

# Whitecross National School

Julianstown, Co. Meath, A92 W291

Roll Number: 17705J

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Principal: Mr Patrick Doran

Deputy Principal: Ms Margaret O'Reilly

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## Admission Policy

### Admission Policy of Whitecross National School

School Address: Julianstown, Co. Meath, A92W291

Roll number: 17705J

School Patron: Reverend Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath

#### 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 11/9/23. 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 Whitecross N.S. 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

Whitecross N.S. is a Roman Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath and is situated in Julianstown in Co. Meath.

Whitecross N.S. is managed by a Board of Management, appointed under the terms of the Education Act (1998) and the Rules for Primary Schools and benefits from the support of an active Parent's Association. At present, we have 420 children enrolled in our school and a staff which consists of an administrative Principal, seventeen mainstream teachers, three special class teachers, five full time and one part-time special education teachers and ten SNAs.

‘Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all’. *‘The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15’*

‘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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,
- and which school 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 Whitecross N.S. 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.

### **Our School Ethos:**

Our school recognises the central role of the family as the primary educator of the child. We also accept and support the constitutional right and duty of the parents to provide for the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of children.

Our school aims to provide the best possible environment to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all its students with the resources available to us. The focus of our school's philosophy is the education of the whole child to reach his/her full potential. We show special concern for the disadvantaged, respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each person. We cater for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and have been quick to respond to the emerging needs of students and communities.

Our school upholds the values and principles of a Christian education in the Catholic tradition. Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, Principal,

staff, parents and pupils will strive to provide an environment, which will allow all students to develop to their maximum potential and fulfil their role in society.

Finally, and equally as important as academic success, is the attitude of the children. We hope that on leaving Whitecross N.S. children will:

- Have concern and respect for the welfare of others and for the rules, which govern the community.
- Enjoy learning and be prepared to tackle further education.
- Be confident in their abilities.
- Be proud of their school and be a credit to their families.

### **Our Aims:**

The school community of Whitecross N.S. aspires to promote a nurturing inclusive environment where each child is encouraged and motivated to become a responsible and happy individual.

We aim to create a school where each child achieves his/her full potential as a well-rounded responsible member of society through encouragement and example; where teaching the child includes the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social aspects of human development; and where a love of learning and an appreciation of life and the world are engrained.

The school aims in particular to:

- Respect the dignity of the student with his/her background, tradition and beliefs, valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak.
- Enable the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- Encourage in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others.
- Promote the student's appreciation of his/her cultural heritage.
- Prepare the student through academic training for his/her vocational role in life.
- Provide opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service of others.
- Provide a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his/her own education and for the life of the school community

### **Our Mission Statement**

Whitecross N.S. is a co-educational Roman Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. Its aim is to promote the full and harmonious development of our pupils: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with others. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Whitecross N.S. provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Whitecross N.S., will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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 when required to do so by the Council.

Whitecross N.S., will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

Whitecross N.S. 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.

#### **All denominational schools**

Whitecross N.S. is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Whitecross N.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD.

Children with special needs enrolling in Whitecross N.S. will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided to the school by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or request that the child be assessed immediately in order to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child and to profile the support services required.

The Board of Management will endeavour to have all resources and support in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, resource teacher, special needs assistants etc., specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc. The school may meet with the parents of the special needs child to discuss the school's suitability for the child as appropriate. If necessary a full case conference may be called, including parents, class teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher and psychologist or social workers as appropriate.

## **5. Admission of Students**

### **Application Procedures**

1. The application process usually takes place in September/October annually. The exact closing date will be published in our Admission Notice each year. This notice will be published on the school's website at least one week prior to the school commencing our annual admission process. We will also place a message in the parish bulletin and in the local playschools as to where the admission notice will be located.
2. **Junior Infants must be four years of age on or before April 1<sup>st</sup> of the school commencement year.**
3. Parents wishing for their children to attend this school should, in the first instance, make contact with the Principal/School Secretary to request an **'Application for Admission'** form. These forms may also be downloaded from the school website [www.whitecrossschool.com](http://www.whitecrossschool.com). Parents will be reminded to read the admissions policy and other relevant policies on the school website. A hard copy of policies will also be available on request or may be viewed in the main school office.
4. Where both parents have joint-guardianship – as is the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for & been granted joint-guardianship or where unmarried fathers/parents satisfy the legal requirements for guardianship under family law, both signatures are required on the **'Application for Admission'** form. In the case of a single guardian, this signature alone is required.
5. The application process is initiated on receipt of the fully completed and appropriately signed **'Application for Admission'** form together with a copy of the child's birth certificate by the school. A utility bill in the name of one of the parents/guardians dated not later than three months prior to the date of submission of the application is also required. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school.

6. On receipt of an '**Application for Admission**' form, the date of application, child's date of birth, address and telephone contact numbers are recorded on the school's database (Aladdin Schools). This record of the application merely confirms that the application will be assessed under the criteria outlined below and does not confer any further status on that application.
  
7. Applications for admission to the special class for students with ASD should adhere to the procedures outlined above. The only separate requirement is that a completed **NCSE Form 7 (Notification to NCSE of Enrolment in a Special School/Special Class)** and a copy of the **psychological report** recommending the placement of the child in an ASD class is submitted with the **Application for Admission**.

**Please note:**

- *Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage*
- *Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.*

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

The special class attached to Whitecross N.S. provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special education needs provided for within this class.

