following parish boundaries are welcome to apply for enrolment: St. Matthew's (Irishtown), St. Mary's COI (Donnybrook), St. John the Evangelist Church & Christchurch Methodist/Presbyterian (Sandymount), St. Stephen's "Pepperpot" Church and St. Ann's Church (Dublin 2).

6.1 St. Matthew's National School is a Church of Ireland school. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d) as follows:

- (a) **Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school¹ and who lives within the boundary of the catchment area listed above.
- (b) **Priority Category 2:** Children of permanent staff members currently working in the school.
- (c) **Priority Category 3:** Brothers and sisters of existing pupils, resident within the locality/catchment area, for whom provision is not given in category 1, will be prioritized within this category. The Application Form must state clearly that the Applicant is a sibling of an existing student at the school.
- (d) **Priority Category 4:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy.

In respect of Priority Category 1 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the Application Form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) a statement from the Applicant confirming
 - a. that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion

¹ As defined in Section 7(A)(2) of the Equal Status Act

- b. and that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

and

- (ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence could consist of:
 - a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students who have siblings currently enrolled in the School (Priority Category 1 & 2). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system (details below). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not exceed the number places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system (details below).

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Having allocated places within categories 1 – 3, remaining places will be allocated by random selection.

Random Selection/Lottery System:

Once the closing date has passed for the receipt of all Applications, the Principal and Chairperson will place Applicants in the relevant categories and allocate places in accordance with availability.

Should a random selection process be required with categories where the number of applications exceeds the places available or to allocate remaining places within category 3, a random selection/lottery will take place:

- a local person who does not have a direct connection to the school will be asked by the Board of Management to draw out names at random. The order in which names are drawn will be recorded. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which names were drawn.

7. Refusal to Enrol

- 7.1 The School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where an Applicant does not comply with the terms of this Policy.
- 7.2 In exceptional circumstances, the School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where:
 - i. the Applicant Student has special needs such that, even with additional resources being made available from the DES/NCSE, the School cannot meet

- such needs and/or provide the Applicant Student with an appropriate education;
- ii. the Applicant Student poses unacceptable risk(s) to other pupils, staff and/or school property.

7.3 Applicants refused under any of the above criteria will be advised of their right to appeal the Board's decision as outlined below.

8. Appeals Procedure

8.1 Applicants may appeal an enrolment decision may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the DES on the official Section 29 Appeal Application Form which can be downloaded from www.education.ie. This appeal must be submitted to the DES within 42 days of receipt of the decision of the Board to refuse enrolment.

9. Ratification and Review

9.1 This Policy was ratified by the Board on 26th November 2018 and follows guidelines issued by the Patron in respect of admissions.

9.2 This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board.

St. Matthew's Enrolment Timeline:

Birth – 30th Sept in year prior to Admission:

Stage 1 of Application Process: Parent/guardians submit the Notification of Intention to Apply Form

Early October in year prior to Admission:

St. Matthew's N.S. will write to those who have submitted a Notification of Intention to Apply Form, inviting Applications for Admission.

First two weeks in October in year prior to Admission:

Parents/Guardians have two weeks to return Application for Admission Form and relevant documentation to the school. All applications must strictly be submitted by 3pm on the specified closing date.

The Board of Management will have **three weeks** in year prior to Admission to review the Applications in line with this policy. A random selection will be held should one be required and the available places offered.

Applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school and return required forms completed in full within **two weeks**.

Should additional spaces become available, they will be strictly offered in accordance with this policy.