

# Athy Model School

## (Church of Ireland)

# Enrolment Policy

### **Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Athy Model School on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012. It will be distributed to all parents wishing to enrol their child/children in this school.

### **Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed again in the spring term of 2014 or when new guidelines are issued from the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Introduction**

This enrolment policy is set out in accordance with provisions of the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Act (2000) and under the guidance of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough.

The Board of Management trust that this will assist parents and guardians in matters relating to enrolment. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal of the school will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Athy Model School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Minister of Education. The school caters for the full range of classes from junior infants to sixth class. The school primarily provides education for children of the Church of Ireland.

We are a four teacher school (including the Principal). We also have a shared Learning Support teacher and a 1shared Resource teacher.

The school's average enrolment is 100 pupils. There are multiple classes in each classroom.

Currently, classes are taught together as follows: Junior and Senior Infants, First and Second Classes, Third and Fourth Classes and Fifth and Sixth Classes.

Our school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998)

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes 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 the school;
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment;
- Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

# Application Procedure

## Stage One

Parents who wish to enrol pupils in Junior Infants should indicate their interest or intention of enrolling their child/children in the school. This can happen at any time between the birth of the child, the family moving into the area and the start of stage two. The school will furnish the parents with the **Notification of Intention to Apply** form *on request*.

Enrolment details for the following school year, including a closing date for Notification of Intention to Apply forms to be submitted to the school (*Stage One*) are announced in the Athy Union of Parishes churches and published in the Athy Union of Parishes newsletter in the new year.

Completed Notification of intention to Apply forms must be returned to the school by the last day of February each year. Forms returned after this point may not be considered, except for children whose families are moving into the area. The completed **Notification of Intention to Apply** forms are kept on file in the school.

If the intention is to enrol in less than 21 days (e.g. having moved into the area) then an **Application Form** may be requested. For these applicants, stage two begins immediately.

All Junior Infants enrol on the first day of the school year. Pupils enrolling in other classes may do so at any time of the year, in consultation with the Principal, subject to school policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Skills.

Places are not allocated to students transferring from another school in the locality.

## Stage Two

Parents who have registered their intent to apply, in Stage One, will receive an **Application Form** in March, along with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policy, which they are asked to read carefully.

Applications shall be submitted in writing (on the Application Form) to the school Principal.

*Each parent will be asked to read the Code of Behaviour. Acceptance of the School Code of Behaviour is essential.*

The closing date for the return of such completed Application Forms is 21 days after the date notified. Only those forms that have been completed in full, including the completion of a parochial certificate or the provision of a letter from the family rector/minister, will be considered.

## Stage Three

The Board of Management will, in the light of Sections 6(e), 9(m) and 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, give consideration to the following:

- a) The number of places available in the school which in turn involves but is not limited to the number of pupils expected to leave the school, the size of all classrooms, the deployment of teachers and the resources of the school.
- b) The religious denomination of the child.
- c) The place of residence of the child.

The Principal and the Chairperson, acting on behalf of the Board of Management, will then consider all completed applications, using the parameters listed below, and will issue decisions within 21 days of the closing date for return of completed Application Forms.

This procedure is based on instruction from the Patron.

- Completion of the Form does not guarantee a place in the school.
- Early completion of the Form is not a factor in the allocation of places at the school.
- All applicants for Junior Infants must be at least four years old before enrolment at the commencement of the school year in the year of admission.
- Siblings of pupils already in the school are not automatically entitled to a place. When oversubscription occurs in any particular category, priority within such a category will be given to the siblings of pupils already enrolled in the school who belong in that category only.
- Catchment is defined by the parish boundaries of Athy Union of Parishes.
- Waiting lists do not carry forward to subsequent years where a child has not been allocated a place.
- The Board of Management may seek further clarification from applicants before making a decision.
- Athy Model School primarily serves the Church of Ireland community.

## **Priority for places is therefore given in the following order:**

- a) Church of Ireland parishioners of Athy Union of Parishes.
- b) Church of Ireland parishioners of adjoining parishes customarily served by the school, where such parishes have no Church of Ireland school of their own.
- c) Children, one of whose parents is a member of the Church of Ireland.
- d) Children who are members of Protestant Reformed or Orthodox Churches and are living within the parishes listed at (a) and (b) above.
- e) Children of parents living within the areas specified in sections (a) and (b) above and who wish their children to be educated within the ethos of the Church of Ireland.

Where oversubscription occurs in any category above, siblings within the category will be given priority. Following allocation of places to siblings, surplus places in the category will be allocated using a lottery system. The lottery system agreed is the 'names in a hat' system; with an independent witness. Those children in this category that are not successful in achieving a place will have their names placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn. Applicants will be informed of their place on the waiting list as it applies in their particular category.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission where there is good and sufficient reason for doing so. Applicants retain the right to appeal such a decision.

All applicants will be informed, in writing, of the Board's decision within the specified time period (namely 21 days).

## **Appeal Procedure**

A subsequent review of a decision by the Chairperson and Principal may be requested, generally on the grounds only of additional information not previously submitted at the time of application.

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised, in writing, of their right to appeal the decision of the Enrolment Committee under Section 29 (1)(C) of the Education Act 1998. In this case, the unsuccessful applicants can appeal locally to the Enrolment Committee, and/or to the Board of Management, and, if necessary, to the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Stage Four**

Successful applicants will be advised, in writing, of the offer of a place, and will be asked to accept the place by completion of the **Registration Form** within 21 days. The completed registration form must be returned to the school within the timeframe specified in the letter of offer. Failure to do so will be interpreted as a refusal of the offer to enrol.

Successful applicants will receive an invitation to an induction afternoon in the summer term. Parents and children will get an opportunity to see the classroom, meet the teacher and other pupils. Children will be given the opportunity to engage in some classroom activities. Parents will be advised by the Principal on matters relating to school ethos, policy, opening and closing times, safety procedures and so on.

The address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment.

## **Enrolment of Children with Special Needs**

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical record and/or psychological report. Where such a report is not available, the Board will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include, for example, access to, or the provision of, any or a combination of the

following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc.

***It is essential that parents and guardians of children who have, or may have any special needs, to inform the school at the earliest opportunity in order that the school can prepare adequately for the reception of the child. This disclosure is essential and will not, in any way, affect admission of the pupil.***

The school will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include parents, principal, class teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher for special needs, Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) or psychologist, as appropriate.

## **Rules and Responsibilities**

It is the duty of the Board of Management to ensure that each application is considered in a fair manner and that it supports the guidelines set out in this policy. The school Principal is responsible for distributing enrolment forms along with the school's introductory pack. Parents have a duty to read the school's ethos, rules and regulations, and to accept and abide by them.