### **All denominational schools**

Whitecross N.S. is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

### **6. Oversubscription**

Whitecross N.S. is at full enrolment capacity when the total enrolment in the school reaches 445 pupils. This total number enables the school to cater for 18 mainstream classes. When the school is at full capacity, the aim will be to have two classes at each class level and three classes at junior & senior infant level. There may be occasions where having three classes at a different class level may be required e.g. when there is a small intake of infants. The Board of Management has decided that the maximum number of pupils that it will allow in each

class is 28. Where there are three classes at any level, the overall total number of pupils at this level will not be permitted to exceed 56 pupils in order to allow the classes to be reformed to two classes as required. The special class for students with ASD caters for a maximum of 6 students.

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:

**Places in mainstream classes will be decided on the following criteria:**

1. Brothers and sisters of children who are currently enrolled as pupils of Whitecross N.S. ✓
2. Applicants resident within the boundary of Julianstown/Stamullen Parish ✓
3. All other applicants ✓

**Places in ASD classes will be decided based on the following criteria:**

1. Pupils currently enrolled in Whitecross N.S. who have been formally diagnosed with ASD who have been recommended as suitable pupils for placement in an ASD class.
2. Siblings of pupils currently enrolled in Whitecross N.S. at the time of application and who also meet the essential criteria mentioned above.
3. Pupils living within the parish boundary of Julianstown/Stamullen Parish with the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.
4. Pupils living outside the parish boundary with the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class

In the event that the number of applicants for enrolment outnumber the number of places available in any one of the criteria above, the following applies:

- Applicants will be prioritised by age, offering places to the oldest until all places are filled
- In the event that two applicants within a category are tied for the last remaining place (because they share the same date of birth) the place will be awarded to the oldest by virtue of time of birth recorded on the Birth Cert.
- In the event that twins apply and only one place remains, both twins will be offered a place

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list and will be prioritised in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

**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:

- 1) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí
- 2) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school
- 3) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- 4) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- 5) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- 6) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than, Criterion 1 listed above
- 7) 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. However, late applications will affect admission if the school is over subscribed.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Whitecross N.S. 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 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 and as outlined below:

- If a child is offered a place, parents/guardians will receive a **‘Letter of Offer’**, which requires that all parents/guardians formally accept or refuse the offer of a place in writing.
- 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 17 below for further details).

**10. Procedures for the acceptance of an offer of a place in Whitecross N.S. by an applicant:**

1. If the parents/guardians wish to accept/decline the place that has been offered, they must do this in writing by the date specified in the Annual Admission Notice.

They must also indicate:

- 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
  - 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.
2. If the parents/guardians are accepting the place offered, they must formally notify the school in writing by the date specified in the Annual Admission Notice to enable the school to complete the registration process.

**Please Note:** Where both parents have joint-guardianship – as is the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for and has been granted joint-guardianship or where unmarried fathers/parents satisfy the legal requirements for guardianship under family law, both signatures are required on the letter of Acceptance/Non Acceptance. In the case of a single guardian, this signature alone is required.

3. Following receipt of written acceptance of a place, Parents/Guardians will be required to provide details of the child's name (including birth cert name), child’s address, date of birth, PPS number, nationality and child’s mother tongue. This information is transferred to the Department of Education (DES) via the Primary Online Database (POD). Sensitive information (religion and ethnic/cultural background) is also requested by the DES. Permission is sought in advance of commencement in school for these two pieces of information to be shared with the DES. Parents will also be required to provide details of their child’s previous education, special educational needs and any medical needs to the school.

4. In the case of a child with specific special educational needs, the B.O.M. may request copies of medical and/or psychological reports. This request will only be made after written acceptance of a place has been received.

## **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 Whitecross N.S. 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 9 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:

- an application for admission to the school has been received,
- an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- 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 Whitecross N.S. 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 Whitecross N.S. 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 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 respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 12.

#### **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, in the following instances:

- (i) to classes or years other than the school's intake group
- (ii) after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought,

are as follows:

1. Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to the procedures set out above, assuming that there are places available in the requested classes. An '**Application Form**' may be completed at this time. Application forms are available from the school office, by email or by post, or can be downloaded from our website. Application forms may be completed and submitted at any time during the school year. Completion of an Application Form does not automatically entitle an applicant to a place.
2. Applications for children to transfer to Whitecross NS will receive written notification on the success of their application within 21 days from receipt of the application.
3. In the event that there are multiple applicants for a class and there is not a sufficient number of places, the criteria listed above applies.
4. The offer of a place is subject to the availability of a place within the required class/classes. The Board of Management has decided that we will only accept 28 children in any class.
5. In the event that there is no place available within the required class/classes, the applicant/applicants name will be placed on a waiting list for the remainder of current

school year. In the event that a place comes available, the parents will be notified by phone and in writing.

6. Parents must confirm acceptance of a place in writing within 14 days of a place being offered. Failure to provide this written acceptance within the 14 days will result in the place being offered to the next child on the waiting list.
7. Following receipt of written acceptance of a place from parents, the school will request a copy of the most recent school report from the parents/previous school. Parents/Guardians will be required to provide details of the child's name (including birth cert name), child's address, date of birth, PPS number, nationality and child's mother tongue. This information is transferred to the Department of Education (DES) via the Primary Online Database (POD). Sensitive information (religion and ethnic/cultural background) is also requested by the DES. Permission is sought in advance of commencement in school for these two pieces of information to be shared with the DES. Parents will also be required to provide details of their child's previous education, special educational needs and any medical needs to the school.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Whitecross N.S. 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**

Parents/Guardians who wish for their child not to engage with religious instruction must make a written request to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parents/guardians to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Written requests by parents/guardians will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **18. Reviews/appeals**

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

The parents/guardians 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.


### **Review Procedure**

The policy will be reviewed by Board of Management every three years or as the need arises.

**Ratification**


This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 18/8/2023

Signed:   
Diarmuid Everard, Chairperson

Signed:   
Patrick Doran, Principal

**Meath Diocesan Education Office**

**Approved**

Signed: 

Date: 11/9/23

